Blended Learning and the Most Compatible Model Implemented by EFL Teachers: A Content Analysis Study

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ABSTRACT : This research aims to find out the most frequently Blended Learning model used by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in teaching English. In total, 65 pieces of studies were analyzed by using tables and charts which are categorized based on the content of the research reports. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis were employed to analyze the data. Then the data computerized and processed using Microsoft Excel to see the distribution of each classification. There were fourteen tables of Paper Classification Form (PCF) classified in this study. The result of the data analysis shows that Flipped Classrooms was the most frequently model implemented by EFL teachers in their teaching and learning process. Teachers prefer to apply this model in teaching English because of some reasons, first, flipped classroom allows students to learn in their own way. Second, it encourages students to actively engage with the material given. The next is flipped classroom creates creative and active learning activities. Fourth, teachers as a guider because the students take control and responsibility for their own learning. Fifth, teachers may have more flexibility in assessing students' learning. Last but not least, teachers receive expanded opportunities to develop their creativity in teaching English.

KEYWORDS: Blended Learning models, English Language Teaching, Research Reports

I. INTRODUCTION

English Language Teaching (ELT) is still as dynamic and difficult today. In terms of use and user, the English language has experienced a significant transformation. According to Renandya and Widodo (2016), English Language Teaching is currently used by a significantly larger number of people all over the world for a wide range of communicative objectives in a variety of social settings. Furthermore, the growing use of digital technology in the classroom has altered how English is learnt and taught. Moreover, ELT is no longer restricted to the traditional classroom setting, where the teacher and learning materials are typically the primary sources of language input and practice. Learners can now immerse themselves in rich target language input that is available 24 hours a day via the internet, as well as seek out new opportunities to practice the language with other English speakers across the world.

The implementation of the Internet in teaching and learning English opened the way for new and innovative methods of teaching and learning. One of the most popular methods is called Blended Learning. It is one of the media technologies that provide an alternative method that is highly relevant to the recent digital era which combines both traditional methods and methods based on multimedia technology in the teaching and learning process. It emerges because of the consideration that both of the methods have few merits and demerits. They are catering to different needs, demands and expectations from the educational system. According to Garner and Oke (2015), blended learning is a concept that incorporates both faces to face teaching and teaching supported by ICT devices. This definition is in line with Dangwal and Lalima (2017) who believed that blended learning incorporates direct instruction, indirect instruction, collaborative teaching, and individualized computer-assisted learning. Moreover, they elaborated some features which include in blended learning, such as face to face teaching, online assessment, peer group interaction, virtual classroom, student interaction with course content, and accessing and maintaining educational blogs. Blended Learning application in the learning process enables students and teachers to have greater opportunities to interact and communicate both inside and outside the classroom. Zainuddin&Keumala (2018) said that Blended Learning can change student learning patterns, where students learn digitally. This also motivates them to spend a lot of their learning time with fun. Moreover, Blended Learning does not rule out direct social interaction or face to face interaction, so that the emotional relationship between teachers and students still is well established. Graham, Spring & Welch (2014) stated that mixed learning methods could contribute to building stronger interactions between teachers and students.

Although the use of technology has often been a common practice in the language learning process today, technology also has various shortcomings, one of which is the neglect of social interaction. This can lead to the weakening of the teacher's function as a motivator and the loss of emotional feelings and sympathy between teachers and students as well as students and classmates. Therefore, to find solutions to the problems above and to create effective learning and under the curricular objectives including skills, knowledge and attitudes, some educators develop new methods that can combine conventional classroom with online learning. So students remain able to adapt to technological developments without neglecting fellow social interactions.Some of the researchers, educators and practitioners have conducted various studies to find out the meaning of Blended Learning, but there is still very little research done to underlie Blended Learning and what components of Blended Learning make this method can be applied effectively in teaching English. Researchers who have researched to explore trends from Blended Learning include Wang, Han & Yang (2015) and MohdAzli, Wong &Noraini (2016) conducted a quantitative meta-analysis to assess the overall efficacy of blended learning treatments. A comprehensive search discovered 40 meta-analyses with a set of assumptions emphasizing technology usage. Their research aims to find out more about the research and application of Blended Learning. Their findings provide a large body of high-quality data suggesting blended learning has a lot of promise in terms of achieving learning outcomes while being supported by technology.

 The results of their research are expected to sharpen and deepen our knowledge of Blended Learning. Another researcher who researched to see the development of research trends and analyze literature reviews from Blended Learning were Mahmud, Ubrani&Wong (2020) who carried out a quantitative meta-analysis to see the effectiveness of the studies that have been conducted related to Blended Learning. They used 40 meta-analytic samples to analyze data published from 2015 to 2019. From their research, it can be concluded that the technologies that are often used in Blended Learning applications include Web-Based Applications, Mobile Applications and Standalone Applications. Overall, this study shows that the application of Blended Learning provides satisfying learning outcomes.Meanwhile, MohdAzli, Wong &Noraini (2016) also researched to analyze the research trends of Blended Learning. This study was carried out by using 45 empirical studies from selected journals available online from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and analyzed those using Complex Adaptive Learning Systems. The results of this study show that there are gaps in Blended Learning research. Other researchers are Wang, Han & Yang (2015), their study aims to bridge the gap from previous Blended Learning studies and promote a deeper understanding of what has been achieved and what needs to be achieved by Blended Learning research. This research reviewed 87 empirical studies from Blended Learning literature at that time. The results of this study describe some of the gaps found from Blended Learning both from the research and in its application.

However, their research is limited to Blended Learning studies from 2015 to 2016. Research on Blended Learning especially in English language teaching is growing along with the development of time, therefore, this study aims to see and discover the extent of the development of research on Blended Learning in English Language Teaching during the past few years. Besides, studying and knowing the latest research in respective fields will greatly help someone's career and academic publications, as well as our awareness of the importance of publications in academic journals, this will help researchers to understand the application of Blended Learning methods especially in teaching and learning English and educational science in general. Tsai and Wen (2005) say that awareness of the latest trend of research publications will help researchers not to repeat the same research. Therefore, investigating the development of these studies can provide us with information about the progress and current status of English language teaching methodology. From a review of these three previous studies, this study is valuable and different from those because of some reasons. First, the previous research is still limited in term of year publication, it concerned about the blended learning studies from 2015 to 2016, and meanwhile, this study explores the newest blended learning research reports from 2010 to 2020. The second reasons that the variable of this research is different from previous Blended Learning content analysis research as the previous one did not explore the model of Blended Learning which is often implemented by EFL teachers.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Research is the search of knowledge through the objective and systematic method of finding. Creswell (2012) defines research as the process of steps used to collect and analyze information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue. Here, the information can be collected from many sources such as books, experiences, journals, human beings, nature, etc. This definition is in line with Pathak (2008) who defines research as the art of scientific investigation that goes through the process by which a person observes the phenomenon again and again and collects the data.

The data can be both numerical and non-numerical. Based on the collected data, then he draws some conclusions. Meanwhile, educational research refers to the systematic collection and analysis of data related to the field of education. This research consists of various research methods and various aspects of education such as student learning, teaching methodology, teacher training and classroom dynamic. It can be in form of theses, dissertations, journal articles and proceedings. Educational research, according to Pathak (2008), is a systematic, objective, and purposeful effort to answer important questions about the educational process, form organizations, and thoughts. As a result, the purpose of educational research is to find generalizations about educational difficulties to improve the quality of teaching and learning by utilizing resources effectively and efficiently. To put it another way, educational research isn't just a way to come up with fresh teaching and learning ideas; it's also a way to persuade us that our ideas are worth pursuing.

Blended learning, according to Singh (2003), is a combination of effective knowledge presentation approaches that helps learners engage in meaningful learning processes. On the other hand, Mohamed Amin, Norazah, and Ebrahim (2014) defined blended learning in four ways: i) a combination of web-based technologies in the learning process; ii) a combination of learning pedagogy approaches; iii) a combination of instructional technology and face-to-face instruction; and iv) a combination of instructional technology and learner's learning assignment. Meanwhile, Zaharah, Saedah, Ghazali, and NurHasbuna (2015), perceived blended learning as a mix of traditional and online learning models. As a result, students are required to participate actively in the learning process until they have found a learning style that works best for them. Teachers play merely the role of mediator, facilitator, or companion in this process, ensuring that students have a relevant and favorable learning environment. Blended learning, with the help of today's technological technology, is expected to eventually improve the traditional learning approach.Moreover, Allen & Seaman (2013) offered one helpful approach to delineate the varied modalities for instruction. They identified criteria that can be used to distinguish between the four most basic course delivery methods. Firstly, is the traditional modality, which provides the entirely in the classroom using face-to-face instruction. Secondly is web-facilitated modality. It includes a face-to-face component and between 1% and 29% of instruction through online delivery. Thirdly, blended/hybrid modality, which includes a face-to-face component and between 30% and 79% of instruction through online delivery. Lastly, is the online modality, in which 80% or more instruction is provided through online delivery.
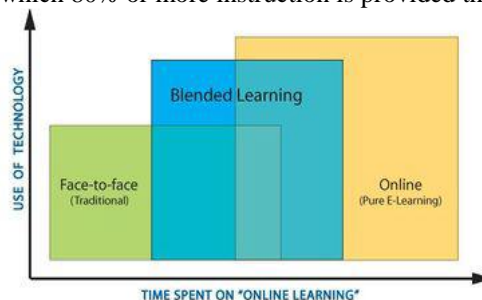

Figure1.1 Blended Learning Approach
Source: http://hlwiki.slais.ubc.ca/index.php/Blended_learning

To sum up, this teaching and learning model helps the student to improve their intelligence on the use of technology and access educational information as a learning resource. As what to Porter, et al (2014) said that mixed learning has contributed to build strong interaction between learners and teachers. Besides, it does not neglect traditional learning because the students may have F2F interaction in the classroom and they may have time to learn independently outside the classroom, getting the material online, and engaging communication with their friends and teachers outside the study hours.

Blended Learning Models : In the early stages of Blended Learning development, it is still messy because the schools are thinking about Blended Learning in hundreds of ways as they experiment to figure out what works best for them. As a result, many models of Blended Learning appeared, some of which are following the objectives of Blended Learning and some do not fit with the Blended Learning categories. Tucker, Wycoff& Green (2017) introduced five models of Blended Learning; station rotation model, whole group rotation model, flipped classroom model, individualized model and A La Carte model. Meanwhile, Truit (2016) mentions 4 Blended Learning models; they are station rotation models, self-blend models, flex models and flipped classroom models. Of all the emerging models, Horn &Staker (2015) models are the most appropriate and cover all the models mentioned by other authors. They introduced four main models of Blended Learning namely: Rotation models, Flex Models, A La Carte models and enriched virtual models.
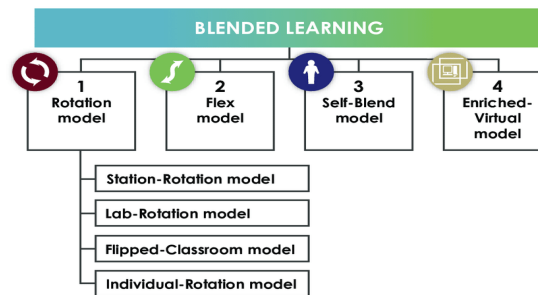
Figure 1.2 Blended Learning Model
Source: http//www.researchgate.net/figure/figure/Blended-learning-models

Content Analysis : Content analysis is a deeper analysis or assessment of the contents of a text or message. A content analyst is a studying document in the form of text with various formats such as photos, audio or video. According to Luo (2019) content analysis is a research method to identify the framework or form in recorded communication. She said that in conducting content analysis, researchers would systematically collect data in sets of text whether in written, oral or visual form such as books, magazines, speeches, social media posts, research reports, films, etc. In other words, Weber (1990) briefly defined content analysis as a research method that uses procedures to make valid inferences from a text. This definition is in line with Krippendorff (2004) who defined content analysis as the research techniques for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the context of their use. He further mentioned that in terms of purpose, content analysis in educational research can be used to quantify the information of educational research reports by sorting data and comparing different pieces of information to summarize them into useful information.

Each author has a certain way of doing research content analysis. Luo (2014) gave five steps in conducting a content analysis study which is (1) selecting the content to be analyzed (2) defining the units and categories of analysis (3) developing a set of rules for coding (4) coding the text according to the rules (5) analyzed the results and concluding. In the different terms, Drisko and Maschi (2006) mentioned that the research process of content analysis can be broken down into five steps which are: identify and collect the data, determine coding categories, code the content, check validity and reliability and analyze and present the result. From the two experts above there are similarities in the way of conducting content analysis study to which we need to give careful attention to, they are collecting the data, defining the categories, coding the content, analyzing and drawing conclusions of the result. Another procedure in doing content analysis research is proposed by Krippendorff (2004). He mention eight steps in conducting content analysis research. The first step is designing. The researcher should design the analysis based on existing theoretical frameworks and experiences relevant to the research question. The second step is unitizing. It frames the object of analysis to be able to process the discrete elements. The next step is sampling. Krippendorff (2004) noted that sampling reduces the whole of available objects of analysis to a management corpus that is representative of the whole set. The fourth step is coding. It is a procedure that aims to capture the object of the study so that it makes it easier to study patterns. The next step is reducing. It aims to gain cognitive access to the meaning of large content analysis. Next is inferring. After reducing the data that is not needed in a study, the next step is to conclude a particular phenomenon. The final step is narrating. In narrating, the researcher will answer the initial research questions to make the result both comprehensive and accessible for others.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed content analysis research design in quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data in the form of numbers were collected for quantification, while qualitative data were collected to find out and analyze the meaning contained in the research reports. The researchers used direct observation to obtain data. The data were obtained from the open-source internet using certain keywords. The researchers used the keywords Blended Learning Implementation in Teaching and Learning English, The models of Blended Learning, etc. Data sources from this study were obtained from theses, dissertations, journal articles and proceedings through open-source access such as TEFLIN Journal, Asian Online Journal, ELT Journal, Lingua Scientia Journal, etc. Furthermore, the researchers examined 65 of the Blended Learning on ELT journals that have been published for the past 10 years.

Due to the time constraint and the small number of research studies which have been conducted related to the Blended Learning approach, stratified random sampling was employed in this study. Moreover, this study has two main research instruments; Internet search and the research report classification tables. Internet search is the main instrument in collecting data in this study. The researchers used Google Chrome which is one of the programs on the Personal Computer (PC) as a research tool where data is obtained through Internet access.

The obtained data were analyzed using two content approaches namely manifest and latent. Manifest content was analyzed by using a classification checklist while the latent content was analyzed by looking at the contents of the selected Blended Learning research report. Therefore, the researchers used both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The obtained data were also computerized and processed using Microsoft Excel to see the distribution of each classification.

To find answers to research questions, the researchers classified the data needed into tabular form, and then they used coding and categorizes the data. The code is all the content and attributes associated with Blended Learning Subsystems, and Blended Learning Models contained in the research reports. While categories are characteristics of content and attributes such as introduction, literature reviews methodology, result and conclusion. In analyzing manifest data, researchers looked at the occurrences of each finding using Microsoft Excel, such as the subject matter, research problems, research designs, data collection, data analysis, sampling techniques and validation. While latent content was analyzed in the form of explanations and descriptions.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the result analysis, it was found that the higher frequency journals of blended learning model on ELT belongs to flipped classroom model which is 17 papers (26.15%). Then, it follows by Blended Learning with E-Learning, 5 papers (7.69%). Meanwhile, the lowest frequency belongs to a partially flipped classroom, layered flipped classroom, blended learning approach using moodle, and station rotation model which respectively only one article journal (1.53%). This finding implies that flipped classroom is being one of most frequently topic concerned by researchers in their articles. The flipped classroom is one of the blended models in which the teacher flips the instruction that would normally occur in the classroom and places it at home in the form of online learning. Then the students attend the brick-and-mortar school for face-to-face, teacher-guided practice or projects (Horn &Staker, 2015; Truit, 2016; Tucker, Wycoff& Green, 2017).

This research supported an idea by Talbert (2018) who said that flipped classroom model is being one of interesting research to be studied by researchers in peer-reviewed journal articles, books and conferences. He found that since 2012, the growth of research concerning the flipped learning model is 60% per year. Many researchers used blended learning in their classes in various disciplines, courses, institutions, etc, either by using qualitative research or quantitative research. Teachers prefer to apply this model in teaching English because of some reasons, first, flipped classroom allow students to learn in their own way. Second, it encourage students to actively engage with the material given. The next is flipped classroom create creative and active learning activities. Fourth, teachers as a guider because the students take control and responsibility for their own learning. Fifth, teachers may have more flexibility in assessing students' learning. Last but not least, teachers receive expanded opportunities to develop their creativity in teaching English (Susanti, W. Et al, 2020; Nouri, J. 2016, Talbert, 2018).

Furthermore, the data analysis also shows that the researchers also concern to conduct studies about blended learning with e-learning. It indicates that blended learning with e-learning is also currently being one of the important issues in education, especially in the teaching-learning process. Meanwhile, the data shows that there are very limited research studies concerned with partially flipped classrooms, layered flipped classrooms, blended learning approach using moodle, and station rotation model. It infers that the issue about these blended learning models is less concerned than the first one. However, it does not infer that these issues are not as important as the first one. Thus, further research about partially flipped classroom layered flipped classroom, blended learning approach using moodle, and station rotation model is needed to be elaborate to enrich their literature review and practice in education.
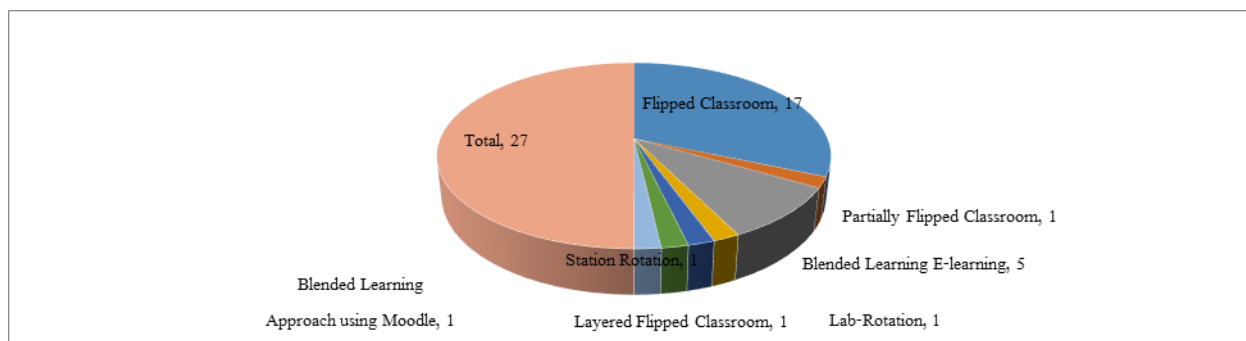
Figure 1.3 The Result of Blended Learning Model

V. CONCLUSION

This study is intended to find out the Blended Learning models which is the most implemented by the teachers on English Language Teaching, and also to see the problems and benefits of applying this model. Thus, the researcher randomly collected 65 pieces of research reports from the Internet to avoid bias in determining the issues about Blended Learning on ELT. Flipped Classroom is believed as one of the most suitable model to be implemented nowadays where the online and offline learning are combined in one way with create more opportunities and flexibility for both the teachers and the students. The result of the data analysis shows that flipped classrooms were being one of the most frequent topics concerned by researchers in their articles. Then, it follows by Blended Learning with E-Learning. The least frequently issue concerned by the researchers were partially flipped classroom, layered flipped classroom, blended learning approach using moodle, and station rotation which suggests conducting future research about blended learning models.A conclusion section must be included and should indicate clearly the advantages, limitations, and possible applications of the paper. Although a conclusion may review the main points of the paper, do not replicate the abstract as the conclusion. A conclusion might elaborate on the importance of the work or suggest applications and extensions.

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