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The Impact of Blended Learning on EFL Students' Motivation to Learn English: An Exploration of Students' Perceptions

Mr. Hamza Mohamed Abd Muftah

Abstract

This study explored ibyan EFL students' perceptions of the impact of blended learning on their motivation to learn English. A qualitative research design was employed, with ten university EFL students participating in semi-structured interviews. The results indicated that blended learning is perceived as a stronger motivator for learning English, and their motivation has significantly increased since its adoption by their teachers. It also revealed that Libyan EFL Students perceive blended learning as a more flexible, enjoyable, productive, active and accessible learning strategy compared to traditional face-to-face instruction. In addition, students identified Google Classroom, YouTube, WhatsApp, Google Meet, ELT websites, e-tests as the most effective digital learning tools in blended learning, contributing to their engagement and motivation in English language learning. The findings highlight the importance of teachers' support during the initial implementation of a blended learning strategy, as well as the clarity of blended learning course content and instructions.

Key Words: Blended Learning, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Motivation, EFL students.

1. Introduction

The emergence of digitalization and the rapid global shift towards the use of technology in various aspects of life have revolutionized the field of EFL education. This shift opened the doors for new learning models such as blended learning which combines digital learning with traditional classroom instruction. Blended learning is recognized as a significant pedagogical approach, as it provides flexible, equitable, creative, motivating and accessible learning opportunities for EFL learners. This new model has necessitated a transition from traditional classroom-based learning to technology-supported blended learning (Dziuban et al., 2018). Such a transition has influenced both learning and teaching processes by affecting pedagogy, infrastructure, teachers and learners.

From learners' perspectives, especially EFL learners, blended learning facilitates EFL instruction and makes it easier and more accessible for them. It also changes how EFL learners interact with learning materials (Huang al et. 2022; Suharsih & Wijayanti, 2021). However, for many developing countries, blended learning has adopted only recently for teaching English as a foreign language, mainly due to the emergence of Covid-19. In Libya, for instance, blended learning has become a core area of interest by both EFL teachers and students. This growing interest raises an important question regarding whether

blended learning serves as a driving force that motivates learners to acquire English language more effectively and provide unique opportunities that can significantly influence students' motivation to learn English.

The existing literature on the relationship between blended learning and motivation to learn English in the Libyan EFL context is very limited. Most Libyan researchers (AlManafi et al., 2023; Abdelatia, 2025) conducted studies to measure academic achievement. This gap highlights the need for a detailed investigation to better understand this relationship. Thus, this research aims to explore EFL students' perceptions of the impact of blended learning on their motivation to learn English language. This study primarily aims to explore and identify students' beliefs and experiences about the relationship between blended learning and motivation to learn English.

Study Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Explore EFL students' perceptions of the impact of blended learning on their motivation to learn English as a foreign language.
2. Identify the aspects of blended learning that EFL students perceive as the most effective in enhancing their engagement and motivation in English language learning.
3. Identify digital learning tools in blended learning that EFL students perceive as the most effective in enhancing their engagement and motivation in English language learning.

Research Questions

Q1. How do EFL students perceive the impact of online learning on their motivation to learn English?

Q2. Which aspects of blended learning do EFL students perceive as the most effective in enhancing their engagement and motivation in English language learning?

Q3. Which digital learning tools in blended learning do EFL students perceive as the most effective in enhancing their engagement and motivation in English language learning?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Blended Learning

Blended learning is broadly defined as a multi-dimensional teaching strategy that integrates traditional, digital, and online instructional processes to optimally meet the specific needs of learners (Durk et al., 2025; Angawi & Tasir, 2024). Blended learning is no longer merely a teaching procedure in which online and offline instruction is combined; rather, it is a pedagogical integration designed to create a flexible, productive, and student-centered learning environment. According to Mulenga and Shilongo (2024), blended learning is a pedagogically planned and adaptive instructional strategy that combines traditional, distance, digital, formal and informal learning modes to satisfy students' needs. From a socio-constructivist perspective, blended learning is defined as a transition from teacher-centered teaching to learner-centered teaching (Meunier et al., 2026). Thus, blended learning is an instructional strategy

combining traditional face-to-face, online and offline teaching approaches to meet the specific needs of students. Blended learning also serves as a vehicle for shifting from teacher-led learning to self-directed learning.

2.2 Motivation in EFL Learning

Motivation is a key predictor for success or failure in foreign language learning. Gardner (1985) defines motivation as "the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (as cited in Tuan, 2012, p. 24). According to Dörnyei (2001), motivation in an EFL context refers to a learner's desire and determination to learn English in classroom situations. It also refers to the extent to which a learner devotes time and effort to learning English, as well as how actively and persistently they engage in the classroom and overcome learning difficulties. Many Researchers have found that motivation is the primary initiator for the EFL learning and subsequently, the driving force for progress in foreign language acquisition and learning (Muftah, 2013; Alfaleh, Albasis & Mohamed, 2025; Farrokh & Hamtay, 2025; Paradowski, 2024).

Motivation is generally divided into two types: extrinsic and intrinsic (Brown, 2007; Dörnyei, 2001). EFL learners are often driven by either of these types according to their goal-oriented behavior, desires and attitudes towards the foreign language. Specifically, EFL learners tend to be intrinsically motivated when they have positive attitudes towards the target language and value its culture. On the other hand, they tend to be extrinsically motivated when they expect to obtain external reward such as a better career or a higher rank in their work or community (Brown, 2007; Dörnyei, 2001).

2.1.2 Blended Learning and EFL Students' Motivation

The influence of blended learning on students' motivation and achievement has been studied by many researchers. For example, the use of blended learning was found to broadly and effectively increase the learning motivation-both intrinsic and extrinsic-and English skills of EFL Indonesian students (Sihombing, et al. , 2024). Sucaromana (2013) found that university EFL students who were taught using blended learning had significantly higher levels of intrinsic motivation for learning English as a foreign language and a better attitude towards English as a subject. They also had greater satisfaction with the learning environment and atmosphere than the students who were taught using traditional face-to-face instruction. Similarly, other studies have reported that aspects of blended learning, such as flexibility, effectiveness and accessibility, as well as digital learning tools used in blended learning-such as WhatsApp, social media, online learning platforms and Skype-reduce EFL Arab students' anxiety and increase their motivation to learn English language (Jiang et al, 2023: Behforouz et al., 2021; Dirjal et al., 2020; Ali, 2020; Ali, 2017; Ali & Bin-Hady, 2019).

Luu & Luu (2024) found that Vietnamese EFL students engaged in blended learning classes showed a stronger desire for self-directed learning and greater enjoyment of the classes. Likewise, Al-Qudimi & Hameed (2024) reported that implementing a blended learning strategy in English language instruction enhances EFL Yemeni students' perceptions of blended learning effectiveness, potentially leading to increased engagement and motivation in learning. In their mixed methods study, Siregar and Triastuti (2025) found that EFL students showed significant improvements in their motivation to learn English

within a blended learning environment. In addition, combining traditional education with modern digital learning tools can enhance learning outcomes in English as a foreign language and improve EFL students' performance due to their strong learning motivation, which includes both intrinsic and extrinsic domains (Apoko & Chong, 2024; Challob & Eid, 2025).

. On the other hand, "blended learning was found to have a greater negative impact on foreign language classroom anxiety than face-to-face learning and e-learning, indicating that it has a greater impact on increasing self-motivation to lessen classroom anxiety" (Alghofaili, 2022, p. 287). Tohamba et al., (2022) also reported that EFL students experienced difficulties when studying online due to technical, technological and pedagogical issues, such as their inability to use smartphone functions, poor internet connections, and a lack of engagement and teachers' insufficient management of blended learning. Moreover, several researchers reported that online learning has a negative influence on EFL students' motivation due to a lack of social interaction, readiness to supervise such type of learning and organizational problems (Zaitun et al., 2021; Meşe & Sevilen, 2021).

As can be seen, there is no absolute consensus on the influence of blended learning on increasing EFL students' motivation. This may be attributable to various factors that should be taken into consideration when implementing blended learning strategy for teaching English as a foreign language.

The Most Effective Digital Learning Tools in Blended Learning Contributing to Libyan EFL Students' Motivation in English Language Learning

Previous studies have demonstrated that various aspects of blended learning influence EFL students' motivation and engagement in learning English. Access to online materials at students' own pace as well as the ability to review content repeatedly is widely seen as a key advantage of blended learning model. Well-designed blended learning content has also been shown to enhance EFL students' motivation and engagement. In addition, earlier research reports that learner autonomy, online learning tools, LMS platforms and digital media are perceived by EFL students as effective elements of blended learning (Adhikari, 2025; Al-Qudimi & Hameed, 2024; Sihombing et al., 2023; Mohammed et al., 2023). However, the literature also emphasized the crucial role of teachers and the importance of effective guidance in delivering productive and meaningful blended learning experiences (Cao et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2022; Istifci, 2016).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Methods and Design

In the current study, a qualitative research design was used to obtain an in-depth exploration of EFL students' perceptions of the impact of blended learning on their motivation to learn English Creswell (2010). Qualitative research is an effective methodological procedure in understanding a complex social phenomenon and ensuring an adequate dialog between the researchers and participants to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality (Cresswell, 2010).

3.3 Study Setting

The study conducted in the departments of English language at university of Zawia, Libya during the academic year 2024-2025.

3.4 Sampling Method and Participants

The sample of the study consisted of ten EFL students studying English as a foreign language in the Departments of English Language at the University of Zawia, Libya. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, which allowed the researcher to select participants who had relevant experience and knowledge related to the research problem. The participants included both females and males students who were enrolled in the third and fourth academic years.

3.5 Data Collection Tool

3.5.1 Semi-Structured Interview

A semi-structured interview was adopted as a data collection tool to gather in-depth information about the participants' beliefs, knowledge, and experiences regarding the research problem (Dornyei, 2007). The interview consisted of ten open-ended questions designed to investigate the research problem. Prior to starting the interview sessions, the researcher carried out a pilot study to assess the validity and reliability of the interview questions. The research obtained permission from participants to conduct the interviews and he assured them that the confidentiality of their responses would be maintained.

4. Date Analysis and Reporting

4.1 Data Analysis

4.1.1 Thematic View Analysis

A thematic analysis technique was employed to analyze the collected data. All audio recordings verbatim were transcribed. The transcripts were read and reviewed several times to gain a thorough understanding of the data. Then, the data were coded and segmented to represent specific themes. Finally, the meanings and implications of the identified themes were interpreted to draw conclusions about EFL students' perceptions of the impact of blended learning on EFL students' motivation to learn English.

4.1.2 Results

Blended Learning and Motivation

Participants believed that blended learning is a stronger motivator for learning English as a foreign language. For instance, the participants stated that blended learning is more flexible, joyful, productive, active and accessible than traditional face-to-face learning. They further explained that this approach enhances their self-paced learning and learning independence. They believe that these key aspects of blended learning motivate them to learn English more effectively. All the participants reported that their motivation to learn English has significantly increased since their teachers adopted blended learning. In conclusion, the participants believed that blended learning is more motivating than traditional learning because this strategy encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. The participants

indicated that blended learning offers more options to learn English and helps students improve their English skills more effectively through useful technological tools.

The Most Effective Digital Learning Tools in Blended Learning Contributing to Libyan EFL Students' Engagement and Motivation in English Language Learning

The participants stated that various technological tools are used by teachers to support blended learning. They consider Google Classroom, YouTube, WhatsApp, Google Meet, ELT websites, e-tests as the most effective digital learning tools in blended learning contributing to their engagement and motivation in English language learning. For example, the participants pointed out that online learning is a key element in blended learning strategy as it plays a crucial role in increasing learner autonomy and motivation in EFL learning. The Participants emphasized that using online learning, Google Classroom and Google Meet saves time and effort and mitigates negative affective factors related to traditional face-to-face learning such as anxiety, embarrassment, and fear of making mistakes.

Additionally, the participants emphasized the importance of teachers' support at the beginning of implementing a blended learning strategy as well as the clarity of blended learning course content and instructions. They believe that a lack of technical and pedagogical support for students during blended learning can negatively influence their performance negatively, particularly in terms of their affective state and knowledge acquisition.

5. Result Summary

1. Libyan EFL students perceive blended learning as a stronger motivator for learning English as a foreign language. They believe that their motivation to learn English has significantly increased since their teachers adopted blended learning.

2. Libyan EFL Students perceive blended learning as a more flexible, enjoyable, productive, active and accessible learning strategy compared to traditional face-to-face learning.

3. Libyan EFL students consider Google Classroom, YouTube, WhatsApp, Google Meet, ELT websites, e-tests as the most effective digital learning tools in blended learning, contributing to their engagement and motivation in English language learning.

4. They emphasized the importance of teachers' support at the beginning of implementing a blended learning strategy, as well as the clarity of blended learning course content and instructions.

5.1 Discussion

This research article aimed to explore Libyan EFL students' perceptions of the impact of blended learning on their motivation to learn English. The results of this study are compatible with the results of the previous studies. Consistent with previous studies (Siregar & Triastuti, 2025; Sihombing, et al. , 2024; Challob & Eid, 2025; Al-Qudimi & Hameed, 2024; Jiang et al, 2023: Behforouz et al., 2021) students reported that blended learning is perceived as a stronger motivator for learning English, and their motivation has significantly increased since its adoption by their teachers.

Regarding the most effective aspects of blended learning affecting their motivation positively, the results of this study also indicate that Libyan EFL Students perceive blended learning as a more flexible, enjoyable, productive, active and accessible learning strategy compared to traditional face-to-face instruction. This finding aligns with previous studies (Luu & Luu, 2024; Dirjal et al., Apoko & Chong, 2024; Ali, 2020; Ali & Bin-Hady, 2019; Ali, 2017), which reported that flexibility, enjoyment, effectiveness and accessibility are the key aspects of blended learning that reduce EFL Arab students' learning anxiety and increase their motivation to learn English.

In addition, the findings reveal that Libyan EFL students consider Google Classroom, YouTube, WhatsApp, Google Meet, ELT websites, e-tests as the most effective digital learning tools in blended learning, contributing to their engagement and motivation in English language learning. This conclusion confirms the results of Adhikari (2025), Al-Qudimi & Hameed (2024), Sihombing et al. (2023) and Mohammed et al. (2023). Consistent with previous studies (Cao et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2022; Istifci, 2016), students emphasized the importance of teachers' support at the beginning of implementing a blended learning strategy, as well as the clarity of blended learning course content and instructions. Thus, the findings of this study confirm previous studies and suggest that blended learning is an effective instructional strategy, positively contributing to EFL students' engagement and motivation in English language learning.

5.2 Conclusion

This research article aimed to explore Libyan EFL students' perceptions of the impact of blended learning on their motivation to learn English. The results showed that blended learning is perceived as a stronger motivator for learning English, and their motivation has significantly increased since its adoption by their teachers. It also revealed that Libyan EFL Students perceive blended learning as a more flexible, enjoyable, productive, active and accessible learning strategy compared to traditional face-to-face instruction. In addition, the findings indicate that students consider Google Classroom, YouTube, WhatsApp, Google Meet, ELT websites, e-tests as the most effective digital learning tools in blended learning, contributing to their engagement and motivation in English language learning. Libyan EFL students emphasized the importance of teachers' support at the initial stage of implementing a blended learning strategy, as well as the clarity of blended learning course content and instructions. The importance of the study lies in its implications for educators and higher education institutions adopting the blended learning instruction as a replacement for traditional face-to-face instruction. Furthermore, more research is needed to investigate the impact of blended learning on English learning motivation, and the challenges Libyan EFL students face when participating in blended learning.

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