Research Article

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON BLENDED LEARNING APPLICATION IN ENHANCING ENGLISH ORAL COMPETENCE AT TON DUC THANG UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Blended learning has become an extremely popular instruction in diverse educational contexts, especially in the Covid-19 pandemic. This instruction has created opportunities for both teachers and students to interact together, which has led to the complete unity among them and has brought beneficial results in education. In this article, the authors would like to investigate students' feedback and their attitudes towards the application of Blended Learning in enhancing English oral competence at Ton Duc Thang University. The research shows the paramount importance of Blended Leaning in helping students enhance their learning ability generally and their oral competence specifically. It, in addition, elicits some of the big hurdles during the implementation, teaching and learning as well as proposes some feasible solutions for future application in this context. Through deep interviews with students, lecturers and managerial staff, the authors would like to elicit its positives and negatives withdrawn from practicality as well as suggest some recommendations to help improve the teaching quality generally and students' English oral competence specifically.

Keywords: blended learning; English oral competence; traditional instruction

1.   Introduction

Blended learning, as far as we are concerned, has become an emerging trend in higher education. It allows learners to have more interaction and engagement through the successful integration of technology. It also enables students to be independent and collaborative in learning (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). As Garrison and Vaughan (2008) assumed, "It is a kind of integration between face-to-face learning and online learning, optimizing students' participation and restructuring traditional classes" (p.5).

With the outbreak of Covid 19 pandemic and the prevalence of technology in the digital era, blended learning has become a widespread approach in many education settings,

not only in Vietnam but in the world as well. This application has shown its effectiveness which can be used to maintain and enhance teaching quality. At present, most institutions have fully prepared for this transformation (i.e., facilities, training, and staff) in which an adaptation to new life has occurred. In this context of Vietnam, the Ministry of Education and Training has issued circular No. 09/2021/TT- on 30th March 2021 on "Regulations on management and organizing of online teaching in general education institutions and regular educational institutions." This regulation has, in fact, paved the way for safe and stable teaching as well as learning. Despite successful adaptations, current teaching practice has been confronted with lots of challenges. In this research, the author would like to survey students' perceptions of the application of Blended learning in the current context. On grounds of achievements and shortcomings, some solutions and recommendations are made for future application.

2.   Literature review

2.1.   *A brief overview of English language teaching*

After World War II, there was an increasing need for people to learn English as a foreign language as a way to communicate among people in the world. This led to the appearance of various teaching methods in the 1950s and 1960s, from the Grammar Translation method, the Direct Method, and the Audio-lingual method. However, these approaches were inadequate in English Language Teaching (ELT) gradually as they emphasized mainly language forms (grammatical structures). Therefore, there was a shift from focusing on language forms to focusing on meaning and language use in communicative contexts (functional use of language). This was known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (also called the Communicative Approach) (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011). The prevalence of CLT in the 1970s, particularly, has led to significant changes in ELT as it concentrates on communicative competence.

2.2.   *Oral competence*

According to Chomsky (1965), "While competence refers to the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language, performance refers to the actual use of language in concrete situations" (p.4). In this work, Chomsky characterized language competence as linguistic competence. Brown (2007) also admitted that "competence refers to one's underlying knowledge of the language, such as grammar rules, vocabulary, all pieces of language and how they are combined together, while performance relates to actual production (speaking/ writing) or comprehension (listening/reading)" (p.35-36). It is evident that "competence" relates to knowledge of the language and "performance" relates to actual use of the language.

As Brown and Yule (1983) assumed, oral competence is an interactive process in which meaning is built based on receiving and producing processed information. In other words, "Transactional function is emphasized to convey information as it helps students communicate information efficiently in real-life contexts" (p.22-23). Regarding this aspect,

Bygate (1991) pointed out "oral competence does not only relate to the ability to produce abstract sentences but adapt them to appropriate situations". From these definitions, it is apparent that oral competence is the capability to produce utterances in real-life contexts in order to communicate effectively (p.13).

2.3. Features and measurement of oral competence

Measuring oral competence has proved problematic for researchers. Skehan (1996) distinguished three aspects, including fluency, accuracy, and complexity, which could be measured separately when assessing learners' oral competence (as cited in Ellis, 2003; Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005). It is measured based on meaning and form (Skehan, 1998; Skehan and Foster, 2001, as cited in Ellis and Barkhuzen, 2005, p.143); as shown in Figure 1 below.
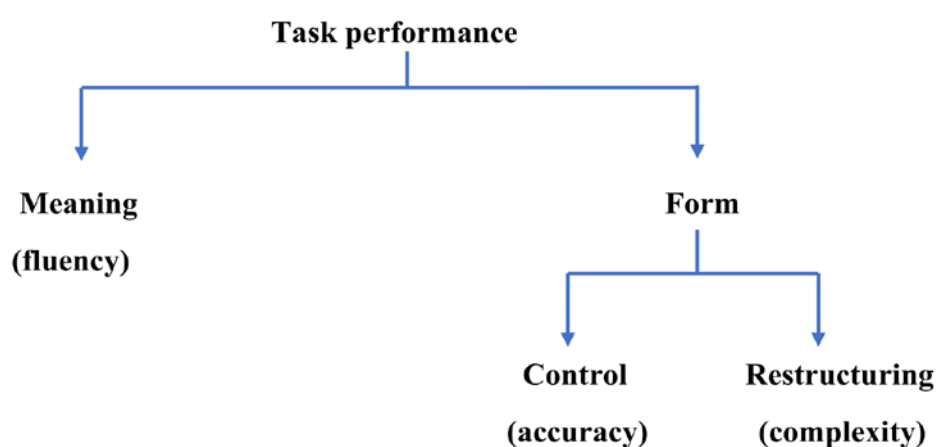

Figure 1. *Three aspects of task performance*

(Source: Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2001, p.143)

As can be seen from Figure 1, task performance is assessed on the grounds of two main criteria consisting of "meaning" and "form" (Skehan, 1996, as cited in Ellis, 2003, p. 116). First, "meaning" refers to "fluency", which includes temporal variables (breakdown fluency), and hesitation phenomena (repair fluency). To gain fluency, students need to have ideas, coherence, and cohesion to link those ideas together, make it logical, and perform smoothly as they use the language. Second, "form" refers to "control" and "restructuring", which are equal to "accuracy" and "complexity", which are the foci of its aspects. In speaking, accuracy, which relates to correcting specific features of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, is considered crucial. "Complexity", which refers to interactional, propositional (learner's conveying message), functional (discourse), grammatical, and lexical, is one of the most important areas of oral assessment. As Brown and Yule (1983) pointed out, these features should be assessed together, not in isolation, to test students' communication abilities.

2.4. Blended Learning

- *Definitions*

According to Thorne (2003), "blended learning is an opportunity to integrate the innovative and technological advances offered by online learning with the interaction and participation offered in the best of traditional learning" (p.16). Put it another way, it is a combination of technology such as emails, virtual classrooms, video streaming, and traditional forms of training. Similarly, Garrison and Vaughan (2008) agreed, "Blended learning is the thoughtful fusion of face-to-face and online learning experiences" (p.5). This application, which has created learning experiences at the right time and place for each individual, has crossed global boundaries, brought learners from different cultures together, and is considered one of the most significant developments in the 21st century.

In this article, the author considers blended learning as the integration of face-to-face learning and online learning with the support of technology to facilitate interactions among students and lecturers and help them find a suitable learning approach.

In the COVID-19 pandemic and the digital era, blended learning is considered as one of the appropriate solutions to tailor learning in order to fit with learners' needs and their learning styles. It has enabled the educational system to be operated effectively during such hard times and has boosted students' computer skills to maintain educational quality. Practically, this application has proven its effects and has been widely applied in diverse institutions. Despite its practicality, it is complicated to apply. It is not kind of an addition of another educational layer but the restructuring of traditional classes with the aims of optimizing students' engagement and extending access to the Internet-based learning experiences. In other words, blended learning is a fundamental redesign that changes the current approaches used in teaching and learning. In order to have a deep insight into its application, the following section will depict a clear picture.

- *Operation conditions*

To operate blended learning successfully in the global changes and the world development, it is vital to follow its special conditions. Thorne (2003) presented eight requirements, including (1) identifying the core learning need, (2) establishing the level of demand, (3) recognizing different learning styles, (4) being creative in using different forms of learning, (5) working with the internal and external providers to identify learning objectives and make sure the provision meets the need, (6) undertaking an education process and developing a friendly-user demonstration to illustrate the potential of blended learning, (7) being prepared to offer follow-up coaching support, and (8) setting up a monitoring process to evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery. **First**, identify the core learning needs. This is one of the essential parts of blended learning as it supplies reasonable solutions for learners. Learning needs will be more focused and specific as individual learning will be tailored. Therefore, it makes the learning more suitable for each student as online learning

components will be adapted based on most learners' needs and the infrastructure capabilities of each educational institution. To make it successful, some underpinning skills such as questioning, listening, and giving feedback from both institutions and students should be developed. **Second**, establishing the level of demand. Assessing practical demand is a must as it helps understand the shape and scale of the demand, both in present and future learning needs. In addition, it may help explore different approaches to learning so as to suit different learning styles. **Third**, recognizing different learning styles. Although there are many different types of intelligence that decide learning styles (Gardner, 1993), blended learning can incorporate them on the grounds of learners' willingness and desire to learn, which reflect their preferred learning styles and make learning more meaningful and memorable. As Thorne (2003) pointed out, "The potential power behind blended learning is that it can connect and engage with all learning preferences and create a holistic model of personal development" (p.28). Evidently, blended learning can combine different learning styles to produce the best learning outcomes. **Fourth**, being creative in using different forms of learning. Blended learning offers plenty of opportunities to take what exists and develop it into a different dimension with the support of suitable new technologies. To design the solutions for successful blended learning, it is advisable to identify the level of demand as learners have a wide range of learning options. **Fifth**, working with the internal and external providers to capture learning objectives and make sure the provision meets the needs. This is, in fact, one of the challenging aspects when launching blended learning, as the providers are located in different areas geographically. To implement it effectively, it is urgent to define key learning needs and the most acceptable way of meeting them. **Sixth**, undertaking an educational process and developing a friendly-user demonstration to illustrate the potential of blended learning. To realize this, it is vital to consider fellow learning, professional developments, managers and learners in order to identify workable solutions such as Power Point presentations, meetings or workshops. **Seventh**, being prepared to offer follow-up coaching support. This issue refers to the ability to purchase and develop multimedia solutions as it allows learners to use technology to support their learning and development. The support may be from different people, such as friends, lecturers, heads of divisions, and schools. In the case of having trouble with technology, learners need to contact the right person to support them in time. **Eighth**, setting up a monitoring process to evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery method. When applying Blended Learning, it is essential to track learners' progress, the lesson learnt, and the learners' improvement. Therefore, having an internal learning management system can really help this process.

Garrison & Vaughan (2008), moreover, added a community of inquiry with three conditions when designing Blended Learning, including (1) social presence, (2) cognitive presence, and (3) teaching presence. This can be demonstrated clearly in Figure 2, as below.
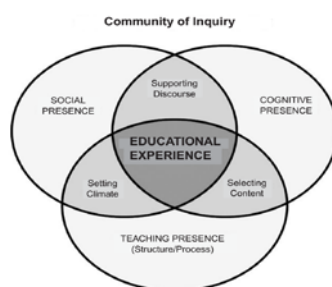
Figure 2. *Community of Inquiry*

(Source: Garrison & Vaughan, 2008, p.18)

First, it is the social presence that needs to be included when applying blended learning. Its purpose is to establish a climate of trust and open communication that may support interaction afterwards. This can be accomplished through collaborative tasks among learners. It is clear that students perceive face-to-face learning and online learning differently. While face-to-face learning allows them to engage in familiar and immediate forms of communication in combination with emotional support due to physical presence, online learning has less frequent collaboration. **Second**, cognitive presence plays a critical role in conducting blended leaning. This term refers to the exploration of content and ideas, organizing and discussing them critically. In other words, it is important to plan for critical reflection, discourse, and tasks that can be used to support systematic inquiry. It is the educators who make up their mind in administering tasks with online learning or face-to-face learning to achieve academic goals. It is better to employ online learning when more individual and reflective phases are of focus, though. **Third**, teaching presence, which is one of the fundamental aspects when designing blended learning, should be carefully noted. It is defined as "the design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes" (Anderson et al., 2001, p.1). This means that it brings community of enquiry, functional relationships, intended outcomes, learners' needs, and learners' abilities together. It can be understood that while teaching presence emphasizes structuring activities, teachers play the role of facilitators who make constructive contributions to learners' performance.

3.   Research design, Results and discussion

3.1.   *Research design*

To realize it practically, the authors would like to introduce some research descriptions as the following:

3.1.1. Research aims

This research aims to clarify the necessity as well as the usefulness of applying blended learning and identify some challenges that need to be solved in the current context. On the grounds of these aspects, some recommendations are elicited to boost the oral competence of sophomore English-majored students at a university.

3.1.2. Research questions

Research question 1: How is students' feedback on the effectiveness of blended learning?

Research question 2: Is blended learning an appropriate instructional approach in the current context (the COVID-19 pandemic and the digital era)?

3.1.3. Research Methods and Tools

In this paper, empirical research was mainly employed.

- *Research design*

The primary purpose of a research design is to provide a detailed plan for the research to be handled. As McMillan and Schumacher (2001) pointed out, "A research design refers to a plan so as to choose subjects, research sites, and procedures to conduct the study and collect the data so as to answer the research questions" (p.166). Therefore, this section mentions aspects of the participants, when, where, and under what circumstances the study was carried out.

The authors define qualitative research as "qualitative research describes and analyzes people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions. The researcher interprets phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p.395). The results are analyzed based on the responses of the participants, which may help increase the reliability of the study.

- *Sampling*

According to Frankael et al. (2001), "sampling refers to the process of selecting these individuals" (p.91). McMillan and Schumacher (2001) also stated that "subjects are usually referred to as a sample . The sample can be selected from a larger group of people, identified as the population, or it can simply refer to the group of subjects from whom data is collected." (p.169). In this study, convenience sampling was chosen. The samples were selected based on the final results of the previous course (Speaking 3) and the standardized program they were attending. Specifically, two assigned classes conveniently opted to participate in this study. When using this kind of sampling, "often the researchers will describe convenient samples carefully to show that although they were not able to employ random selection, the characteristics of the subjects match those of the population or a substantial portion of the population." (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001, p.175).

Participants in this research were handled at any university, Faculty of Foreign Languages. Specifically, 30 sophomore English-majored students, 2 lecturers who have been responsible for the class of Speaking 4 and 2 Heads of Division in the Faculty of Foreign Languages, at any university in Ho Chi Minh City, joined in.

- *Research tools*

In this research, in-depth interviews were administered because "in-depth interviews are open-response questions to obtain data of participant meanings – how individuals conceive of their world and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their

lives" (McMillan & Schumacher, p.443). Interviews help researchers (1) gain present perception of thoughts, (2) get future expectations or anticipated experiences, (3) verify the information from other sources, and (4) extend ideas based on participants' opinions on the issue. In this study, interviews with groups of students and in-depth interviews with each student ranked very well; good; fairly good; and average. The author interviewed groups of students to get a general viewpoint on the issue and then each type of student so as to have a clear and detailed perspective on the present issue. The authors also invited two lecturers and two heads of divisions to join in, with the purpose of inviting them to share the current teaching practice and the management of each division. On the basis of these responses, results were gathered and analyzed.

3.2. Results and discussions

In this study, besides conducting group interviews, individual in-depth interviews were simultaneously carried out with students who were ranked very well, good, fairly good, and average. Lecturers and heads of divisions are invited to join in this study as well. To understand deeply their perspectives, the following parts will describe the whole picture of this application.

3.2.1. Results of students' feedback

As stated previously, the researcher conducted interviews in groups and in-depth interviews with individuals to get their feedback. Three aspects, which were included in the interviews, consisted of (1) students' oral competence improvement; (2) students' affection; and (3) students' comments on advantages and disadvantages of blended learning. **First**, students' oral abilities have improved steadily. For language ability, they were able to generate ideas, form the structure of speaking tasks and progressed significantly in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, especially when they participated in face-to-face learning. Students also felt more confident in speaking when learning online in comparison with learning face-to-face. Fairly good and average students stated, "They feel more confident speaking when learning online. However, they are timid to speak in front of the crowd and dare not raise hands to speak up their ideas or answer the questions in face-to-face learning." (Groups 3, 4, 7 and students, 5, 6). For the impact of this approach, most good students assure us that "we prefer learning face-to-face to learning online as we have more meaningful interactions and get immediate feedback from lecturers. Other good, fairly good, and average students said "We think this application is normal as our oral abilities are modestly bettered" (groups 1, 2, 5, 6, and students 1, 2, 3, 5, 6). It can be recommended that lecturers' teaching methods need to be adjusted. As students stated, "more interactive activities and more engaging tasks are needed to help them be creative so as to enhance their oral competence and their creativity (groups 1 & 2, and students 1, 2, 3, 5, 7). If time is allowed, lecturers could create a quiz to check whether students remembered what they studied or not (groups 1 & 2). Simultaneously, some mini games should be added to help students remember and

apply specific vocabulary in their speaking tasks (groups 3, 5, and student 5). **Second**, students showed their affection for this approach. On the one hand, a small number of students (30 percent) pointed out, "We like this approach as it has enhanced our studies" (groups 2, 4, and students 3, 4, 7, 8). Relating to learning schedules, they implied that it would be better if the school could adjust time more suitably as we are inflexible in moving to school from home and vice versa. In terms of ways of learning, they showed that this approach paved the way for choosing a flexible learning approach and gave them more time to prepare for the lesson in online learning as well as practice in face-to-face learning. On the other hand, most students (about 70 percent) did not really favor this approach. They elicited that "The learning schedule is hard to adapt to with two weeks of online learning and offline learning" (groups 1, 3, 5, 7, and students 1, 2, 3, 6,). As a result, the school needs to pay attention to the learning schedule. Most students agreed, "school should listen to students' current issues and find ways to help them overcome those difficulties in learning (groups 4, 6, 7 and students 1, 3, 4, 6, 8). **Third**, there are strengths and weaknesses when learning with this approach. On the one hand, students could avoid COVID-19 sickness and become more flexible with changes when learning online. They found that "we are able to watch the video clips of online teaching at home to update our knowledge as well as review the lessons once the Internet connection is not stable. We can find materials (ideas and vocabulary) in relation to the assigned speaking task." (Groups 1, 4, 5, 8, and students, 4, 8). They also believed face-to-face learning might intrigue them more and could prevent them for feeling bored when studying online. Students pointed out, "They had chances to interact, share ideas with others, and receive feedback from lecturers in face-to-face learning" (groups 3, 5, 6, 8, and students 2, 4, 5, 6). On the other hand, it was hard to arrange personal schedules in online learning as each subject had its own schedule. As a consequence, they might forget their learning schedule, be shy of speaking in class, be easily distracted, and find it hard to gather and share ideas in online rooms as each student had their own learning style (groups 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, and students 1, 4, 5). Even so, some students were dependent on the Internet to find materials and ideas to speak, which limited creativity (groups 4, 5, and students 6, 7). From the perspective of students, they need to actively participate in learning and stay focused on the grounds of their own learning autonomy (groups 1, 5, 6, 7, and students 1, 3, 5, 8).

3.2.2. Results of lecturers' feedback

As lecturers' comments, (1) lecturers' new teaching methods, (2) students' participation, (3) students' oral competence, and (4) lecturers' comments are issues leading to hurdles in teaching with blended learning. **First**, lecturers have to be flexible when delivering lessons and upgrade their technology skills. "Theory should be taught and explained when teaching online. In reverse, practice should be carried out when studying offline. It was also advisable that interesting lessons should be planned in combination with

interesting activities to boost learners' oral abilities and pave the way for learning motivation. In addition, lecturers need to have a good command of technology. As having experienced, lecturers were able to catch up with online teaching so as to adjust efficiently during their teaching" (Lecturer 1). Apparently, schools need to create a more suitable teaching and learning schedule. "The application of blended learning with 2 weeks of online learning and face-to-face learning has caused many difficulties for both lecturers and students." (Lecturers 1, and 2). On the one hand, lecturers find it hard to focus on theory or practice or combine both, as they have to follow the teaching schedule. On the other hand, it is inconvenient and time-consuming for students and teachers to move from one school block to another one, or from home to school and from school to home (Lecturer 1). **Second**, students' involvement is completely different between face-to-face and online learning. "Students have to become more flexible to keep up with the flow of the class, and discover online learning tools, but interactions among students and lecturers were limited." (Lecturers 1, and 2). For lecturers, it takes them time to create online rooms for discussion and log into each room to observe students' performance and give feedback. Lecturers, indeed, cannot control all aspects of learning when teaching online, so they do not completely understand all students' current setbacks to support them" (Lecturer 2). Therefore, the faculty needs to organize different training sessions on specific online teaching tools, but not in general ones like Google Meet or Zoom. It would be better if the faculty could hold a channel where lecturers could share effective teaching methods, useful teaching websites, or interesting activities together. (Lecturer 2). **Third**, blended learning helps students enhance their oral competence. "For a learning atmosphere, learners have a comfortable space to practice with their peers in online rooms. Nevertheless, they cannot do private stuff once they study face-to-face as they are under the lecturers' management" (Lecturer 1). For competence, learners need to be active in learning and have high learning autonomy. They can record video clips of themselves speaking, which requires them to have technology skills and to rehearse speaking. This activity has boosted their learning competence, computing skills, and learning autonomy. (Lecturer 2). Therefore, official channels for exchanging knowledge should be formed so that lecturers have more interaction with students and track their learning progress (Lecturer 2). **Fourth**, despite the positives, there are still many drawbacks to using blended learning. Evidently, students are easily distracted when studying online, but lecturers cannot control all activities in class. Students do not want to interact online when learning this subject, which causes lecturers challenges in assessing their learning progress, participation, and learning attitudes. Lecturers are heavily dependent on the Internet and spend lots of time using online teaching tools to manage the class" (Lecturers 1 and 2). From these assumptions, students need to have learning autonomy and maintain it during their learning process. "Students should follow the lessons regularly and do as instructed. Also, students

should spend more time on self-studying at home in order to improve their English oral competence." (Lecturers 1 and 2).

3.2.3. Results of Heads of Division's responsibility

Managerial staff also elicited some key points about the Blended Learning application. There are three main aspects, including preparation and conditions for development; (2) training; (3) supervising this process; and assessing teaching quality. **First**, preparations and conditions for developing this approach have been set up. Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, online teaching has been suspended for three semesters. In this context, staff have to run all activities relating to teaching schedules, learning schedules, arranging rooms and time for face-to-face learning (70 percent) and online teaching (30 percent) as regulated by the Ministry of Education and Training. For teaching, this process has been in progress as it has already been conducted. Students use Google Meet or Zoom to teach online in combination with the E-learning system to support students' materials and assess their performance through Progress Test 1 and Progress Test 2. When launching Blended Learning, face-to-face teaching is added like what the school has operated up to the present. (Head of Division 1). "For online teaching tools, if copyrighted tools are used with more detailed instructions, it will be better for lecturers and help boost teaching quality." (Head of Division 2). **Second**, training and supporting lecturers have been implemented. For training, the school and the faculty have organized various training sessions for online teaching and have shown different online teaching tools. However, it appears to cause confusion among lecturers. "It is advisable to unify one or two software for online teaching as the school has given too many teaching tools." (Head of Division 2). For assessing, each division has its own training sessions and meetings to unify assessment methods (Head of Division 1). It can be implied that "the school should use only Google Meet or Zoom to record screens and teach voice so that students who have been infected by COVID-19 are able to study at home. In the future, it would be better if schools could equip one camera in each classroom to livestream the teaching process so that all teaching activities can be observed and all students can learn at the same time" (Head of Division 1). **Third,** the supervising process and assessing teaching effectiveness have been conducted. "For the supervising process, the school has still followed the regulations. When teaching online, lecturers invited supervisors to check their attendance, teaching periods, and teaching quality. Besides, lecturers had to advise on the current teaching session, record screen and teach voice as Google Meet did not support recording clip videos." (Head of Division 1). "For the teaching quality, it was based on four main channels, including (1) students' satisfaction; (2) formal observation from school; (3) online or face-to-face observation from the Faculty of Foreign Languages; and (4) results of the midterm and final tests" (Heads of Division 1 and 2). "It can be suggested that for testing and assessing students' performance, the school should combine both online and face-to-face methods of testing. Students who are infected by COVID-19 have to delay

their tests. Therefore, if these forms of testing are combined, the school does not have to organize another day for testing, which causes enormous expense." (Head of Division 1).

In view of the authors, we would like to make some general comments on the positives and negatives of blended learning as well as recommendations for further application. First, face-to-face learning just takes place for a limited time. Students have to spend time moving from one block to another block to attend classes or going home to study online. Therefore, lecturers can assign homework for preparation in advance. This may also give students opportunities to practice and raise questions when they are engaged in the next lessons. It is my recommendation that blended learning has to be conducted to help students have good preparation and concentrate more on studying. Second, face-to-face learning does not allow lecturers to expand deep knowledge in the lesson and students to prepare the tasks sufficiently. Thus, using blended learning may enable lecturers to provide more pertinent knowledge and help students be better prepared before class. Third, although face-to-face learning has helped students interact immediately, they are shy about practicing English with their partners. Thus, blended learning can guarantee students' oral competence to some extent and enable them to be more confident in speaking English. Fourth, face-to-face learning cannot provide students with underlying learning materials; it cannot even support saving online teaching video clips. Consequently, students' learning processes are interrupted, leading to the loss of practice chances and updating knowledge. In contrast, saving online video clips of teaching is useful in creating various learning resources. Therefore, using blended learning is suggested in this situation.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, based on theoretical reviews and empirical research on blended learning, the paper has shown its effectiveness in teaching, especially in the COVID-19 pandemic and in the digital era. With the positives withdrawn from the study, it may help students be more flexible and have a suitable approach for their learning. Meanwhile, its limitations may help the schools, the Faculty of Foreign Languages, lecturers, and students have a general view again, think deeply, and come up with long-term effective solutions to help students overcome these learning difficulties as well as accelerate educational quality.

It can be said that this study may pave the way for future research relating to combining different teaching approaches in ELT to tackle the current issue of blended learning. Using one teaching approach is not feasible to generate effective results but other approaches should be incorporated so as to meet different learners' levels and to achieve learning outcomes. In addition, more training on ELT from the faculty should be conducted so as to have a deep insights into the context of teaching nowadays. This is also one of the channels that lecturers can use to update and enhance their professional development in teaching.

❖ **Conflict of Interest:** *Authors have no conflict of interest to declare.*

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NHẬN ĐỊNH CỦA SINH VIÊN VỀ DẠY HỌC THEO PHƯƠNG THỨC KẾT HỢP TRONG VIỆC NÂNG CAO KHẢ NĂNG NÓI TIẾNG ANH TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC TÔN ĐỨC THẮNG

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TÓM TẮT

Phương thức dạy học kết hợp đã và đang trở thành phương thức dạy học phổ biến ở các cơ sở đào tạo, đặc biệt trong thời kì dịch Covid 19. Phương thức dạy học này tạo ra nhiều cơ hội cho giảng viên và sinh viên tương tác với nhau nhằm tạo ra sự thống nhất trong hoạt động dạy học và mang đến kết quả hữu ích trong đào tạo. Trong nghiên cứu này, các tác giả nghiên cứu tìm hiểu cách nhìn nhận và thái độ của sinh viên đối với việc ứng dụng phương thức dạy học kết hợp trong việc nâng cao khả năng nói tiếng Anh tại một trường đại học. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy tầm quan trọng của phương thức dạy học kết hợp trong việc nâng cao khả năng học tập của sinh viên nói chung và khả năng nói tiếng Anh của sinh viên nói riêng. Bên cạnh đó, nghiên cứu cũng chỉ ra những khó khăn trong quá trình vận hành, giảng dạy, học tập theo phương thức này cũng như đưa ra các đề xuất mang tính khả thi trong bối cảnh đào tạo này. Thông qua phỏng vấn sinh viên, giảng viên và cán bộ quản lí, các tác giả chỉ ra những ưu điểm và hạn chế từ thực tiễn đào tạo, từ đó đưa ra một số kiến nghị nhằm cải thiện chất lượng dạy học nói chung và khả năng nói tiếng Anh của sinh viên nói riêng.

Từ khóa: dạy học theo phương thức kết hợp; khả năng nói tiếng Anh; dạy học theo phương thức truyền thống