Theory and Practice of Science and Technology
2025, VOL. 6, NO. 9, 22-25
DOI: 10.47297/taposatWSP2633-456904.20250609

The Impact of Blended Learning Models on Foreign Language Learning Efficiency in Higher Education Institutions

Xiaochuan Song

School of Foreign Languages, Henan Agricultural University, Zhengzhou, Henan, 450046, China

ABSTRACT
Against digital transformation, blended teaching models integrating online and offline learning have emerged as the core direction for foreign language education reform. This study systematically analyzes the mechanisms and enhancement strategies of blended learning's impact on foreign language acquisition efficacy. It constructs a theoretical framework for spatiotemporal elastic configuration, elucidating its intrinsic logic of enhancing language internalization efficiency through cognitive elaboration. The research reveals constraints in teaching practice, including insufficient integration of digital resources with physical classrooms, gaps in teachers' technological integration capabilities, and misalignment between traditional assessment methods and new learning behaviors. Proposed solutions include developing a graded instructional design matrix to balance cognitive load, establishing a continuous evolution mechanism for teacher digital literacy, and creating a multidimensional language proficiency assessment network.

KEYWORDS
Blended learning model; University foreign language education; Learning efficiency

1 Introduction

As global society enters a fully connected digital development phase, the higher education ecosystem is undergoing systemic restructuring. The limitations of traditional fixed-setting teaching paradigms are becoming increasingly apparent: the absence of learner-centered approaches restricts the release of subjective motivation; standardized processes struggle to accommodate personalized cognitive trajectories; and knowledge transmission models hinder the incubation of higher-order thinking. These pain points create structural conflicts with the application-oriented nature inherent to foreign language disciplines, necessitating the establishment of active learning environments that transcend temporal and spatial constraints. The evolution of educational technology has created historic conditions for pedagogical transformation. Boundary-less learning scenarios enabled by internet infrastructure, differentiated content adaptation mechanisms supported by intelligent algorithms, and data-driven precision teaching decision models collectively propel the educational ecosystem toward a shift from singularity to pervasive extension. Against this backdrop, foreign language disciplines—requiring dynamic language practice environments and authentic cultural interaction scenarios—emerge as the foremost frontier for pedagogical innovation and technological advancement. As a key technological solution for deconstructing traditional teaching frameworks, blended learning derives its core advantage from multidimensional integration: Resource Integration Dimension: The scalability of digital learning resources complements the depth of interaction within physical spaces. Cognitive Activation Dimension: Self-directed exploration with progress control synergizes with teacher-guided cognitive conflict creation. Competency Forging Dimension: Fragmented input efficiency and structured output training complete a spiral-shaped competency enhancement loop.

2 The theoretical logic of blended learning in enhancing foreign language learning efficiency

2.1 Elucidating the core characteristics and essential elements of blended learning

Blended learning is far more than simply combining online and offline teaching formats. Rooted in constructivist and humanistic pedagogical principles, its essence lies in systematically integrating and profoundly reconstructing the respective strengths of both learning environments to achieve optimal learning outcomes. Its essence is prominently manifested in the dimensions of integration and reconstruction. In terms of integration, it effectively combines the autonomy, resource richness, and convenience of online learning with the immediate feedback, deep interaction, and emotional communication advantages of face-to-face classrooms. In terms of reconstruction, it profoundly transforms traditional teaching processes by shifting knowledge transmission and internalization to pre-class online completion. This frees up precious classroom time for knowledge application, deepening, and creation, thereby maximizing the temporal and spatial efficiency of teaching and learning. Its core components encompass: clearly defined learning objectives, high-quality online resources, meticulously designed blended teaching activities, efficient teacher-student and peer interaction mechanisms, timely and relevant learning support and feedback, and a scientifically sound formative assessment system.

A successful blended learning model requires its online and offline components to be organically unified, mutually supportive, and progressively interlinked, rather than disjointed [1].

2.2 Analyzing the multidimensional composition and evaluation system of foreign language learning efficiency in higher education

As an integrated concept, assessing foreign language learning efficiency in higher education should transcend the singular consideration of academic grades. It requires constructing a comprehensive evaluation framework encompassing multiple dimensions: learning input, process, and output. Efficiency in the input dimension manifests through the adequate stimulation of learning motivation and the scientific utilization of study time, enabling students to maintain proactive and sustained learning momentum. The process dimension focuses on learning depth and quality, including deep comprehension of linguistic knowledge, flexible application of cognitive strategies, and positive learning affective experiences; the output dimension centers on the ultimate goal of efficiency—substantial enhancement of students' comprehensive language proficiency. Therefore, a scientific evaluation system must abandon outcome-only approaches and strive to establish a robust, multidimensional formative assessment framework that comprehensively and dynamically maps students' knowledge, skills, and competencies growth.

2.3 Demonstrating the mechanism of blended learning in enhancing foreign language learning efficiency

The core mechanism enabling blended learning to effectively boost foreign language learning efficiency lies in its systematic response to traditional teaching challenges and adherence to learning science principles. The pre-class online self-directed learning phase empowers students with complete control, allowing them to repeat learning at their own pace. This addresses the inherent rigidity of offline classroom pacing, ensuring personalized and efficient knowledge input and laying the foundation for optimized learning outcomes. Consequently, the offline classroom transforms into the primary venue for competency development. Liberated from knowledge transmission, instructors can focus on facilitating advanced activities such as in-depth group discussions, scenario-based exercises, and project-based inquiry. This approach powerfully drives the efficient conversion of linguistic knowledge into practical application skills, constituting the key pathway to significantly enhanced learning outcomes. Throughout this process, the online platform's interactive feedback and data tracking capabilities form the bedrock of precision teaching and personalized guidance. Educators can diagnose student challenges based on learning evidence, implement targeted instruction and interventions, and ultimately achieve a virtuous cycle of teaching adaptability and overall effectiveness.

3 Practical challenges limiting foreign language learning efficiency in blended instruction

3.1 Inadequate integration of online and offline instructional design hinders learning outcomes

In current blended teaching practices, disjointed online and offline components and insufficient coordination pose significant obstacles. Most implementations assemble disparate elements superficially: online platforms become mere "digital repositories" for traditional courseware, where students engage in rudimentary multiple-choice exercises, severely lacking deep cognitive participation and interaction. Meanwhile, offline classrooms persist in the outdated model of one-way teacher-centered delivery, rarely adjusting instructional focus based on students' prior learning [2]. Instructors often neglect pre-class online data analysis, failing to address common issues exposed online during classroom instruction or design targeted activities to overcome learning bottlenecks. This superficial embedding of self-study and lectures fails to reconstruct traditional processes, merely adding to students' workload. It leaves them feeling disconnected from knowledge and struggling with transfer, ultimately preventing a qualitative leap in learning outcomes.

3.2 Teachers' digital literacy and role transformation lag behind instructional innovation

Effective implementation of blended learning demands multidimensional competencies from teachers. However, foreign language instructors in higher education currently face dual challenges in this transition. Technologically, faced with continuous updates to innovative teaching platforms, interactive tools, and resource creation software, widespread unfamiliarity or even resistance to application persists, hindering the effective construction of teaching scenarios that stimulate deep online interaction and dynamic learning progress tracking. At the pedagogical level, the challenge is more fundamental: the blended structure requires teachers to transition from being "unidirectional content deliverers" to becoming "learning system designers, higher-order thinking facilitators, and learning community collaborators" —a largely incomplete shift. Some educators cling to traditional authoritative teaching roles, lacking conceptual awareness and practical experience in guiding students toward deep inquiry, designing collaborative tasks that spark inspiration,

and providing precise developmental feedback. This reinforces rigid classroom power structures, significantly stifling students' autonomy and creative potential.

3.3 Traditional learning assessment systems struggle to meet new blended teaching requirements

As a meta-driver guiding teaching and learning behaviors, the alignment of assessment with pedagogical philosophy carries systemic implications. Regrettably, the large-scale summative assessments prevalent in higher education foreign language programs—typically centered on final exam scores—have become a significant obstacle to the comprehensive implementation of blended learning. Key issues include: Learning motivation becomes distorted. The "one exam determines one's future" paradigm induces highly utilitarian learning calculations, leading to students' sporadic and inconsistent engagement and avoidance of daily, deep communicative assignments [3]. This severely deviates from the blended learning approach's emphasis on holistic growth throughout the learning process. Process evidence is neglected. Vast amounts of formative data generated during learning—such as time allocation for online activities, depth of interactive contributions, common misconceptions, and task completion quality—represent valuable evidence for dynamic assessment. Yet within the existing system, this data is largely wasted, significantly undermining the precision and validity of evaluations.

4 Optimized pathways for enhancing foreign language learning efficiency in blended instructional models

4.1 Developing integrated online-offline instructional design to promote deep learning

The key to overcoming the disconnect between online and offline learning lies in establishing an integrated instructional design framework centered on student engagement and task-oriented learning. This framework breaks traditional linear processes by reverse-engineering teaching and learning pathways based on authentic, challenging language application problems or tasks. The online pre-learning phase moves beyond fragmented knowledge delivery, providing carefully curated and restructured learning resources—such as micro-lectures and structured case studies—tailored to core task resolution. These resources incorporate cognitive engagement exercises to guide autonomous knowledge construction [4]. In-person classroom activities then seamlessly build upon the online foundation, concentrating time on knowledge application scenarios. They cultivate a problem-solving-driven cognitive dialogue space through in-depth case analysis, structured debates, and project-guided practice. Post-class online sessions emphasize skill transfer and structured reinforcement, featuring language-output collaborative tasks like co-authored writing and peer video-based oral assessments. This ultimately achieves a cognitive leap from input and internalization to practical output .

4.2 Enhancing teacher digital competency empowerment systems to facilitate role transformation

Supporting teachers' effective transition from "instructors" to multidimensional roles as "system architects, advanced facilitators, and community collaborators" requires building a systematic, continuous empowerment framework. This goes beyond superficial technical training, deeply integrating technology application, contextualized pedagogy, and subject-specific cognitive enhancement. Specific pathways include: - Establishing routine tiered teaching research mechanisms, periodically conducting design workshops based on blended practices and practical smart tool salons, introducing real-world case studies from internal and external teaching exemplars, and organizing collective lesson planning and reflective reviews for innovative courses; Establishing robust professional teaching support networks by integrating resources from Teacher Development Centers and IT departments to provide one-stop technical support, specialized course design consultation, and customized high-quality resource development, thereby significantly reducing operational barriers to cross-dimensional innovation for educators; Foster a culture of professional symbiosis by encouraging cross-disciplinary/intra-disciplinary iterative teaching teams. Through structured peer review and refined collective teaching research, incubate an ecosystem of mutual inspiration and collaborative refinement. This enables faculty to achieve holistic role transformation encompassing conceptual adoption, practical competence, and identity alignment.

4.3 Innovating diversified comprehensive evaluation mechanisms based on process data

To fully unleash the developmental function of evaluation in blended environments, it is essential to reconstruct a multi-source, multidimensional evaluation framework based on a closed-loop process evidence system that dynamically reflects authentic competencies [5]. This framework centers on process-based value-added assessment and

multidimensional evidence integration. Its pivotal components include: Significantly increasing the weighting of process-based evaluation dimensions, encompassing multidimensional metrics that reflect online engagement levels, task output performance, offline classroom participation depth, and project outcome effectiveness; Fully leveraging the data-driven potential of learning platforms to generate personalized learner analysis regularly reports as evidence for precise instructional interventions, transforming student evaluation into adaptive growth guidance tools; It constructs a multi-role feedback loop system that organically integrates teacher diagnostics, structured peer evaluations, group collaborative reflections, and self-directed reviews. This transforms assessment into a unified domain for deep competency validation, collaborative spirit cultivation, and metacognitive skill enhancement, ultimately driving a paradigm shift from "assessment for conclusion" to "assessment for growth".

5 Conclusion

The blended learning model deeply aligns with the intrinsic needs of respecting learner diversity, restructuring instructional sequencing, and stimulating cognitive depth, offering a theoretically viable pathway to overcome bottlenecks in the effectiveness of university foreign language teaching. Its core drives a structural shift in teaching paradigms from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches, empowered by technology. However, translating this conceptual framework into practice faces significant obstacles: the decoupling of online and offline designs, the slow transformation of teacher roles, and the inadequate adaptation of assessment systems. These constraints severely limit the full realization of its potential efficacy. Future optimization must therefore be a collaborative leap forward.

Funding

Key Teaching Reform Project of Henan Agricultural University "Integrating Traditional Chinese Phonology into University English Instruction" (NO: 110-24XM0160)

About the Author

Xiaochuan Song , Ph.D., Associate Professor, research interests include linguistics, foreign language teaching, and translation.

References

[1] Song Danxia. Innovation and Practice of Blended Learning Models in "New Business Education" at Universities in the Digital Intelligence Era [J]. Heilongjiang Education (Higher Education Research and Evaluation), 2025, (09): 51-54.

[2] Ma Fenyin, Ding Jiaqi. Research on Problems and Countermeasures in Blended Teaching of Humanities Courses in Higher Education Institutions [J]. Journal of Higher Education, 2025, 11(24): 122-125.

[3] Yang Jingxian, Li Yan. Bridging the "Digital Divide": Exploring Optimization Pathways for Blended Teaching in College Ideological and Political Courses [J/OL]. Contemporary Education Forum, 1-15 [2025-09-11].

[4] Liu Ming, Ji Shimei, Cheng Huiling, et al. Research on Constructing a Blended Teaching Competency Model for College Faculty [J]. China Education Informatization, 2025, 31(08): 106-115.

[5] Deng Lixia. Research on Application Strategies of Blended Learning in College English Classrooms [J]. Academic Weekly, 2025, (22): 21-24.