

## Investigating the Impact of Blended Learning on Kurdish EFL Learners' Speaking Skills at Two Selected Universities in Kurdistan

Mohammed Hussein Mohammed<sup>1</sup>, Himdad A. Muhammad<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of English Language, Faculty of Arts, Soran University <sup>2</sup> Department of English Language, College of Basic Education, Salahaddin University

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31918/twejer.2471.40>

Published: 21/07/2024

### Abstract

The current study aims to investigate the impact of blended learning on learners' speaking skills. Blended learning combines traditional or face-to-face learning with online or electronic learning. The study compares students' performance in traditional and blended classes. The samples were 190 second-stage students in the academic year 2021-2022 selected from the English departments at Soran and Salahaddin Universities, who studied. The study used a quasi-experimental method to collect data. Based on the mentioned method, there are two groups, the control group, which follows the traditional method and the experimental group, which is taught by blended learning. The results reveal that students' speaking skills improved in both groups. However, the students' performance who experienced blended learning in the experimental group showed better performance than those who studied the traditional method in the control group, one of the reasons could be the accessibility to authentic material.

**Keywords:** *Blended Learning, Learners' Performance, Speaking Skill, Traditional Teaching.*

## **Investigating the Impact of Blended Learning on Kurdish EFL Learners' Speaking Skills at Two Selected Universities in Kurdistan.**

**Mohammed Hussein Mohammed**

**Himdad A. Muhammad**

Department of English Language, Faculty of Arts, Soran University  
Department of English Language, College of Basic Education, Salahaddin University-  
Hawler

[Mohammed.mohammed@soran.edu.iq](mailto:Mohammed.mohammed@soran.edu.iq)

[Himdad.muhammad@su.edu.krd](mailto:Himdad.muhammad@su.edu.krd)

### **Abstract:**

The current study aims to investigate the impact of blended learning on learners' speaking skills. Blended learning combines traditional or face-to-face learning with online or electronic learning. The study compares students' performance in traditional and blended classes. The samples were 190 second-stage students in the academic year 2021-2022 selected from the English departments at Soran and Salahaddin Universities, who studied. The study used a quasi-experimental method to collect data. Based on the mentioned method, there are two groups, the control group, which follows the traditional method and the experimental group, which is taught by blended learning. The results reveal that students' speaking skills improved in both groups. However, the students' performance who experienced blended learning in the

experimental group showed better performance than those who studied the traditional method in the control group, one of the reasons could be the accessibility to authentic material.

**Keywords:** Blended Learning, Learners' Performance, Speaking Skill, Traditional Teaching.

## 1. Introduction:

Three technological fields can be employed for education (Skrypnyk et al., 2015):

- Information technology makes education computer-based and is used for personal use and supporting access to information for academic purposes.
- Communication technologies can be learning management systems to use software platforms for sharing content.
- Social technology encourages collaborative learning through bilateral communication techniques like gathering and exchanging information and fostering relationships.

Brown (2001) believes that speaking should be taught in an authentic way that leads to practising activities in a real-life situation which makes the students use different and more advanced vocabulary and sentence patterns verbally step by step, meanwhile, teachers should continuously monitor students' progress and performance to diagnose the weakness of the course and check the learning outcomes.

Speaking is an essential skill that requires many activities and work to be improved because students need to express themselves and convey their messages clearly through speaking skills. According to Blau et al. (2020), as cited in (Hasanah and Malik, 2020), technological advances impact all aspects of students' learning, including cognitive, affective, and attitude aspects. Further, students' progress abounds to remove time and access obstacles; therefore, blended learning, a combination of face-to-face and electronic learning, provides students with many learning materials that help them improve the quality of their learning.

## 2. Historical Background

Education has benefited from blended learning (Tandoh, Flis, & Blankson, 2014). Garrison and Vaughan, (2008) claim that even though it was first used in the workplace, it was found to be very useful in the education sector in general and teaching in particular. Since many elements of blended learning may be used in the teaching and learning process, it was later adopted in higher education.

Maise (2006), as cited in (Geraldine, 2011), states; that despite the acceptance of blended learning in business, higher education, and English language teaching (ELT), there are still disagreements over its definition because there is no universal agreement. By definition, all learning is blended. It is a combination of technology and in-person training used appropriately to maximize learning results and save expenses (Bandos, 2006). When more than one media is used to enhance learning outcomes, it is referred to as blended learning, according to Singh and Reed (2001), as cited in Tomlinson and Whittaker (2013). Blended learning is not restricted to online and face-to-face classes, but it includes using any electronic or online platform to enhance the learning process.

According to Pappas (2015), businesses and academic organizations wanted a mechanism to monitor the development of their participants. The first Learning Management System (henceforth, LMS) was implemented but lacked modern features. However, it raised the standard of remote learning and allowed corporations to monitor their students' enrollment performance and progress. The world has experienced rapid technological advancement over the past two decades. Computers are now almost universally accessible, and at the same time, their features and qualities have improved. Users can use them for various purposes, and connecting to the internet has become possible, allowing everyone to connect to the virtual world. The blended and eLearning sectors benefit from the advancement. The space available to instructors and students was more extensive to a considerable extent, and CD-ROMs could be abandoned in favour of uploading materials and assignments to designated sites (LMS) on the internet. Due to the accessibility and simplicity of utilizing, downloading, and uploading resources, web-based learning has quickly gained popularity (Skrypnyk et al., 2015).

Briefly, employing blended learning in business was done to save time, effort, and money, but it might also be used to improve learning outcomes when a foreign language is being taught. The results of more studies in this area show that blended learning is stimulating, and it is clear that many students are

enthusiastic about using technology. The first of these is motivation, which supports the use of blended learning in the instruction of foreign languages. The second factor is engagement, which is far superior to traditional paper-based projects to enhance learning. The last reason is feedback, which also benefits language learning effectiveness. Students receiving valuable feedback improves learning outcomes (The Virtual Training Team, 2019).

### 3. Theoretical Background:

Numerous learning theories have been developed due to many years of study and observation, and they all demonstrate how different people learn. Individuals can be categorized into three groups based on their learning, according to Bersin (2004).

Visual Learning Method is for visual learners, who make up between 50 and 70 percent of learners. The easiest way for visual learners to learn is to visualize the images, diagrams, etc. They also prefer to take notes while studying textual material on graphs or whiteboards.

The auditory Learning Method is the second group, which includes 20 to 40% of all learners. When attending seminars or lectures, for example, this type of learner can absorb the most information; they prefer to take notes later.

The kinesthetic Learning Method is the final category. The population of students who fall into this category is the smallest, comprising between 5 and 20 per cent of all students. These students learn best when they copy and attempt to perform activities; they can also learn by touching and doing.

Blended learning strives to give students an experience of contemporary classrooms and encourage active learning, according to scholars and authorities such as Alsalhi, et al. (2021) and Turpin (2018). Constructivism is an excellent theory to establish the fundamentals of blended learning since it offers students a variety of learning opportunities and resources to complete tasks and challenges. Constructive approach principles are practical for blended learning. Contractive approach principles emphasise and motivate students to engage actively through a cooperative learning strategy in problem-based activities in which students can think critically and reflect on each other's ideas (Slavin, 1994) as cited in (Bazelais and Doleck, 2018).

According to Hofmann (2018), many instructors who have taught in blended classes believe that blended learning has three properties: educational treatment, the power of technological tools, and the environment. Educational treatment in blended learning refers to a combination of traditional face-to-face instruction and online learning experiences, such as webinars, discussion forums, and multimedia resources. The power of technological tools refers to the use of technology in a blended class to support and improve learning, such as learning management systems, video conferencing software, and online collaboration tools. The learning environment in a blended class includes both physical and virtual spaces, such as the traditional classroom and the online learning environment. A properly designed learning environment should encourage interaction, collaboration, and engagement between students and instructors. At the same time, modern blended learning includes more properties and attention to every learning feature, such as what, how, when, and where people learn. In other words, the modern one is about learning all the time.

Blended learning provides various opportunities for teachers and students in teaching and learning. Teachers have to be familiar with the principles of teaching and blended learning. Moreover, the knowledge of learning theories is constructive for teachers to prepare the required teaching materials and select suitable methods, activities, and assessment ways to fulfil students' needs and actively engage them in the learning process.

#### 3.1. Blended Learning:

In recent years many educators have tried to define blended learning, and there are many definitions that one may come across while searching for blended learning, one of the definitions states;

“Blended learning is the most logical and natural evolution of our learning agenda. It suggests an elegant solution to the challenges of tailoring learning and development to the needs of individuals. It represents 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. It can be supported and enhanced by using the wisdom and one-to-one contact of personal coaches.” (Thorne. 2003:16)

Another definition defines blended learning as follows;

"Blended learning is the combination of active, engaged learning online combined with active, engaged learning offline to provide students with more control over time; blended learning is the place, pace, and path of their learning" (Tucker, 2022: 27).

Blended learning is an instructional strategy that blends traditional in-person teaching with electronic or online learning. The method leverages technology to improve and reinforce teaching and learning and can consist of a variety of techniques like multimedia resources, online discussions, webinars, and other forms of digital communication.

### 3.2.Models of Blended Learning:

There are various models and elaborations of blended learning models; according to Clayton Christensen's study, the majority of these courses fall under one of four categories:

1. **Rotation model:** In this blended learning strategy, classes are alternately held online and in person. The teacher may choose how they will meet, or there may be a set timetable. Online, whole-group, project discussion, small-group, or in-person assignments are most likely part of the sessions. Most students are aware that they should rotate as directed by their lecturers. The four sub-models that make up the rotation model are as follows:

**a. Station Rotation:** The students in this model rotate around all of the stations in the classroom, whether they are group projects, face-to-face interactions, or online tasks.

**b. Lab Rotation** - In this model, online sessions are conducted by students in computer labs.

**c. Flipped classroom:** in this model, the environments foster active learning. In this strategy, students obtain information about the subjects they will study via online or electronic platforms before entering the classroom. The most use of class time and in-person meetings is the aim so that students can practice the exercises and exchange ideas on the information they have learned.

**d. Individual Rotation** - In this approach, each student can receive a customized schedule from the teachers and is not required to switch between several teaching modes, resulting in tailored instruction (Christensen Institute, 2015).

**2- Flex Model** - This learning strategy places a lot of emphasis on online education as the foundation and pillar of education. Students will complete and submit their work and assignments online, and teachers will advise and tutor them in the classroom. This mixed model promotes individualized learning where students can meet their unique needs by getting help from teachers (Thompson, 2016).

**3. A La Carte Model** - Students may receive online courses from studying during or even after school. The lectures can be recorded by the teachers and distributed to the students. Activities may also be completed off-site and subsequently submitted.

**4- Enriched Virtual Model:** With this model, students attend lectures in person before finishing their coursework remotely at home. Because students interact with their teachers in person each day, this concept differs from the flipped classroom. Additionally, this paradigm is not entirely online because face-to-face learning sessions are mandatory rather than voluntary (Christensen Institute, 2015).

Farmer (2020) classifies six models of blended learning. Guided lab time involves individual or group work with instructors monitoring and providing feedback. Integrated lab time has synchronous lab work and asynchronous presentations with feedback at the end of the session. Capstone or independent learning encourages student autonomy with support if needed. Project-based courses allow students to work individually or in teams to discuss real-life issues with feedback from instructors and peers. Self-directed courses are for advanced students who engage asynchronously in group discussions, peer review, research, and group assignments.

The station rotation model is one of the leading blended learning models suitable for the current study context. According to the model, students move through all learning stations, including online classes or assignments, face-to-face classes, etc. Students receive the resources through online sessions or electronic

platforms and then practice or show the performance in face-to-face sessions. The other model suitable for the Kurdistan universities context is the flipped classroom.

#### 4. Previous studies:

There have been studies related to the use of blended learning in different places of the world. A selection of the most relevant ones to the current study are going to be presented below:

In their work, Isda et al. (2021), entitled; "The Effect of Using Blended Learning Model on Enhancing Students' Speaking Skills in Senior High Schools", aimed to examine students' performance and level of differences in speaking skills in terms of grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and pronunciation. The study's design was quasi-experimental, which means the study used a pretest and post-test to collect the data; the study's findings revealed that the blended learning method positively impacted students' speaking skills.

Handoko and Ayumi (2021) conducted research entitled "Teaching Writing in a Blended Environment". The research aimed to show how a blended learning environment can be implemented in teaching writing skills. The study samples comprised 90 students who offered English Communication at Universitas Andalas, Indonesia. The participants break down into two groups experimental and control groups. In the experimental group, the researchers divided the face-to-face and online sessions into three phases; brainstorming, drafting and final writing. The findings reported that students who studied in the experimental group and received a blended method significantly improved in the process of writing essays.

Ehsanifard et al. (2020) conducted research under the title; "The Impact of Blended Learning on Speaking Ability and Engagement" aimed to investigate the effectiveness of students speaking performance and engagement in a blended environment. The researchers used a mixed method to collect data. The participants were 60 language learners who studied in a language centre in Tehran, Iran. They put students into two experimental and control groups, the former receiving blended instruction and the latter receiving traditional instruction. At the beginning of the course, the researchers used the Oxford Placement Test to know about the student's overall ability, and for both the pretest and post-test, they used the IELTS speaking exam. Also, to investigate students' engagement, researchers used a questionnaire to collect data. The findings revealed that the participants' speaking performance who studied blended learning was better than those who received the traditional method. Also, the results showed that blended learning instruction provided more engagement opportunities for students' participation and practice.

Another research entitled; "The Effects of Blended Learning on Thai University Students' Speaking Ability, Learning Motivation and Perceptions" was done by Kantisa and Sitthitikul (2020). The study examines the effects of blended learning on 102 Thai university students' speaking skills, their motivation and students' and teachers' perceptions toward blended learning. The paper used a mixed method to collect the data, and the paper used tests (speaking pretest and post-test) to investigate students' verbal ability and to investigate students' motivation. A questionnaire has been used. Also, semi-structured interviews were used to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions of blended learning. The paper's result showed a positive impact of blended learning on students' speaking skills. Results prove that students were highly motivated and that teachers and students perceive applying blended learning positively.

Ginaya, Rejeki, and Astuti (2018) conducted research entitled: "The Effects of Blended Learning on Students' Speaking Ability: A Study of Utilizing Technology to Strengthen Traditional Instruction". The study aimed to explore the effect of blended learning on students' verbal ability by applying WebQuest project tasks. The participants were 51 students at a public higher education establishment in Bali who studied in the Tourism and Travel Business diploma program. The researchers used different tools to collect data, such as tests (pretest and post-test), planning, action, and observation. They were randomly selected and assigned to experimental and control groups. The researchers proposed to blend WebQuest application within instruction because the data showed that the group who received the treatment, blended learning instruction outperformed the control group and had higher motivation and interest.

The current study differs from the previous studies in various aspects. First, it takes two different universities for the study to compare the effectiveness of blended learning on students' performance. Second, the study focuses on productive skills while other research concentrates on one skill or students' overall performance.

## 5. Methodology and Research Design:

This study investigated the impact of blended learning instruction on students' speaking skills by comparing a blended learning group with a traditional one. Also, the study hypothesis is that the blended learning method improves students' speaking performance because students practice activities inside and outside the classroom since such a learning environment is not available in the traditional learning method.

The current section is about the method and the process of study. The section introduces the research design, methods, study sample, tools, and procedures. Then, the validation and reliability of the tools used and ethical considerations are mentioned.

### 5.1.Method:

To achieve the aims of the study, the quasi-experimental design is used. The study uses a quantitative method; according to Creswell, (2009), the quantitative method encompasses the procedures used for gathering, examining, comprehending, and stating the study results. In both survey and experimental research, particular approaches are utilized to determine a sample and population, specify the inquiry methodology, collect and analyze data, present the findings, draw conclusions, and give the research in a manner that conforms to a survey or experimental study.

"Communication" is the module that second-year students at two universities of Soran and Salahaddin study and selected in this study. Communication incorporates productive and receptive skills; only speaking skills are singled out to be investigated in the current work. The reason behind choosing this module was the flexibility of the module and the number of diverse speaking activities that can be covered during the module session; meanwhile, there are many collaborative activities that students can practice offline or online. Further, students can use the Learning Management System (LMS) to upload the materials and resources or submit their assignments and homework. According to the study's design, two groups of students were designed. The first group experienced the traditional method, the control group, and the other group experienced the blended learning method, called the experimental group. The two groups were tested before the course and at the end of the course to gauge their progress.

### 5.2.The Sample of the Study:

The study was conducted at Soran and Salahaddin Universities during the fall season of the academic year 2021-2022. The target population was second-year students which were 190 students who enrolled in the "Communication" module at the Colleges of Education and Arts, English Departments, the experimental group consisted of 100 students and the control group consisted of 90 students. The students at Soran University were divided into three groups, and Salahaddin University was divided into two groups.

### 5.3.Validation

Measuring what is supposed to be measured is validity. Any research methodology must include validity because it raises the quality of the work; invalid works are useless (Cohen et al. 2007). In this study, an expert committee was convened to ensure the tools' validity and make the required corrections and improvements (Appendix 1).

### 5.4.Reliability:

The consistency of the measures is what reliability aims for. Reliability is attained if a question is asked frequently and the response is expected to be the same. Research reliability can demonstrate the degree of measurement bias (Pandey and Pandey, 2015).

To achieve reliability of the test, the results of both examiners were calculated to check whether there were significant differences between them.

Table 1. Reliability of the Test

|  | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--|------|----------------|-----------------|
|  |      |                |                 |

|        |            |       |      |      |
|--------|------------|-------|------|------|
| Pair 1 | Examiner 1 | 3.405 | .845 | .101 |
|        | Examiner 2 | 2.862 | .746 | .089 |

The mean value of the first examiner's results is 3.405, and the same value for the second examiner is 2.862. The test is reliable if the P value of both tests is  $>0.05$ , i.e. greater than the significant level 0.05; this means that there is no significant difference between the answers of the sample; this means that the test items are reliable (See table 1).

### 5.5.Ethical Consideration:

To begin with, it is crucial to consider ethical aspects. Paying close attention to ethical considerations is essential because it can assist researchers in ensuring scientific integrity, transparency, and trust in the findings and conclusions related to the research topic (Cohen et al., 2007).

To adhere to ethical standards, the researcher implements specific measures to safeguard the confidentiality of participants' personal information and to anonymize data to the greatest extent possible to protect their privacy during and after the study. Moreover, the researcher ensures that the participants are fully aware of the nature of the study and their right to withdraw their participation at any time. To achieve this, a consent form is provided, which clearly and comprehensively explains this information, and participants are allowed to ask any questions before deciding to participate.

## 6. Data Collection Tool:

According to Pandey and Pandey (2015), any research uses different tools to collect data, and these tools will be selected and used based on research objectives. The test is the tool that this study used to gather the required data.

### 6.1.Test:

Wewer (2020) states that the test is one of the most frequent and crucial tools for collecting data. Depending on the goals of the study, there are several test types. Some researchers make use of ready-made or standardized examinations. Other researchers adapt an existing test to fit the goals of the research.

According to Fluchers and Davidson, (2007), a well-designed test can assist the researcher in obtaining accurate and objective data for the study's analysis. The current study used a pretest and post-test to assess student's performance at the beginning of the course and the end of the course. And then compare the results of both tests to investigate the effect of the instructions on students' performance.

The speaking test that was used in this study covers almost all the related areas of speaking skills, such as; vocabulary, stress, intonation, grammar, etc. The test includes 20 questions to assess students' skills in diverse speaking skills (Appendix 2). The two examiners asked some of the questions, and the conversation lasted 3-5 minutes for each responder.

## 7. Piloting:

Pilot studies are the small-scale use of the tools before the application on a large scale. Before employing the tools on a broad scale, pilot studies are conducted to evaluate their completeness, clarity, usability, and management (Leavy 2017).

The current paper employed (50) students as pilot samples to evaluate the administration and clarity of the test items before it was applied, and then necessary changes were subsequently made.

## 8. Rubric

A rubric is an objective way of assessing someone's outcomes. The rubric works as a guide consisting of several standardized criteria to evaluate students' outcomes. Moreover, rubrics are essential in developing learning (Wolf and Stevens, 2017) and make the teaching process transparent.

The current study used a rubric for assessing the speaking tests. The rubric was taken from another source and modified and adapted to fit the study's aims. The rubric that was used covered whole areas that the tests aim to assess; using rubrics makes the process safe and avoids examiners' subjectivity (Appendix 3).

## 9. Data Analysis:

The section on data analysis presents the analysis of the test results. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was utilized to analyze the test data. Regarding the control group, two independent sample t-tests were used to compare students' performance before and after receiving the instruction. Also, two other independent samples t-tests were used to measure the student's performance in the experimental group before and after receiving the treatment.

Table 2: statistical description of students' performance in the experimental group

| Experimental Group | N   | Mean   | Std. Error | Std. deviation |
|--------------------|-----|--------|------------|----------------|
| Pretest            | 100 | 28.130 | 0.555      | 5.550          |
| Posttest           | 100 | 33.290 | 0.749      | 7.497          |

The results in Table 1 show the students' speaking performance before receiving the instruction and after receiving the instruction who received the treatment. The findings show that the mean of students' speaking performance in the pretest examination is 28.130, and the standard deviation is 5.550, students received the instruction, blended learning. The post-test results show dramatic progress in students' speaking performance after receiving the instruction, the mean increased to 33.290, and the standard deviation became 7.497.

Table 3: statistical description of students' performance in the control group

| Control Group | N  | Mean   | Std. Error | Std. deviation |
|---------------|----|--------|------------|----------------|
| Pretest       | 90 | 34.744 | 0.874      | 8.293          |
| Posttest      | 90 | 37.288 | 0.782      | 7.418          |

The results in Table 3 indicate the students' speaking performance before and after receiving the instruction who received traditional instruction. The findings reveal that the mean of students' speaking performance in the pretest examination is 34.744, and the standard deviation is 8.293. Students received instruction in blended learning. The post-test results show considerable progress in students' speaking performance after receiving the instruction, the mean increased to 37.288, and the standard deviation became 7.418.

Table 4: statistical description of students' performance in both groups

|          | Group        | N   | Mean   | Std. Error | Std. deviation |
|----------|--------------|-----|--------|------------|----------------|
| Pretest  | Experimental | 100 | 28.130 | 0.555      | 5.550          |
|          | Control      | 90  | 34.744 | 0.874      | 8.293          |
| Posttest | Experimental | 100 | 33.290 | 0.749      | 7.497          |
|          | Control      | 90  | 37.288 | 0.782      | 7.418          |

Table 4 shows the descriptive analysis of both groups' results before and after receiving the instruction. The results show that students' speaking performance in the pretest is 28.130 for the experimental group and 34.744 for the control group, respectively. The essential part of the study is receiving the instruction. The study aims to investigate the impact of blended learning instruction on students' speaking performance and then compare them with students who received traditional instruction. The mean of post-test results is 33.290 for the experimental group and 37.288 for the control group.

## 10. Discussion:

The study results show that students' performance in both groups progressed; moreover, in both groups, students practised different activities while receiving the instruction. Still, the students speaking abilities in the blended learning method improved more than in the traditional group. As Haerazi et al. (2019) state, practising various activities, such as watching videos and engaging in discussion, positively impacts students' speaking abilities.

Different reasons could lead to improving students' speaking performance in blended learning, one of which is motivation. One of the advantages of using technology is motivating and encouraging students to

participate in class activities individually or in groups (Freeman and Anderson, 2011). Moreover, blended learning provides students with practising and learning from different activities and resources, which fosters learners' involvement in the learning process

Students receive a variety of projects and homework during the treatment process, demonstrating that learning was not simply limited to the classroom by allowing students to practice online and outside of class. They could then present their work to the class, which shows how the blended learning approach helps students grow and evolve their skills. The authentic resources provided to students' Learning Management Systems (LMS) for practice and submission are also well-liked by them. Additionally, LMS enabled teachers to constantly engage with students and submit pertinent course materials for them.

The findings reveal that despite students' progress in both groups, blended learning provides and creates more learning opportunities for students to practice various language activities. Blended instruction maximizes students' communication and involvement inside and outside the classroom in online and offline activities, students find new ways of interacting and practising the activities with their instructors and peers. Moreover, it encourages students to talk in different situations, increasing their speaking ability (Hojnacki, 2015, as cited in Ehsanifard et al., 2020).

The findings of this study are the findings of Isda et al. (2021) research that claims that blended learning had a positive impact on students' speaking abilities. Moreover, Ehsanifard et al. (2020) research supports the study's results, which claim that utilizing blended learning instruction helps students' engagement and provides more practice. Further, the findings match the findings of Kantisa and Sitthitikul (2020), who claim that blended learning motivates students to participate in class activities.

## 11. Conclusions and Recommendations:

Blended learning provides more learning opportunities for students inside and outside their classrooms. They will be more motivated and engaged in learning when they do so. It also helps students to depend on themselves by analyzing the received knowledge and constructing new information based on their background. The results show that the traditional teaching method is less effective than the blended learning method, as the experimental group performed better than the control group after receiving the instructions. Also, the results reveal that blended learning positively impacts students' speaking performance, so the researcher recommends using blended learning in speaking classes to maximize students' engagement and participation.

## 12. References:

- Bazelaïs, P., Doleck, T. (2018). Investigating the impact of blended learning on academic performance in a first-semester college physics course. *J. Comput. Educ.* 5, 67–94. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40692-018-0099-8>
- Bersin, J. (2004). *The Blended Learning Book Best Practices, Proven Methodologies, and Lessons Learned*. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.
- Bonk, C. J., & Graham, C. R. (2006). *The handbook of blended learning: Global perspectives, local designs*. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer Publishing.
- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman Inc
- Christensen Institute (2015). Blended learning definitions. Retrieved from <https://www.christenseninstitute.org/blended-learning-definitions-and-models/>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education*. Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

- Farmer, H. (2020) 6 Models for Blended Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Course Delivery, EDUCAUSE Review, 18 August, Retrieved at 12 Dec. 2022 from; <https://er.educause.edu/blogs/2020/8/6-models-for-blended-synchronous-and-asynchronous-online-course-delivery>
- Flucher, G. & Davidson, F. (2007). *Language Testing and Assessment An Advanced Resource Book*. New York. Routledge.
- Freeman, L.D. & Anderson, M. (2011). *Techniques & Principles in Language Teaching*. New York. Oxford University Press.
- Ehsanifard, E., Ghapanchi, Z., & Afsharrad, M. (2020). The Impact of Blended Learning on Speaking Ability and Engagement. *Journal of Asia TEFL*. 17(1): 253-260.
- Garrison, D. R., & Vaughan, N. D. (2008). *Blended Learning in Higher Education: Framework, Principles, and Guidelines*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Geraldine, T. (2011, 4-7 July). This thing is called blended learning - a definition and planning approach. Research and Development in Higher Education: Reshaping Higher Education, 34, Gold Coast, Australia. <http://hdl.handle.net/10072/42960>
- Ginaya, G., Rejeki, I. N. M., & Astuti, N. N. S. (2018). The effects of blended learning on students' speaking ability: A study of utilizing technology to strengthen the conventional instruction. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 4(3), 1–14. Retrieved from <https://sloap.org/journals/index.php/ijllc/article/view/158>
- Haerazi, H., Prayati, Z., & Vikasari, R. M. (2019). Practising contextual teaching and learning (CTL) approach to improve students' reading comprehension about motivation. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 8(1), 139-146. <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v8i1.2011>
- Handoko, H. & Ayumi, A. (2021). Teaching Writing in Blended Environment. *Journal Arbitrer*. 8(2). 197-206. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25077/ar.8.2.197-206.2021>
- Hasanah, H. & Malik, M. N. (2020). Blended learning in improving students' critical thinking and communication skills at University. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*. 15(5), 1295 - 1306. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v15i5.5168>
- Hofmann, J. (2018). *Blended Learning*. Alexandria: ATD Press.
- Isda, I. D., Purwati, P., & Imran, I. (2021). the Effect of Using Blended Learning Model on Enhancing Students' Speaking Skill in Senior High Schools. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 9 (1), 92. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v9i1.2921>
- Kantisa, P. & Sitthitikul, P. (2020). The Effects of Blended Learning on Thai University Students' Speaking Ability, Learning Motivation and Perceptions. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*. 17(4). 1377-1391.
- Leavy, P. (2017). *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Molina-Azorin, F.J. (2016). Mixed methods research: An opportunity to improve our studies and our research skills. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*. 25 (2). 37-38.
- N. R. Alsalhi, S. Al-Qatawneh, M. Eltahir, and K. Aqel, "Does Blended Learning Improve the Academic Achievement of Undergraduate Students in the Mathematics Course? A Case Study in Higher Education," *Eurasia J. Math. Sci. Technol. Educ.* 17(3). 1–14, 2021, doi: 10.29333/EJMSTE/10781.
- Pandey, P. and Pandey, M.M. (2015) *Research Methodology: Tools and Techniques*. Bridge Center, Romania.
- Pappas, Ch. (2015). The History of Blended Learning. *eLearning Industry*. Retrieved on 10 Nov. 2022 from: <https://elearningindustry.com/history-of-blended-learning>
- Skrypnyk, O., Joks, S., Jovanovic, V., Dawson, S., Gasevic, D., & Siemens, G. (2015). *The History and State of Blended Learning*. Alberta: Athabasca University.

- Tandoh, K., Flis, N., & Blankson, J. (2014). Blended Learning: History, Implementation, Benefits, and Challenges in Higher Education. In L. Kyei-Blankson & E. Ntuli (Eds.), *Practical Applications and Experiences in K-20 Blended Learning Environments* (pp. 18-27). IGI Global.  
<https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-4912-5.ch002>
- The virtual training team, (2019, Sep. 24). *The History of Blended Learning*. Retrieved on 8 Nov. 2022 from: <https://www.thevirtualtrainingteam.com/what-we-think/the-history-of-blended-learning/>
- Thompson, J. (2016, Feb. 12). *6 Blended Learning Models: When Blended Learning Is What's Up For Successful Students*. ELearning Industry. Retrieved on 23. Sep. 2022 from <https://elearningindustry.com/6-blended-learning-models-blended-learning-successful-students>
- Thorne, K. (2003). *Blended Learning: How to Integrate Online and Traditional Learning*. London, UK: Kogan Page Limited
- Tomlinson, B., & Whittaker, C., (2013). *Blended Learning in English language teaching: Course design and implementation*. London. British Council.
- Tucker, C. R., (2022). *The Complete Guide to Blended Learning*. Indiana: Solution Tree Press. Retrieved on 12.Dec. 2022, from; [https://issuu.com/mm905/docs/complete\\_guide\\_to\\_blended\\_learning\\_the\\_look-insid](https://issuu.com/mm905/docs/complete_guide_to_blended_learning_the_look-insid)
- Turpin, C. (2018). *Blended Learning and Its Effect On Student Achievement: An Action Research Study*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved on 13 Nov. 2022 from <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/5104>
- Wewer, T. (2020). Assessment of Young Learners' English Proficiency in Bilingual Content Instruction (CLIL) in Finland: Practices, Challenges, and Points for Development. In deBoer, M. & Leontejev, D. (Eds). *Assessment and Learning in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Classrooms Approaches and Conceptualizations*. (pp. 137-167). Springer Nature Switzerland <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-54128-6>
- Wolf, K. & Stevens, E. (2007). The role of Rubrics in advancing and Assessing Students' Learning. *The Journal of Effective Teaching*. 7(1), 3-14. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1055646.pdf>

#### Appendix (1): Jury members

| No. | Name                  | Title               | University            |
|-----|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1   | Dr. Nada Jabar Abbas  | Assistant Professor | Salahaddin University |
| 2   | Mr. Lazgin Barany     | Assistant Professor | Dohuk University      |
| 3   | Dr. Salam Nema Hakeem | Assistant Professor | Salahaddin University |

|   |                             |                     |                       |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 4 | Dr. Hoshang Faruq Jawad     | Assistant Professor | Sulimany University   |
| 5 | Dr. Dlakshsan Yousif Othman | Assistant Professor | Salahaddin University |
| 6 | Dr. Tahsin Hussein Rasul    | Lecturer            | Salahaddin University |

#### Appendix (2): Oral Exam Items

1. Could you tell me about your family?
2. How do you share housework in your family?
3. Do you think children should help with the housework? Why and how? / Why not?
4. What kind of clothes do you like to wear?
5. Do you try to follow the latest fashion? How? / Why not?
6. What kind of people do you like to spend time together with?
7. Could you describe the area where you live?
8. Could you describe the home you would like to have in the future?
9. What do you think? How can you use your English in the future?
10. How is it best to learn English? What has worked for you? Why?
11. What do you like most about learning languages?
12. Could you tell me about the job you would like to have in the future?
13. Would you like to be self-employed or an employee? Why?
14. How are your weekdays different from weekends and holidays?
15. What kind of holiday do you prefer and why?
16. Could you tell me about a film you have seen recently?
17. What are your favourite places for going out?

18. What does music mean to you?
19. Tell me what you read. Where and how often do you read that/those?
20. What technological devices would you not like to live without? Why?

**What do you think about the following? (at least 1 min.)**

- Social networks- advantages and disadvantages
- Education system in Kurdistan
- Blended vs traditional learning
- Travel brings new experiences
- Reading opens up your mind
- Habits of successful people

### Appendix (3): Speaking Rubric

Rater: \_\_\_\_\_

Student code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

| Criteria                                                 | <b>4</b><br><i>Excellent</i>                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>3</b><br><i>Good</i>                                                                                                     | <b>2</b><br><i>Fair</i>                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>1</b><br><i>Poor</i>                                                                                                                                      | Score |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>TASK COMPLETION &amp; COMPREHENSIBILITY (CLARITY)</b> | Completes task by elaborating on the theme, with a high level of detail and/or creativity<br>Response is readily comprehensible; and requires no interpretation on the part of the listener. | Completes tasks appropriately. Response is comprehensible; and requires minimal interpretation on the part of the listener. | Partially completes task; lacks important information or response is too basic.<br>Some parts of the response are comprehensible; others require interpretation on the part of the listener. | Task minimally complete. Provides little or no information.<br>Most parts of the response are not comprehensible to the listener.                            |       |
| <b>FLUENCY &amp; PRONUNCIATION</b>                       | Thoughts expressed completely with few pauses or hesitation.<br>Sounds natural                                                                                                               | Some hesitation but manages to continue and complete thoughts.<br>Sounds somewhat natural.                                  | Speech is choppy and/or slow with frequent pauses, most thoughts are complete.<br>Some problems with pronunciation/intonation may interfere with communication.                              | Speech halting and uneven with long pauses or incomplete thoughts.<br>Multiple problems with pronunciation/intonation that may interfere with communication. |       |
| <b>CREATIVITY</b>                                        | They use creative content all the time and a variety of sentences. Their dramatization is great.                                                                                             | They use creative content many times and a variety of sentences. Their dramatization is very good.                          | They use creative content sometimes and a variety of sentences. Their dramatization is good.                                                                                                 | Students did not use creative content. Their dramatization is poor.                                                                                          |       |
| <b>VOCABULARY</b>                                        | Rich and varied use of vocabulary.                                                                                                                                                           | Vocabulary conveys appropriate meaning most of the time; appropriate for the level.                                         | Vocabulary does not convey meaning some of the time; too basic for the level.                                                                                                                | Vocabulary does not convey meaning most of the time; too basic for the level.                                                                                |       |
| <b>GRAMMAR</b>                                           | Grammar is consistently accurate and appropriate for the level.                                                                                                                              | Grammar is mostly accurate and appropriate for the level.                                                                   | Grammar is sometimes accurate and/or not appropriate for the level.                                                                                                                          | Grammar is rarely accurate or appropriate for the level.                                                                                                     |       |
| <b>Overall grade:</b>                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                              |       |

پوخته:

ئامانجى ئەم تويزينهوميه ليكولينهوميه له كاريگمرييهكانى فيربوونى ئاويتته لهسمر تواناي قسهكردى قوتاببيان. فيربوونى ئاويتته، تيكهلهيهكه له فيربوونى نهرىتى يان پرووبهروو لهگهله فيربوونى ئونلاين يان ئهليكترونى. تويزينهومكه ئەداى قوتاببيان له پۆله نهرىتیهكان و ئاويتتهكان بهراورد دهكات. نمونهكان له 190 قوتابى قوناغى دووهى سالى خويندنى 2021-2022 له بهشى ئینگليزى له زانكوكانى سوران و سهلاحهدين ههليزيرداون. تويزينهومكه شيوازيكى نيمچه تاقيكارى بهكارهيناهه بۆ كوكردنهومى زانياريهكان. به پشتبستن بهو شيوازهى باسكراوه، دوو گروپ ههه، گروپى كونترول كه شيوازي نهرىتى پهيرو دهكات و گروپى ئەزموونى كه به فيربوونى ئاويتته دهخويندريت. ئەجامهكان دهريدههه كه تواناي قسهكردى قوتاببيان له ههردوو گروپهكهدا باشتير بووه. بهلام ئەو قوتاببيانكه كه ئەزموونى فيربوونى ئاويتتهيان كردهوه له گروپى تاقيكاريدا، ئەداى باشتريان نيشانداهه له چاو ئەوانهى كه شيوازي نهرىتيان له گروپى كونترولدا خويندوهتهوه، يهكيك له هوكارهكان دهوانيت دهست راگهيشتن بيت به مادده رهسههكان.

الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة تأثيرات التعلم المدمج على قدرة التكلم لدى الطلبة، والتعلم المدمج هو مزيج من التعلم التقليدي (التعلم وجهاً لوجه) مع التعلم عبر الإنترنت (التعلم الإلكتروني). تحاول الدراسة المقارنة بين أداء الطلبة في الفصول الدراسية التقليدية والفصول المدمجة، وقد اخترنا 190 عينة من الطلبة في السنة الثانية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعتي سوران وصلاح الدين للعام الدراسي 2021-2022. وقد اتبعنا المنهج الشبه التجريبي لجمع البيانات والمعلومات، واستناداً على هذا المنهج قسمنا الطلبة إلى مجموعتين، المجموعة الضابطة التي تتبع الطريقة التقليدية والمجموعة التجريبية، وقد وصلنا إلى نتيجة مفادها أن مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب تحسنت في كلا المجموعتين. ولكن الطلاب الذين في صف التعلم المدمج في المجموعة التجريبية كان أداءهم أفضل مقارنة بأولئك الذين درسوا الطريقة التقليدية في المجموعة الضابطة، وقد يكون أحد الأسباب هو الوصول إلى المواد الأصلية.