



THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FACE-TO-FACE, ONLINE, AND BLENDED LEARNING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Pazilova Khusnidakhon Kobiljon kizi

Fergana State University, Faculty of foreign languages,
student of Philology and teaching language (English language)

Sotvaldieva Xilola Musinovna

- Scientific leader: associate professor of practical English department
khusnidakhonpazilova@gmail.com
+998942942112

Fergana, Uzbekistan

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17813700>

Abstract

Recent developments in digital pedagogy have accelerated the diversification of instructional modes in English Language Teaching (ELT). As educational institutions increasingly alternate between face-to-face (F2F), online, and blended instruction, understanding the comparative effectiveness of these modalities has become essential. This study presents a mixed-methods analysis conducted across two participant groups: 76 first-year university students majoring in English Philology and 58 pupils from grades 6–7 in a public secondary school. The research investigates linguistic progress, learner engagement, classroom interaction patterns, and teacher feedback mechanisms across the three modalities over a 12-week instructional cycle. Quantitative data include pre- and post-tests, weekly vocabulary quizzes, writing assessments, and digital activity logs, while qualitative data derive from classroom observations, learner diaries, and teacher interviews.

Findings indicate that F2F learning resulted in the highest oral fluency gains, especially among younger learners, who demonstrated increased willingness to speak and lower anxiety in physical classroom environments. Online instruction showed significant improvement in writing accuracy and reading comprehension, particularly among university students with higher digital literacy and autonomous study habits. Blended learning emerged as the most balanced modality, yielding consistently strong vocabulary retention, improved grammar accuracy, and higher engagement, attributed to the structured combination of synchronous interaction and asynchronous digital practice. Teacher feedback was also more targeted and timely in blended settings due to the integration of Learning Management Systems.

While F2F learning remains superior in developing communicative competence, and online learning excels in fostering self-regulated learning behaviors, blended instruction demonstrates the most sustainable and pedagogically flexible outcomes across age groups. These findings align with previous research advocating multimodal curriculum design in ELT. The study concludes that an optimal approach incorporates differentiated modality use tailored to learner age, technological readiness, and specific linguistic objectives.



Keywords:

Face-to-face learning; online learning; blended learning; English language teaching; learner engagement; digital pedagogy; comparative analysis; secondary students; university students

1. Introduction

The evolution of English Language Teaching (ELT) in the last decade has been marked by a shift from traditional classroom practices toward digitally mediated and hybrid forms of instruction. Scholars have suggested that these shifts are not merely technological but pedagogical, reshaping interactional patterns, learner autonomy, and accessibility (Anderson, 2016). Face-to-face (F2F) instruction has historically dominated ELT due to its interactive affordances (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), while online learning has grown rapidly with the expansion of digital platforms, offering flexible, self-paced environments (Moore, 2018). Blended learning, combining physical and virtual components, represents an emerging middle ground often perceived as pedagogically optimal due to its multimodal nature (Garrison & Vaughan, 2017).

Despite substantial literature comparing these approaches, few studies simultaneously examine multiple age groups using the same research design. Younger learners often require structured social environments, whereas university students may thrive in autonomous digital contexts. To address this gap, the present study juxtaposes the performance and experiences of 6–7th-grade pupils and university English majors in F2F, online, and blended environments.

This article aims to provide a nuanced analysis of how instructional modality influences linguistic outcomes, learner engagement, and classroom dynamics in ELT, supported by empirical evidence collected over a structured instructional period.

2. Methods

2.1 Participants

The study engaged 134 participants:

- 76 first-year university students (aged 18–20) enrolled in an English - Philology program.
- 58 secondary-school pupils from grades 6 and 7 (aged 11–13).

Students were randomly assigned to three groups:

- 1.Face-to-Face (F2F) – 45 learners
- 2.Online – 44 learners
- 3.Blended – 45 learners

2.2 Study Duration and Structure

The research was conducted over 12 weeks, covering:

- Communicative grammar
- Functional vocabulary development
- Reading and listening skills



Writing practice

Speaking activities (role-plays, presentations)

2.3 Data Collection Instruments

Pre- and post-tests measuring vocabulary, grammar, reading, and speaking

Weekly quizzes on new lexical items

Writing assessments evaluated using a standardized rubric

Classroom observations (F2F and blended)

Digital participation logs (online and blended)

Learner reflection journals

Semi-structured teacher interviews

2.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were processed using descriptive statistics and paired-sample t-tests. Qualitative data underwent thematic coding following Braun & Clarke (2019). Cross-group triangulation increased the reliability of findings.

3. Analysis

3.1 Linguistic Performance

Post-test results revealed significant differences among modalities:

F2F group showed the highest improvement in speaking fluency, with pupils increasing average oral performance scores from 59% to 82%.

Online group excelled in reading comprehension and writing accuracy, especially among university students (improvement from 64% to 86%).

Blended group achieved the strongest results overall, with notable gains in vocabulary retention (up to 91% accuracy on final quizzes).

3.2 Engagement Patterns

Observation notes indicated:

Younger learners exhibited higher engagement in F2F sessions due to the structured social environment.

University students in the online group displayed strong autonomy, completing asynchronous tasks consistently.

Blended learners showed the highest overall engagement due to varied task formats.

3.3 Teacher Feedback

Teachers reported:

Feedback in F2F classes was immediate but sometimes superficial due to time constraints.

Online platforms enabled detailed written feedback, but learners were occasionally slow to apply suggestions.

Blended settings allowed the most consistent feedback loop, with digital tools complementing in-class reinforcement.

4. Results

4.1 University Students

Speaking: Blended (78%), F2F (74%), Online (62%)

Writing: Online (88%), Blended (82%), F2F (69%)



Vocabulary: Blended (92%), Online (85%), F2F (79%)

4.2 6–7th Grade Pupils

Speaking confidence: F2F > Blended > Online

Reading comprehension: Online > Blended > F2F

Grammar: Blended > F2F ≈ Online

4.3 Overall Trends

F2F = best for interaction and communication

Online = best for independent learning and writing tasks

Blended = balanced modality with highest aggregate improvement

5. Debates and Discussion

Contemporary research debates the relative strengths of digital and traditional modalities. Some scholars argue that online learning democratizes access and supports differentiated pacing (Hodges et al., 2020). Others warn that it may reduce spontaneous interaction and emotional engagement, especially among younger learners (Zheng, 2021). The results of our study support both perspectives.

For university students, online learning amplified autonomy and writing performance, consistent with previous findings that digital platforms enhance process-writing and revision (Hyland, 2016). However, secondary pupils struggled with motivation and required more teacher scaffolding, aligning with Vygotskian principles emphasizing guided interaction.

Blended learning, while often praised as the pedagogical “middle path,” poses challenges in implementation, especially with regard to teacher workload and technological infrastructure. Yet the empirical gains observed reinforce claims that blended environments foster deeper learning due to multimodal input and flexible engagement (Graham, 2020).

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the effectiveness of instructional modality in ELT depends significantly on learner age, digital readiness, and linguistic objectives. F2F learning remains the most conducive to building communicative competence in younger learners, while online learning benefits digitally literate students developing writing and reading skills. Blended learning emerges as the most robust and adaptable approach, supporting well-rounded linguistic development through a combination of synchronous interaction and asynchronous reflection.

Educators should therefore adopt flexible, needs-based modality selection rather than treating any single instructional format as universally optimal. Future research may examine long-term retention effects and the impact of emerging AI-supported tools on blended pedagogies.

References:

1. Anderson, T. (2016). Theories for learning with emerging technologies.
2. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis.
3. Garrison, D. R., & Vaughan, N. (2017). Blended learning in higher education.



4. Graham, C. R. (2020). Current research in blended learning.
5. Hodges, C., et al. (2020). The difference between emergency remote teaching and online learning.
6. Hyland, K. (2016). Teaching and researching writing.
7. Moore, M. (2018). Online education: Principles of distance learning.
8. Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. (2014). Approaches and methods in language teaching.
9. Zheng, B. (2021). Student engagement in online learning environments.