# Reading Comprehension through Blended Learning at IAIN Samarinda

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#### **Abstract**

Due to the growing need for English reading in the academic world, learners' reading abilities must be improved in order to have a better understanding of English texts. If learners grow comfortable with reading strategies, they will become more motivated to read, which will result in more exposure to foreign language information. The researchers discovered that students who were taught using Blended Learning and mobile learning had increased reading abilities in English and a more favorable attitude toward Blended Learning in reading class. The study included both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The experiment is conducted by the administration of a test to collect data on learning outcomes, while the qualitative data is collected through the use of questionnaires and interviews. IAIN Samarinda's first semester sampled 32 students. The findings were analyzed using the t-test method. It was found based on the two scores and the t-value that there was a statistically significant increase in reading for learning to use a blended learning approach. Additionally, the questionnaire and student interview data about the perspective of blended learning in reading classrooms indicated that blended learning had a favorable influence. Blended learning may be utilized to assist learning in English language lessons. The advantages of blended learning as a supplement to secondary or foreign language education will benefit students.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Blended Learning, Higher Education

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the quick speed of technical and societal development has been a distinguishing feature of our civilization. With the growth of information technology, students are used to learning many elements of knowledge using numerous devices such as computers, notebooks, tablets, and mobile phones. This disruptive tendency in higher education may be seen in the establishment of joint work among academics from various fields and universities. In order to cope with this shift, colleges must improve remote learning so that students may continue to study and have access to learning information even if they are unable to attend class.

Blended learning is a kind of distance education in which online and face-to-face training are combined. The objective is to engage students in their learning by employing online technology to facilitate or support learning activities that occur outside of the classroom, as well as to encourage students to arrive prepared for class (Harpiansi, 2019). Blended learning is a method of teaching that combines face-to-face training with the use of a computer (Grgurovic, 2011).

The first-year students at IAIN Samarinda are obliged to enroll in a pre-college program that focuses on teaching English and Arabic to all students under the direction of the UPB (Language Development Unit) as an initial provision of foreign language skills. The educational differences amongst IAIN students, such as Islamic boarding school, madrasah, and high school, necessitate a comprehensive strategy to achieving English language competence. Indeed, many university students receive little English exposure. They, on the other hand, have limited English proficiency, particularly in reading comprehension. According to Grabe (2014), understanding of printed texts needs word recognition, sentence processing, strategic procedures, activation of pertinent prior information, meaning interpretation, and continual monitoring of ongoing comprehension. The majority of students learn and utilize English only in class, and thus require additional time for practice and learning outside of class. Each meeting in the classroom is limited to 100 minutes. Thus, lecturers must provide additional time outside the classroom for students to learn by assigning them additional tasks and assignments. As a result, students are expected to complete their assignments outside of class. Additionally, the researcher observed that students are bored when completing traditional assignments or learning via paper. To address the aforementioned issue, lecturers might utilize blended learning to assist in teaching and learning activities.

While several studies (e.g., Soltani Tehrani & Tabatabaei, 2012; Behjat, Yamini, & Sadegh Bagheri, 2012) have been conducted to the best of the researcher's knowledge to examine the effect of BL on various language skills, no comprehensive study on the effectiveness of blended learning for Iranian EFL learners has been conducted. Furthermore, Jou, Lin, and Wu (2016) discovered that blended learning improved learners' performance. Hew and Cheung (2014) asserted that BL helps learners to improve their interpersonal communication, indicating the potential of cooperation. Blended learning enables more advanced learning activities to occur within class time, increasing students' opportunities to engage in meaningful and engaging activities and therefore enhancing learning outcomes (Boucher, Robertson, Wainner & Sanders, 2013).

Trowler (2010) highlighted that engagement entails interaction between time, effort, and other resources, both students and institutions aimed at optimizing student experience and enhancing learning results and development, according to the previous study. Educators utilized blended learning to employ both traditional face-to-face and online training (Wang, Yang & Wen, 2009). Many teachers mix their courses to give their students with the biggest learning model and the most effective learning environment imaginable (Wang et al., 2009). Literature shows why individuals have chosen mixed learning. The reasons for this were: to increase student interest in learning (Adas & Bakr, 2013); to make lessons more interesting (Pearcy, 2009), to improve communication (Palak & Walls, 2009), to facilitate social networking (Melor and Rashidah, 2011), to promote collaboration (Anderson, 2007), to motivate students (Eydelman, 2013) and to promote a learning setting that focuses on students (Vernadakis, Giannousi, Derri, Michalopoulos, Kioumourtzoglou, 2011).

Regarding the increasing demand in the academic world for English reading, learners must improve their reading skills and have a better understanding of English texts. If students get acquainted with effective reading methods, they are more inclined to read and become more exposed to foreign language content. On the basis of the assertion, researchers at IAIN Samarinda are trying to integrate blended learning in understanding reading.

# 2. METHODOLOGY

This investigation is carried out in quantitative ways. It has three kinds of preexperimental design, real experimental design and virtually experimental design in experimental research (Fraenkel, Hyun, and Wallen, 2012). The design was pre-experimental in this investigation. The reason the researcher picked this design was because of the other researchers' other designs like quasi-experimental, real experimental and qualitative. Besides this, it also has only one control group in this investigation. Furthermore, this design was pretest and post-test. The pupils were tested before the dynamic evaluation was treated to know the achievement of the students in writing. In the meantime, after the Dynamic Assessment thesis, students were given the chance to know the written achievement of the students. T-test was used to compare the post-test and pre-test results. After the results were obtained, the  $\alpha$  = 5 percent table was compared.

One of the important matters in the studies is the challenge which involves population and sample. The population is something that refers to all distinct institution of items (Lehman, 2009). Further, the population is likewise referring to the institution of individual or problem of a population (Fraenkel et al., 2012). On this research, first semester students of IAIN Samarinda, for about 103 students as the population and 32 students as samples.

In this observe, the researcher uses instruments which are a test, interview, and questionnaire. The instrumentation refers to unreliability, or loss of consistency, in measuring gadgets (Gay, 2011). This studies employee studying takes a look at within the form of multiple choices questions as for its tool. Based totally on Connoll (2008), multiple desire questions can offer college students with an available way to study course material, check that they apprehend key principles, and receive immediate or well-timed feedback to help them manipulate their mastering. Moreover, the multiple-choice questions can provide instructors with data approximately college students' pre-direction expertise, information gaps and misconceptions, to help plan studying and coaching techniques.

## 3. FINDINGS

# 3.1 Students' reading comprehension before and after being taught with BL

An independent t-test was done to see whether there was a substantial difference between the two groups before the experiment. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the results. The entire sample of the experimental group is 32 pupils, according to the statistics collected. The mean of the experimental group preliminary test was 52.50 and 62.13. Therefore, it may be stated in descriptive statistics that the average outcomes of pretest and post-test are different.

Table 1 Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Pair 1	pre	67.1875	32	3.79675	.67118	
	post	82.4219	32	6.76460	1.19582	

According to the output, the value of mean of pretest was 67.18 and posttest was 82.42 with 32 participants. Standard deviation of pretest was 3.796 and posttest was 6.764. In addition, value of standard error mean of pretest was 0.67118 and posttest was 1.19582.

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			N	Correlation		Si	ig.
Pair 1	Pre & Pos	st .	32	.682		0.	000
Table 4 Paired Samples Paired Diff					t	df	Sig. (2-
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		_		tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
-15.23438	5.01447	.88644	-17.04228	-13.42647	-17.186	31	.000

In table 4, the value t (31) = -17.186, p<0.0005. Due to the means of the two score and the direction of the t-value, we can conclude that there was a statistically significant improvement in reading learning following the blended learning technique.

# 3.1.1 Students' Perspectives of Using Mobile Devices in Blended Learning

The quantitative data analysis, described in this section, is based on students' responses to the blended learning. The first-year students of IAIN Samarinda took on precollege program which focus all students to learn English under the management of the UPB (Language Development Unit) as the initial provision of foreign language skills. They were majoring Arabic language, English language and Islamic education and their age ranged from 18 to 21. According to the result of the online questionnaire, as many as 65.6% were female and 34,4% were male.

Table 5
The Ease of Using Mobile Devices in the Blended Learning Environment (Interact with Peers and Group, Practice Reading on Mobile Phone)

NO	Statement	Percentage Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Interacting with group members is easy to read on mobile telephones	3,1	18,8	25	37.5	15.6
2	English reading on mobile devices is convenient since I can access it anytime and anyplace.	0	0	6.3	65.6	28.1
3	By engaging with my classmates on my mobile phones, I can effortlessly improve English.	0	3.1	25	37.5	34.4

The above data indicate that 93,7% of the students felt that it is convenient for them to practice English reading through their mobile phones because they could access the reading sources whenever and wherever they wanted. If the students had a liberty to choose when and where they read, it might help them understand the reading material easier compared to when they did it in traditional class with heavy textbook and an on-going lecture which was happening at the front. The convenient aspect of mobile phone also might become an encouragement for students to read for pleasure or doing an extensive reading. As it is shown on the chart, the 71,9% of students agree that they can easily practice their English skill by interacting with their peers through mobile phones. There are tons of English Language Learning application out there either in Play store or Apple store that can be used to support their learning process. Apps on Android or Apple mostly are designed for self-learning without a limitation of time so students might have a chance to master the material or even have a chance to speak or chat with native because some apps also have native speakers who could help the users in learning their native language.

Table 6
The Effectiveness of Using Mobile Devices in a Blended Learning Environment)

<i>J</i>	Jecuveness of Osing Modile Device	Percentage				
No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
4	Due to the characteristics of mobile phones, I am able to interact with my group members at any time and from any location.	0	3.1	12.5	50	34.4
5	By utilizing integrated learning, it is possible to grasp English reading.	0	6.3	53.1	21.9	18.8
6	I may be able to expand my English reading outside the classroom setting through mobile- based reading discussions.	3.1	3.1	6.3	56.3	31.3
7	M-learning is an efficient method of increasing reading comprehension.	3.2	3.2	29	54.8	9.7

The chart shows that almost half of students feel that blended learning is helpful for them to understand English reading. Although 53.1% were still contemplating about the use of blended learning since the use of blended learning in Indonesia have many issues such as the internet connection and the digital literacy of both lecturers and students but if we look back to the previous results and connect them to this, it implies that blended learning may

help students in learning English reading. The data presented in the above table indicate that 87,6% of students state that it is easy for students to communicate with their friends through their mobile phones, they can have opportunities to learn, read, or even discuss the topics of English reading outside their scheduled classroom through mobile-based reading discussion. This implies that they have extended learning process by doing a self-learning activity which will help them to understand the English reading more since their mobile phone make the learning process more convenient and to their liking in terms of situation and condition and even time. Based on the chart above, the students agree that it is effective for them to improve their reading comprehension through m-learning. 54.8% agree that m-learning is an effective way to improve their understanding on English reading material.

Table 7
Comparison between a Traditional Class and a Blended Learning Class Using Mobile Devices

No.	Statement	Percentage Strongly Disagree	e Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
8	It is more comfortable to connect with peers in a mobile environment than it is in a classroom setting since there is no time constraint.	0	3.1	15.6	59.4	21.9
9	In comparison to traditional classrooms, it is advantageous to conduct discussions in English using mobile phones.	0	0	43.8	40.6	15.6
10	It's beneficial to practice English on mobile devices because I don't have time to study outside of class.	71.9	15.6	0	3.1	9.4

The above data indicate that 81.3% of Students find it comfortable for them to interact with their peers virtually for reading discussion since they have freedom in scheduling the discussion session and they have no time limit compared to traditional classes. They can talk freely, convey their opinion, and enjoy the discussion more in mobile environment. The above data indicate that 56.2% of the students find it useful to have discussion in English virtually compared to traditional classes. Mobile environment will motivate them to practice their English because whatever they say will not always be assessed by the lecturer. They will become more confident to chat or talk in English virtually since the discussion is usually held in an informal and laid back situation which make them comfortable enough to use their English. An analysis of the data presented in the above chart indicates that 23% of the

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students use mobile phones to practice English out of class while 15,6% of the students disagree that they practice English out of class using mobile phones.

Table 8

No.	Statement	Percentag Strongly Disagree	e Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
13	I'd want to learn English reading on a continual basis using mobile phones.	0	0	18.8	56.3	25
14	I am eager to study further English skills via m-learning.	3.1	0	12.5	56.3	28.1

The above data indicate that the students (81.3%) agree that they would like to study English reading virtually through their mobile phones. This is related to the convenience the features of mobile phones offer to them that makes it easier to them to communicate with each other, motivate them to learn more out of class, and encourage them to use English more during their discussion with their group members through mobile phones.

According to the result of the questionnaire shows 27 students (84.4%) of the population are willing to study other skills of English through m-learning. On the other hand, a student disagrees to study other skills English through m-learning.

In line with the general result of the students' questionnaire, some students have had positive perceptions about blended learning and stated their positive opinions during the interviews. The first question, do you think that the reading lesson that we had using media outside class social media, YouTube, Google etc. was beneficial for you? If yes, in what terms were these benefits.

"It was beneficial for me. It motivated me. It increased my success. Our lessons were fun. This increased my motivation. It also enabled to retain the information for longer time." (ST 1).

"E-learning can motivate me to learn more because I actively involved in learning." (ST 6)

"I enjoy learning a lot and I also have a better attitude towards learning English." (ST 7)

The next question discover the difficulties of students encountered while they were learning the reading lesson supported with media such as social media, YouTube, Google etc.

"I have difficulty understanding the information and not being able to ask if I have a responsibility" (ST 3)

The last question asked their opinion of learn the reading lesson supported with social media, YouTube, Google etc. with blended learning in the future.

"This type of class is both a lot of fun and it also enables me to have more interest in the lesson." (ST1)

"It motivated me for my lessons and made me more successful." (ST 2)

# 4. DISCUSSION

As this study evaluated the influence of blended learning on reading comprehension utilizing a website (nicenet), another study was identified with the same emphasis. Alshumaimeri and Almasri (2012) examined the effect of utilizing WebQuests to understand reading. In their study, the experimental group was supplemented by regular instruction and WebQuests. The control group got solely traditional teaching. Significant changes were detected in the post-test comprehension performance of the experimental group compared to the pre-test, indicating that using WebQuest can increase student reading comprehension ability. The results demonstrate the potential of WebQuests in increasing reading comprehension.

The findings of this study are in accordance with the findings of the study done by Al-Jarf (2007) and Ghahari and Ameri-Golestan (2014), which found similar improvements in learner reading skills exposed to mixed learning compared to those studying reading in a typical classroom environment. The study findings also confirmed the results of Kazu and Demirkol's (2014) study, which reported a significant difference between the performance of learners attending traditional classrooms and those learning in a mixed learning environment, the latter being more positively influential than the former. Similarly, Dowling, Godfrey and Gyles (2003) observed increased grades and mixed learning results.

In addition, Jou, Lin & Wu (2016) revealed beneficial benefits of mixed learning on learner performance. Hew and Cheung (2014) stated that BL offers learners opportunities to enhance communication among themselves, suggesting possibilities for cooperation. Blended learning enables more advanced learning activities during in-class time, giving students more opportunity to participate in meaningful engaging activities, therefore increasing learning outcomes (Boucher, Robertson, Wainner & Sanders, 2013).

Furthermore, the students feel that improving their reading comprehension through mlearning is helpful. 54.8% agree that m-learning is an efficient technique of mastering English

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reading material. Moreover, questionnaire findings suggest that students (81.3%) believe that they want to study English reading electronically using their mobile phones. This is connected to the convenience of mobile phone features that make it simpler for them to interact with each other, inspire them to study more out of class, and encourage them to utilize English more during their conversation with their group members via mobile phones.

Stefan (2016) underlined BL's flexibility and collaborative features. Students may access learning resources from anywhere using BL, while teachers also have more freedom to alter learning materials. All benefits add to teaching efficiency. She also highlighted the significance of face-to-face sessions to introduce new instructor principles.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Research findings revealed that most participants had a good view of adopting mobile learning in mixed learning on reading comprehension. The outcome of the questionnaire revealed that students agreed that adopting mobile learning in mixed learning on reading understanding was beneficial, helpful, and successful in supporting them in learning English anytime and anywhere. They also feel that adopting mobile learning in mixed learning not only improves their reading comprehension, but also their vocabulary and listening abilities. However, based on the outcome of the interview, the researcher found various positive aspects of participants' use of mobile learning in mixed learning on reading comprehension, i.e. students thought using mobile learning in mixed learning was a cool learning style since using smartphone and internet. Then students may freely communicate with professor and peer anytime and anywhere. It also enhanced students' drive to fully read and understand the different types of materials. It might also improve the vocabulary of kids, influencing their writing and speaking abilities. In contrast, there were also downsides of adopting mobile learning in mixed learning for reading comprehension, i.e. internet connectivity and network issues. Then, some pupils also said they had difficulty messaging or typing small mobile phone screens. Despite the disadvantages of adopting mobile learning in mixed learning on reading comprehension, the positive features of it still offered more benefits to the learning activities of the students and their performance. This benefit might be sustained to their learning result, particularly in reading comprehension. Finally, there was a good view of employing mobile learning in mixed reading comprehension.

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