

# Effects of Blended Learning on EFL College Students' Oral Communicative Competence: A Critical Review of Studies

Wu Zhangli\*

Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Lilliati Ismail

Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Norhakimah Khaissa Ahmad

Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Omer Hassan Ali Mahfoodh

School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

Wang Xuewen

Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

**Abstract**—For EFL learners' development of oral communication competence in English, computer-assisted instruction has become an indispensable model. In the face of the arrival of the information and intelligence era and the need for regular pandemic prevention and control, blended learning has become a normalized teaching approach. Although there have been some investigations of the effectiveness of blended learning in enhancing college EFL students' English communication skills, a review article that synthesizes the findings of these studies deserves an urgent attention. Thus, the overall purpose of this research is to review previous studies that have examined the use of blended learning to improve college EFL students' English communication skills. The anticipated outcomes of this research can uncover the potential benefits of utilizing blended learning for enhancing English oral communicative competence among college EFL students. This article can offer some critical perspectives, suggestions, and consequences concerning the integration of blended learning in the acquisition of English language communication competence among college EFL students.

**Index Terms**—blended learning, online teaching, college EFL students, oral communicative competence, review article

## I. INTRODUCTION

In modern English language learning (ELL), the main goal of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners is to effectively use language in real-life communication environments, rather than simply focusing on grammatical rules and memorization of content. As noted by Poolsawad et al. (2015) and Brown (2016), achieving communicative competence has remained a primary objective in language classrooms as a means of facilitating globalization and internationalization. In recent decades, the advancement of technology—particularly with the emergence of digital devices and Web 2.0 technology—has opened up a wide array of opportunities to enhance English communication skills. Further, the progress of technology has significantly transformed the domain of learning and acquisition of English language communication competence (ELCC).

Consequently, online teaching has become a conventional way of teaching at primary, secondary, and tertiary education for a long time. During the pandemic, online teaching was adopted as an emergency measure (Lee et al., 2022), which has not only provided a new perspective for the reform of teaching methods in higher education but also has created a wide range of opportunities for it. In the post pandemic era, blended learning has become a mainstream teaching method which utilizes a range of online tools and platforms such as video conferencing, online forums, and course management systems (Brown, 2016). Through these platforms, teachers can effectively deliver educational content, while still conducting in-person lessons.

However, despite the increasing attention given by educators to the use of blended learning approach, few studies have focused on developing students' oral communicative competence (OCC) in English through this approach.

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\* Corresponding Author.

Therefore, the main purpose of this article is to examine the possibilities and challenges of using blended learning to enhance English language communication skills among college EFL students. This article is a review article which critically analyses previous studies that have investigated the effectiveness of blended learning for improving English language communication competence among young learners. This article ends with a presentation of the procedures of the implementation of blended teaching.

## II. IMPORTANCE OF OCC FOR COLLEGE EFL STUDENTS

Throughout time, the primary goal of language classrooms has been to achieve communicative competence, which involves teaching the organizational, pragmatic, systematic, and psychomotor aspects of language (Brown, 2016; Poolsawad et al., 2015). This goal remains relevant in modern ELL, where the emphasis is on the practical use of language for the development of effective communication in real-life situations, as opposed to simply memorizing grammar rules (Eaton, 2010).

Several studies have highlighted the positive impact of OCC on college EFL students' academic success. For example, Nassaji and Fotos (2011) found that EFL students who possess effective OCC have higher academic achievement, increased participation in classroom activities, and improved comprehension of academic materials. Additionally, effective oral communication allows students to understand and express academic concepts accurately, ask questions, and engage in discussions, leading to successful academic performance. OCC is also essential for cultural integration for EFL students. In fact, effective oral communication allows students to participate in social interactions, build relationships, and integrate into the target language culture (Kramsch, 2009). EFL students who possess effective OCC are more likely to feel confident, interact with native speakers, and gain a deeper understanding of the culture.

The literature also emphasizes the role of OCC in EFL students' professional success. For example, EFL students who possess effective OCC are more likely to succeed in job interviews, be hired, and advance in their careers (Susanto, 2012). Effective oral communication is also essential in various professional settings, such as negotiations, presentations, and meetings, and can lead to career success and advancement. Furthermore, in personal development aspect, effective oral communication allows students to express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions, leading to improved self-esteem and personal growth (Tavil, 2010). Taking this into account, college EFL students who possess effective OCC are more likely to feel confident, assert their needs, and develop their social skills, leading to personal development and overall well-being. Hence, OCC is critical for college EFL students' academic success, cultural integration, professional success, and personal development. Effective oral communication allows students to participate in social interactions, build relationships, and express themselves accurately, leading to personal, social, and professional success.

However, there are still several common challenges and obstacles that college EFL students may encounter in developing effective oral communication skills. For instance, many students may feel nervous or anxious when speaking in public or in front of others, which can affect their ability to communicate effectively. Moreover, some students may lack confidence in their abilities to communicate effectively, which can hold them back from expressing their ideas clearly and persuasively. In addition, effective oral communication skills require practice and repetition, but many college EFL students may not have enough opportunities to practice and improve their skills. With the advent of digital technology, teaching techniques have evolved to incorporate new tools and platforms. Blended learning allows for greater flexibility in terms of scheduling and pacing and provides students with increased opportunities to practice their oral communication skills with more immediate and detailed feedback.

## III. EFFECT OF ONLINE TECHNIQUE ON ENGLISH ORAL COMMUNICATION: RELATED STUDIES

In recent times, technology has brought about a revolution in the realm of human interaction. One specific domain where technology has made a profound impact is in the arena of spoken English communication. Virtual classrooms and video conferencing are online educational platforms that offer a collaborative learning environment for students and instructors altogether. These platforms have become increasingly prevalent in English as a Second Language (ESL) settings, as they permit learners to practice their English language skills in real-time with native speakers. Lamy and Hampel (2007) assert that video conferencing platforms, such as Zoom and Skype, are valuable tools that can help students enhance their pronunciation, intonation, and speaking fluency. Moreover, these platforms can be utilized to simulate real-life scenarios, rendering them a valuable tool for learners to practice their communication proficiencies.

An additional use of web-based technology in the field of spoken English is through the utilization of mobile applications. Programs like Duolingo, Babel, and Rosetta Stone can offer language learners interactive tutorials, assessments, and activities to enhance their speaking abilities. These applications also provide speech recognition features, which can supply instantaneous feedback on one's intonation and pronunciation. Mobile apps can provide learners with the opportunity to exercise their speaking skills at their own convenience, which offers a higher level of flexibility and convenience, in addition to offering a range of multimedia resources, such as audio and video files, which can enrich learners' proficiency in listening and speaking skills. Additionally, mobile apps frequently employ gamification and other interactive features to make learning more captivating and stimulating (Alwafi et al., 2022).

Furthermore, online discussion forums and social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, can be used for English oral communication practice. These platforms allow for asynchronous communication and provide a platform for students to engage in discussions and debates with their peers, practicing their speaking and listening skills altogether. Aykut (2008) discussed the implementation of tasks with technology in ELT, including the use of online tools, including discussion forums and video conferencing. The authors argued that technology can enhance the effectiveness of language tasks by providing opportunities for collaboration, communication, and feedback.

Nevertheless, the technological barriers may exist in the immersive online learning approach. Yet, some learners may struggle to navigate online platforms or may not have access to the necessary technology, which can result in unequal learning opportunities (Rerung, 2018; Rianto, 2020; Sari & Wahyudin, 2019). Besides, learners may be susceptible to distractions when using online tools, which can decrease their engagement and hinder their language learning progress, as well as overreliance on online tools may result in a diminished emphasis on other essential language skills, such as critical thinking and creativity. The existing problems mentioned above reflect the need of mixed instructional approach that integrates both online and offline instruction. In this way, the strengths of both two types of approaches can give learners opportunities for active learning and engagement. Students can achieve deeper learning and retain information better through blended teaching. This is because blended learning can not only provide learners with authentic language learning experiences but also the flexibility to learn at their own pace and on their own schedule (Müller & Mildemberger, 2021).

#### IV. BLENDED LEARNING IN ELT AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION EDUCATION

##### A. Popularity of E-Learning in ELT

In recent years, electronic learning (e-learning) has experienced a surge in popularity within the realm of English language instruction. This trend can be attributed to various factors, such as the advantageous features of online learning, which include its flexibility and convenience, as well as the plethora of digital tools and resources accessible to both instructors and learners. Additionally, the increasing significance of digital literacy in contemporary society has contributed to the rising acceptance of e-learning methodologies (Pratiwi et al., 2022).

Several studies have investigated the effectiveness of e-learning in ELT. For instance, Paliath and Evangeline (2022) found that e-learning was more effective than traditional classroom instruction in improving learners' reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, Istifci et al. (2011) reported that e-learning was as effective as face-to-face instruction in developing learners' writing skills. Furthermore, Banditvilai (2016) found that e-learning enhanced learners' attitudes towards ELL, as well as their proficiency in listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills. The supremacy of e-learning in ELT has been reported in a good number of studies. Studies have shown that e-learning can lead to an improvement in learners' motivation, engagement, and autonomy (Lazorak et al., 2021). It enables learners to work independently and at their own pace, thereby enhancing their self-regulation and self-directed learning abilities. In addition, e-learning facilitates personalized learning by providing learners with a variety of resources, such as online dictionaries, grammar and vocabulary exercises, and multimedia materials (Purwantoro et al., 2021). Besides, e-learning platforms offer opportunities for learners to engage in collaborative learning and social presence by interacting with their peers and teachers (Lazorak et al., 2021).

Despite the inherent benefits of electronic learning in English Language Teaching (ELT), it also poses certain impediments. Foremost among these is the absence of direct personal contact, which can impede the acquisition of verbal communication and auditory perception skills (Mwakyusa, 2016). In addition, e-learning necessitates that students have strong self-discipline and motivation, traits which may not exist in all learners. Another issue that learners encounter is the potential for technical difficulties such as connectivity issues and software malfunctions, which can diminish learners' engagement and motivation (Olutola et al., 2021).

##### B. Blended Learning for the Improvement of English OCC

The use of blended learning in improving English OCC has emerged as a response to the growing demand for English language proficiency in an increasingly globalized world. As English has become the dominant language of international communication, the ability to speak and understand English has become essential for success in academic, professional, and personal contexts.

After investigating the effectiveness of blended learning in improving English OCC among university students, Hasanah and Malik (2020) reported that students who received blended learning instruction showed a significant improvement in their OCC because they had more opportunities to practice speaking and receive feedback through the online components of the course, which included interactive multimedia resources, online discussion forums, and chat rooms. Blended learning provides learners with opportunities to practice English oral communication skills in a supportive and low-risk environment. It also allows learners to engage with authentic English language resources, such as videos, podcasts, and social media, which can improve their language proficiency and fluency (Kukulkska-Hulme & Traxler, 2013). Besides, blended learning offers learners flexibility in terms of time and location, allowing them to learn at their own pace and convenience (Moradimokhles & Hwang, 2022).

Blended learning benefits from face-to-face interaction because it incorporates additional elements of teaching and learning, such as social networking, group collaboration, and daily conversation (Yang & Ogata, 2023), which may not

be present in digital-only learning (Simbolon, 2021). It is important to mention that online learning may not cover all the necessary language skills required for everyday life, such as public speaking. In other words, online platforms may not bring the same experience gained when learners are in immersive language learning environments (Alhamami, 2018, 2019). However, the experiences gained from face-to-face interaction can be exploited to enhance online learning. This can be done through creating an engaging atmosphere and improving language speaking skills. With this in mind, the primary overall objective of ELT is to equip students with the necessary language skills to handle real-life situations, which can be best achieved through speaking, a skill that is best developed through face-to-face interaction in the classroom.

In another study, Ibrahim and Yusoff (Yu et al., 2005) found that by using blended learning for the speaking course, students were provided with more opportunities to practice speaking outside of the classroom and were encouraged to develop and do presentations to real audiences. They also discovered that utilizing a wiki in a blended learning environment was advantageous for the Public Speaking course. Likewise, Qindah (2018) suggested that blended learning was suitable for teaching language skills, especially in speaking and grammar courses, as it requires students to take responsibility for their learning and practice their language skills efficiently. Besides, Yang et al. (2013) investigated the effectiveness of integrating Communication Technology into personalized English listening and speaking instruction through using Moodle, a computer-based learning environment. They reported that students who participated in the intervention program showed significant improvements in both English speaking and listening skills. To conclude, the literature reviewed in this section supports the idea that blended learning can effectively enhance speaking skills.

## V. BLENDED LEARNING IN IMPROVING ENGLISH OCC: THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

A good number of theories have been used to support the wide range of benefits in using blended learning. For example, sociocultural theory is a theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of social and cultural contexts in shaping human learning and development. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs when a learner can engage in activities that are just beyond their current level of ability, but still within their zone of proximal development (ZPD). This means that learning is a socially mediated process that requires interaction with others who are able to provide guidance, feedback, and support.

Another key concept in sociocultural theory is the idea of scaffolding, which refers to the support that more knowledgeable others provide to learners as they move towards greater independence and mastery of a task (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Scaffolding can take many forms, such as modelling, questioning, prompting, and providing feedback. The goal of scaffolding is to gradually transfer responsibility for learning from the teacher to the learner, while still providing the necessary support to ensure success.

Sociocultural theory also emphasizes the role of language and communication in shaping learning and development. Language is not just a tool for communication, but also a means for thinking and problem-solving (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). In sociocultural theory, language is seen as a social practice that is shaped by cultural and historical contexts, and that plays a central role in shaping social relationships and identities (Lantolf, 2000). Sociocultural theory has been applied to the field of second language acquisition (SLA) to help understand the complex processes of learning a new language within social and cultural contexts. In this relationship, the sociocultural theory provides a valuable perspective on how social and cultural factors can influence language learning and teaching (Scott & Palincsar, 2013). By emphasizing the importance of social interactions, collaboration, and exposure to authentic materials, sociocultural theory can help educators and learners create more effective blended learning environments that support the development of English oral communicative competence.

Another underpinning theory is the communicative competence model by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). This model is comprised of four components: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. It emphasizes the importance of using language for communication purposes, rather than simply focusing on linguistic accuracy (Bagarić & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2007). In this view, communicative competence goes beyond linguistic knowledge to include social and pragmatic factors that enable effective communication in different contexts. The model has been widely used in language teaching and testing and has influenced the development of communicative language teaching approaches, which emphasize the importance of using language in authentic communicative situations to develop communicative competence.

Canale and Swain's (1980) model has been used as a basis for developing communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches, which aim at promoting language learning through communicative interaction. In CLT, the focus is on providing learners with opportunities to engage in authentic communicative activities, in which they are required to use language to achieve meaningful communication goals. The use of communicative activities helps learners to develop the ability to use language in a variety of contexts, and to adapt their language use to suit different situations and interlocutors.

The concept of communicative competence has also been influential in the development of language assessment. Canale and Swain's (1980) model has been used as a basis for designing communicative language tests that assess not only linguistic knowledge but also the ability to use language in social and pragmatic contexts. Communicative language tests aim to assess learners' abilities to use language in real-life situations, rather than simply testing their

knowledge of language rules. By providing opportunities for authentic language use and collaboration in both face-to-face and online settings, blended learning can help students develop their linguistic knowledge and social, cultural, and situational awareness in communication. Moreover, the use of technology can help students develop their strategic competence by encouraging them to use different communication strategies to achieve their goals in a digital environment.

## VI. BLENDED TEACHING IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

The virtual world, specifically online teaching platforms and educational resource libraries, offers valuable assistance for blended teaching and learning. This approach allows educators to extend their teaching beyond the physical classroom and provides students with greater opportunities to learn efficiently and effectively. By utilizing online teaching platforms and high-quality educational resources, blended teaching and learning not only allows teachers to lead the learning process but also enables students to play an active role in learning. Teachers can incorporate online teaching resources into their classroom teaching, while students can access these resources and interactive tools for further learning, discussion, and communication outside the classroom. The hybrid teaching mode in the network environment mainly includes the following procedures (see Figure 1):

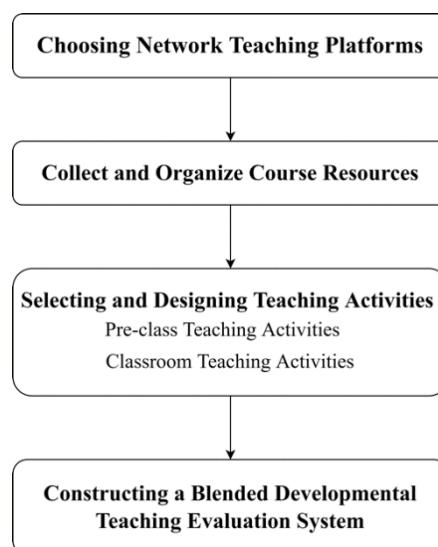


Figure 1. Blended Teaching Implementation Procedures

### A. Choosing Network Teaching Platforms

Currently, most universities in the world have built advanced and fully functional campus networks and accessed the Internet, providing a good network environment for traditional school education and online education. However, the function of the network for teaching should not be just the release of teaching content, but more should be to support teaching interaction, teaching evaluation, and teaching management since these are important links to ensure teaching quality.

Although the network can provide rich and colourful communication functions for teaching, these functions are scattered, which is not conducive to the deployment and management of teaching. Therefore, there is a need for a web-based teaching platform that integrates the functions of teaching content publishing and management, classroom teaching, online teaching interaction, online teaching evaluation, project-based collaborative learning, developmental teaching evaluation, and teaching management to support hybrid teaching (Rao, 2019). Currently, the popular general online teaching platforms include 4A, Tsinghua Education Online, RTVU Online, Netladder Teaching Platform, and Ambo Online, WebCT, Blackboard, UKEU, Frontier, and Learning Space, etc.

### B. Collect and Organize Course Resources

Course resources refer to a wide range of multimedia teaching materials that students can use to achieve the objectives of the course content. According to Yu et al. (2005), these resources are typically part of a network course with a logical organizational structure that includes presentation and interactive teaching content. These resources can be multimodal with various formats, such as videos, audio, animations, graphics/images, and text, which can serve as both content presentation and interactive educational resources, as well as English teaching resources. Course resources can also include tools for teaching evaluation, such as questions and papers, and a literature catalogue index for expanding the scope of learning content. The design of course resources is similar to that of online courses and can be developed using online teaching platforms.

In the blended teaching mode, the second language oral teaching material is not restricted to the usual textbook content. Teachers have the freedom to expand the teaching material beyond textbook knowledge, incorporating current social content that aligns with students' interests and the effectiveness of past content. This includes a range of knowledge areas from professional knowledge to ideological, political, and cultural knowledge. To adapt and introduce relevant content into teaching, teachers draw from a wealth of online resources, catering to the diverse learning needs of students and promoting their independent learning and oral communication practice. The advent of intelligent information technology such as artificial intelligence and cloud computing has revolutionized the way we obtain information. We now have access to comprehensive network information, making it easier for students to incorporate into their daily lives.

### *C. Selecting and Designing Teaching Activities*

The activities for English oral teaching are created with the intention of promoting a thorough development of the teaching process. These activities may include problem-solving through exploration, collaborative group problem-solving, group communication and discussion, answering common questions, online intelligent Q&A, self-assessment plans, homework plans, and evaluations. To ensure that these activities are effective, they must align with the course objectives, content, and presentation format, and should be selected and designed in accordance with the teaching progress, specifically relating to knowledge points. The aim of teaching activities is to establish language speaking environments for students and to enhance communication and interaction between teachers and other students. As a result, suitable teaching strategies are of utmost importance for the successful execution of teaching activities.

#### *(a). Pre-Class Teaching Activities*

Before class, teachers should adequately prepare by uploading course materials, audio, and video to the Learning Pass platform and assigning preview tasks. Students can download learning resources in a timely manner, carefully complete preview tasks, take note of any questions they don't understand, and seek advice from teachers during offline teaching. Previewing can be done through online teaching, which allows for flexible learning opportunities. The online resources provided by teachers are comprehensive, diverse, and feature rich audio and video materials, which can motivate students to engage in pre-class preview and achieve positive learning outcomes. For the online teaching of practicing English oral competence, the pre-class activities are available as below:

**Learning how to pronounce and use intonation:** Prior to class, students are required to learn English pronunciation and intonation using online platforms or other methods, such as listening exercises, phonetic training, and imitative exercises.

**Completing pre-class assignments:** Before class, the teacher assigns preview tasks such as completing listening exercises, reading specific articles, or preparing dialogues or speeches, enabling students to better utilize their oral expression skills during class.

**Self-study:** Students must independently study relevant information prior to class, such as new vocabulary, phrases, and sentences, to apply the knowledge more effectively during class.

**Communication and interaction:** Students can communicate and interact with their peers and teacher through online discussion forums, email, WhatsApp, and other platforms, allowing them to discuss problems, share experiences, and address difficulties.

**Pre-class preparation:** Students need to prepare necessary teaching tools and learning materials, such as recording equipment, dictionaries, notebooks, and course outlines in advance, to participate in class interaction and practical exercises more effectively.

#### *(b). Classroom Teaching Activities*

The integration of online and offline teaching in hybrid teaching has transformed the previous single teaching method into a new teaching process that incorporates multiple links, including multi-structure driven approaches, situation creation, preview with teacher guidance, multi-aspect detection and feedback, and cooperative learning. This approach not only increases students' enthusiasm for learning and hands-on practice, but also allows for more flexibility in scheduling and communication between teachers and students. The new teaching process requires teachers to consider the connections between links in teaching and test their ability to match multiple links with online and offline teaching content to encourage more participation from students. Blended teaching is not simply a sequential process of "offline first, then online" or "online first, then offline," but rather a synchronous integration of online and offline teaching (Yu et al., 2005). The diversification of teaching processes does not necessarily mean a decrease in teaching standards or content difficulty. Instead, as teaching processes change, teaching standards and difficulty should be improved to reflect the diversification of standards and evaluation.

Firstly, the teacher should give a brief overview of the pre-class learning situation, which can include offering feedback on students' online learning progress. Examples of this are checking students' homework, using online platforms to review assignments and provide prompt feedback and grading. These activities can have various benefits. First, they can enable students to gauge their progress and identify areas for improvement. Second, they can help in sharing outstanding student work in class as this can, in turn, motivate students to complete their online assignments and enhance their enthusiasm and confidence for learning. Organizing online group discussions can encourage students

to share their experiences and knowledge gained from frontline activities, as well as help teachers understand students' learning difficulties and needs. By giving personalized feedback and suggestions on students' homework and performance, teachers can help students comprehend their learning situation and enhance their self-reflection and abilities. Finally, teachers can create a pre-class questionnaire survey to learn about students' perspectives and experiences with frontline activities, as well as their expectations and suggestions for future learning, which can be useful for improving classroom instruction.

Next, adjust the teaching goals accordingly by considering the students' prior learning and concentrate on crucial and challenging topics. Teaching the essential concepts in the course is a crucial step to ensure that students promptly comprehend the course's knowledge framework. In the classroom, educators utilize pre-planned online courses that combine meticulously created and handpicked multimedia materials to engage students' various senses and assist them in comprehending and retaining the information.

Then, put emphasis on English oral practice through classroom discussion, communication, Q&A, and classroom group collaboration research topics. Classroom discussions can be the beginning of online discussions, or they can be the continuation and deepening of online discussions. To foster students' practical abilities and innovative spirit, project-based research-based learning is an effective approach. The development of project research can be carried out in both online and classroom settings: online, discussions, information retrieval and processing, data sharing, results display, process information recording, and evaluation are mainly conducted; in the classroom, group presentations are organized, and in the process of presentation, there is in-depth communication and discussion with the teacher, thereby obtaining appropriate oral communicating guidance.

#### *D. Constructing a Blended Developmental Teaching Evaluation System*

Build a multi-level and open hybrid teaching evaluation system. In the context of improving blended learning processes, the content, methods, and processes learned by each individual are not the same. Teaching evaluation should focus more on examining students' multi-level performance at various stages of a course. In online speaking activities, weaker students should focus on consolidating their basic knowledge, while stronger students can explore more advanced topics. Meanwhile, offline courses should be tailored to different student groups with varying discussion and assignment styles. By adopting a hybrid teaching approach, teachers can provide targeted teaching and formulate different evaluation systems depending on the needs of each student. It is essential to reconstruct the balance between online and offline assessment, as hybrid teaching emphasizes self-learning and group collaboration, making self-evaluation and peer evaluation essential components of a comprehensive, open, and diverse evaluation system.

To effectively carry out developmental evaluation, it is crucial to choose suitable evaluation methods and apply them flexibly, taking into account the specific evaluation content and corresponding course objectives. It is also important to incorporate the concept of performance-based evaluation appropriately. The evaluation should be focused on students' speaking performance and their ability to apply oral English knowledge or information technology to solve communication problems in practical situations. This approach should involve a comprehensive evaluation of students' language foundation, learning process, methods, and the formation of relevant emotional attitudes and values. With the aid of the internet, evaluation activities can be conducted through various means such as online speech, self-evaluation, portfolio recording, and questionnaires, allowing for a more comprehensive assessment.

### VII. BLENDED LEARNING IN TEACHING OCC FOR COLLEGE EFL STUDENTS

The implementation of blended teaching to improve students' OCC necessitates the integration of virtual and in-person instructional approaches, and the successful fusion of these two methods is heavily dependent on leveraging cutting-edge computer technology, thereby imposing fresh demands on educators and learners alike. According to Vaughan (2010), teachers face various challenges when they start implementing blended learning, and factors such as teachers' personal creativity, the performance of blended learning systems, management support, incentive policies, and training all have an impact on teachers' blended learning. Similarly, Brown et al. (2016) also believes that there are both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that hinder teachers from implementing blended learning, such as a lack of time or increased workload.

While blended learning has the potential to enhance students' ability to communicate orally by providing more learning resources, greater opportunities for oral practice, and customized teaching services, the integration of technology into the teaching process, which results in the online component, might cause some level of unease among students, teachers, and educational institutions. Rasheed et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review of the literature and summarized that the challenges students face in blended learning include: self-regulation challenges, technological literacy and competency challenges, students' isolation challenges, technological sufficiency challenges, and technological complexity challenges. According to research conducted by Özmen and Atıcı (2014) and Thoms and Eryilmaz (2014), combining social networking sites with learning management systems has been found to have a positive impact on the quality of communication among students as well as between students and their instructors. This integration leads to increased social interaction, which ultimately results in a more engaging learning experience. Consequently, students who attend institutions where social networking sites are used for online activities are likely to face fewer of the challenges highlighted above (Rasheed et al., 2020).

To teach effectively in a blended learning environment, it is important for English teachers to possess adequate technological skills. Additionally, it is necessary for educators to seek out the appropriate technical and instructional assistance from their institution to inspire students to engage and participate in oral communication actively in their learning. According to Medina (2018), the competence of teachers in utilizing contemporary technological advancements is being challenged, and their unwillingness to acquire knowledge and apply online technology might be linked to studies highlighting the educators' grievances concerning the inadequacy of proper training and motivating assistance provided by their institutions in terms of integrating technology into their teaching practices.

In order to effectively utilize blended learning to improve students' oral communication abilities, educational institutions must possess a thorough comprehension of the technological proficiency and aptitude levels of their teachers and students, which is essential for the provision of dependable and resilient technological infrastructure support, as well as varied learning management systems. The main challenge that educational institutions face in implementing blended learning is providing technical support for teachers and students, including the expenses related to online technologies, maintenance, training, and acquiring appropriate modern technologies to promote a productive blended learning environment (Dehghanzadeh & Jafaraghaee, 2018; Genaidy et al., 2018).

To sum up, there is a growing need for increased involvement of stakeholders in utilizing blended learning for English language education and improving communication skills. This can be achieved by gaining institutional recognition and by teachers' dedicated efforts towards establishing a more extensive and well-structured hybrid learning system.

## VIII. CONCLUSIONS

Online teaching has a broader meaning beyond distance education and can also have a significant impact on traditional classroom teaching. The purpose of integrating online teaching into campus teaching is not to replace traditional teaching methods, but rather to gradually merge and complement them to improve the overall teaching approach. This leads to the development of an effective teaching methodology that can be implemented in an information technology environment. Blended learning has become increasingly popular with the advancement of educational technology, and it emphasizes the combination of the strengths of traditional and digital teaching methods to achieve better learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the emergence of new digital resources has brought about rapid changes in various aspects of the world. Blended learning, as a newly emerging technological tool, has great potential to enhance modern language education in various fields due to its popularity among students. Therefore, English language educators, scholars, and institutions need to recognize the potential benefits of using blended teaching in the English education sector, especially for young learners. They should also take advantage of the opportunity to develop an innovative digital learning system for EFL students in the post-pandemic era.

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**Wu Zhangli** is a TESL major PhD student at the Universiti Putra Malaysia. She received a bachelor's degree in English major from Inner Mongolia Normal University in China and a master's degree in English Pedagogy from Huaibei Normal University, China. Her current research field is Teaching of English as a Second Language. She is interested in second language acquisition, English pedagogy, and classroom teaching.

**Lilliati Ismail** (Ph.D) is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Language and Humanities Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests include Teaching of English as a Second Language, Grammar instruction, Task-based language teaching, Language assessment, Teacher training.

**Norhakimah Khaissa Ahmad** (Ph.D) is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Language and Humanities Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests include Teaching of English as a Second Language, Applied Linguistics.

**Omer Hassan Ali Mahfoodh** (Ph.D) is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Languages, Literacies and Translation at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). His research interests include Second Language Writing, EAP, Applied Linguistics, Discourse Studies, and Second Language Acquisition.

**Wang Xuewen** is an Educational Technology major PhD student at the Universiti Putra Malaysia. His current research field is Educational Technology and Health Education. He is interested in E-health Literacy Education, Blended Learning and Physics Education.