Language Related Research
E-ISSN: 2383-0816
https://lrr.modares.ac.ir
https://doi.org/10.29252/LRR.15.5.2
http://dorl.net/dor/20.1001.1.23223081.1401.0.0.375.7

Tarbiat Modares University

Vol. 15, No. 5
pp. 35-56
November & December 2024

Received: 23 September 2023
Received in revised form: 24 October 2023
Accepted: 14 November 2023

Students' Perceptions of Learning EFL in The Combination of Face-to-Face and Online Teaching Environments

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Abstract

The combination of face-to-face and online teaching, also called Blended learning (BL) has practically become one of the prevalent models of teaching and learning all over the world. Particularly, it has been applied as a new trend of using technology to concurrently combine in-class and out-of-class learning to optimize the educational impacts on students. However, BL is still quite a new learning model and has not been applied widely in teaching English in Vietnam. The current study was conducted to explore students' perceptions of BL, the difficulties students think they have, and the percentage of face-to-face and online learning they prefer when learning in the BL environment. Sixty civil engineering students participating in the survey filled out a questionnaire after the forms of BL and the Learning Management System (LMS) Moodle had been introduced to them. The findings indicated that more than half of the participants were stimulated by BL and willing to take on the challenges. Nevertheless, some concerns about the lack of IT skills to fulfill the requirements of the BL course cannot be ignored.

***Keywords*:** blended learning, E-learning, EFL learning, students' perception

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[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1401.0.0.375.7]
[DOI: 10.48311/LRR.15.5.35]

1. Introduction

The world where we live has been continuously changing, which causes a lot of impacts on all aspects of our lives. Inevitably, education has been deeply affected by many factors, and the fourth industrial revolution and COVID-19 are among the major ones that have greatly influenced education (Alakrash & Razak, 2022).

The fourth industrial revolution, or the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0), has significantly impacted all aspects of our society. In terms of education, it has increasingly influenced learning opportunities, educational policies, and instructional procedures. The Internet of Things (IoT) has greatly impacted curriculum design and introduced new teaching methods to educators (Alakrash & Kazak, 2021). Blockchain, Cloud Computing, and cyber security are believed to be used in a wide range in the future to improve learning opportunities and keep students' activities for a long time (Elayyyan, 2021). Additionally, Social networking has integrated into education, providing teachers and students with platforms to enhance the educational process, collaborate in lessons, and access new communication opportunities (Wang, 2023). Particularly, in English language teaching, IR 4.0 not only provides students with flexible time and place for learning and enhances their confidence, independence, and motivation but also engages teachers to use technology in the teaching and learning process (Arsaf, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic emerging in 2019 caused a lot of devastating damage to all sectors and fields in the world. Education has inevitably experienced the toughest period. The whole educational system around the world from elementary to tertiary level has collapsed (Mishra et al., 2020), schools at all levels closed for a long time creating an urgent need for the education system to find alternatives to traditional teaching and learning processes. As a result, teaching modes were switched from teaching face-to-face to online teaching or a combination of both online and offline. It is a fact that the transformation of teaching and learning modes has brought many challenges for both teachers and learners (Dick et al., 2020). Teachers faced difficulties in "controlling the dynamics and interactions in the class, and the difficulties in arranging workload in school curricula filled with online classes" (Mai & Khac, 2021). According to Mai and Khac (2021), when COVID-19 broke out in 2019, Vietnamese students' studying was repeatedly disrupted as schools closed and re-opened. During social distancing and lockdowns, teaching and learning activities were conducted online through web-based facilities such as Zoom, Zalo, and Google Meet or through

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1401.0.0.375.7]
[DOI: 10.48311/LRR.15.5.35]

learning management systems like Moodle. In English language teaching, the coronavirus pandemic highlighted significant deficiencies in EFL teachers' digital competence and the use of Information and communication technologies, in spite of prior efforts towards educational digitalization (Morata-Garrido et al., 2023). Despite many difficulties in teaching and learning online, teachers and students deeply understood the need to continue their education and ensure their safety at the same time. Consequently, they adopted and adapted to teaching and learning in the online environment (Mishra et al., 2020). In summary, English language teaching needs reconstructing to keep up with the changes around the world.

In Vietnam, online learning has been approved by the government. In the past few years, the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam (MOET) has issued many documents regulating online teaching in educational institutions from high school to higher education. Typically, Circular No. 08/2021/TT-BGDĐT dated March 18, 2021, regulates that up to 30% of the total volume of the university training program (full-time and part-time) is carried out online (MOET, 2021a). On March 30, 2021, the MOET released Circular No. 09/2021/TT-BGDĐT which regulates the management and arrangement of online teaching in general education institutions and continuing education institutions. This Circular stipulates the management and organization of online teaching of general education programs, and continuing education programs at the lower and upper secondary levels, including the arrangement of online teaching; technical infrastructure for online teaching; and responsibilities of relevant agencies, organizations, and individuals. With the recognition of legal documents, online learning has become more and more popular in the context of Vietnamese education (MOET, 2021b).

Since the COVID-19 pandemic subsided, students and teachers have come back to face-to-face classrooms in the "new normal" state - the post-Covid era. There has been a debate on whether it is necessary to maintain online teaching and on what is the appropriate percentage of online to implement in teaching. Although the combination of face-to-face and online teaching or BL is believed to bring many advantages to teaching (Bakeer, 2018; Hà, 2019; Lê & Hà, 2020), many factors should be considered before implementing BL in teaching, especially how students perceive BL and how ready they are to experience this mode of learning. To answer these questions, it is significant to investigate how students think of learning in both face-to-face and online teaching environments

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1401.0.0.375.7]
[DOI: 10.48311/LRR.15.5.35]

and how many percent of online is suitable for them. Therefore, this study explored EFL students' perceptions of BL, the difficulties that they can meet, and their willingness to learn in the BL environment. The study aims to answer the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How do ELF students perceive the BL approach?

RQ2: What seems to be the challenges for ELF students learning via BL?

RQ3: What are the proportions between face-to-face and online teaching that EFL students would like in a BL course?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Perception and the Role of Students' Perception

Perception is one of the most difficult concepts to define. It can be "a belief or opinion often held by many people and based on how things seem" or "the way that someone thinks and feels about" something (Cambridge Dictionary). Efron (1969) defined perception as "man's primary form of cognitive contact with the world around him". In some research, researchers define perception as a process of obtaining information through top-down and bottom-up modes (Demuth, 2013), and to be aware or understand sensory information (Qiong, 2017). Mismara's (2019) research suggests that perception is a procedure of taking "intangible information from our environment" to communicate with the environment around us.

Students' perceptions have been emphasized in research related to teaching and learning (Edgerton & McKechnie, 2023; Wright, 2017; Bulut, 2003). Edgerton and McKechnie (2023) confirmed the significant relation between students' perceptions of the school's environment and their academic achievement, Wright (2017) stated that students' perceptions are very important in investigating the quality of blended learning. According to Bulut (2003), the perception of students plays a significant role in the language teaching and learning process and helps teachers choose suitable activities for developing students' language skills in the classroom.

2.2. The Combination of Face-to-face and Online Teaching

As a result of the fourth industrial revolution and the COVID-19 pandemic, digital

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technology has been widely used in tertiary education to help students survive effectively in such a technologically based world. To deal with this growing expectation, E-learning (online learning), and hybrid or Blended Learning - combining E-learning and face-to-face teaching (Circular No. 12/2016/TT-BGDĐT) – have been chosen by many countries and educational institutions, especially during the outbreak of the global Covid-19 pandemic. However, it is a challenge to clearly define the term BL as many different definitions of BL have emerged (Ossiannilsson, 2018). BL can be considered a mode in the teaching and learning process that combines the strengths of face-to-face and online teaching and takes advantage of theory, method, and technology, typically web-based tools and information technology to optimize students' learning (Singh et al., 2021). BL is also defined as a combination of face-to-face teaching with e-learning including synchronous and asynchronous teaching (Albiladi & Alshareef, 2019; Hubackova et al., 2011), or a formal education program in which students learn partly through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path, and pace and partly at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home (Staker & Horn 2012). It is also an effective combination of different models and learning styles carried out in a meaningful learning environment that is actively connected (Kaur, 2013), or the proper use of a mixture of theory, method, and technology to optimize learning in a particular context (Cronje, 2020).

2.3. The Significance of Implementing BL in Teaching EFL

The face of education has changed because digital technology has been widely used, which forces tertiary education to deal with the growing expectations to help students survive effectively in such a technologically based world. BL is consistent with the values of traditional higher education institutions and has the proven potential to enhance both the effectiveness and efficiency of meaningful learning experiences (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). As a result of the fourth Industrial revolution, E-learning (online learning), and hybrid or BL- combining E-learning and face-to-face teaching (Circular No. 12/2016/TT-BGDĐT) – have been chosen by many countries and educational institutions in the era of Technology 4.0, especially during the outbreak of the global Covid-19 pandemic. In the past few years, the Ministry of Education and Training has issued many documents regulating online teaching in educational institutions from high school,

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and continuing education to universities. Typically, Circular No. 08/2021/TT-BGDĐT dated March 18, 2021, regulates that up to 30% of the total volume of the university training program (full-time and part-time) is carried out online. In addition, Circular No. 09/2021/TT-BGDĐT dated March 30, 2021, stipulates the management and organization of online teaching of general education programs, and continuing education programs at the lower and upper secondary levels, including the arrangement of online teaching; technical infrastructure for online teaching; and responsibilities of relevant agencies, organizations, and individuals. Developing ICT capacity in teaching and learning, promoting digital transformation in education, expanding access to education for students, and creating opportunities for students to study anywhere, anytime are the essential aims of Circular No. 09/2021/TT-BGDĐT. With the recognition from legal documents, E-learning and BL have become more and more popular in the context of Vietnamese education.

There have been many studies on applying BL in teaching in different disciplines at various levels with positive results. BL has significant effects on learners' motivation (Lê & Hà, 2020), helps enhance learners' self-consciousness, attitude, and responsibility (Bakeer, 2018; Hà, 2019) motivated students, and helps them achieve more benefits because students can take all advantages of traditional pedagogical methods and E-Learning as well (Vũ, 2020). According to King (2016), BL is not a new approach but has become much easier and more meaningful for learners with the capabilities of today's technology. In addition, different learning styles and different learning environments are combined in a flexible, integrated, and complementary way to help, support, and enhance learners' diverse needs and provide a successful, efficient, and enjoyable learning experience in a BL environment. King (2016) also supports the view that BL can result in a better student learning experience, improved learning outcomes, and greater student motivation, confidence, and satisfaction leading to learners becoming more independent and enjoying learning the language. BL is also evaluated to be able to substantially enhance the student experience if it is implemented "appropriately" and can be effective in enhancing the four English language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Hashemi & Si Na, 2020), help the teachers to cover the lack existing in online and offline learning, help students to learn English contextually, and make students improve their language skills (Rachman et al., 2021). Moreover, online learning integrated with face-to-face one suits students' interest in using the Internet (Wright, 2017). Additionally. the ability to review course content and educational tools and resource accessibility are key benefits of online learning (Derakhshan & Shakki,

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2024). Besides the benefits, lecturers and students have faced some inevitable challenges when working in a BL environment. Teacher-student and student-student interaction is one of the issues that needs consideration (Wright, 2017), but discussion forums can be a solution (Shykina, 2015). However, internet connection (Kaur, 2013) is still a big concern. In ELT, Morata-Garrido et al. (2023) stated that blended learning's success has relied more on responsive EFL teachers than on specific training from schools. This highlights the need for better support and updated digital strategies from schools. In other words, pedagogical and technical factors are the main challenges of e-learning when considering applying BL (Derakhshan & Shakki, 2024).

In conclusion, the literature shows that the combination of face-to-face and online teaching, or BL can bring many advantages to English language teaching. Most of the reviewed studies mainly evaluate the implementation of BL during the COVID-19 pandemic (Mai & Khac, 2021; Rachman et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2021; Mishra et al.,2020), the effects of BL on students' learning (Hashemi & Si Na, 2020; Van Alten et al., 2019), and suggested techniques to apply in teaching and learning in BL (Nguyen, 2021; Nguyen & Luu, 2020; Vu, 2020). However, there has been little research on students' perception of BL in the context of Vietnam (Phuong et al., 2019), and Indonesia (Wright, 2017). In reality, BL is not new in the world, but quite fresh in the context of Vietnam, particularly in tertiary EFL classes, so lecturers' and students' perceptions of BL have not been deeply and widely investigated.

3. Methodology

3.1. Context of the Study

This descriptive study was conducted on civil engineering students who study English as a non-major subject to meet one of the outcomes of the curriculum, e.g. gaining an English B1 certificate. They must study 4 General English modules with 2 credits (60 periods) each. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they had to learn 100% online and did assignments on LMS and Google Forms. Since they returned to school to study face-to-face, they have been asked to keep doing assignments and quizzes on LMS as before. Based on the percentage of online teaching regulated by the MOET of Vietnam (30% at most), the combination of face-to-face and online instruction in one EFL module at my school will follow the percentages below.

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1401.0.0.375.7]
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Table 1
The Percentages of Face-to-face and Online Combination

Percentages	Number of teaching periods	
	Face-to-face	Online
85% face-to-face + 15% online	51	9
80% face-to-face + 20% online	48	12
70% face-to-face + 30% online	42	18

3.2. Participants

Participants comprised 60 civil engineering students in their first and second year at university, including 18 females and 42 males. They have learned at least one module of General English and are familiar with doing quizzes on LMS.

3.3. Data Collection

Data was collected via a questionnaire consisting of three parts. Part 1 includes 5 questions about students' perceptions; Part 2 has 5 questions about students' difficulties. The five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= Completely disagree to 5 = Completely agree was applied to the questions in part 1 and part 2. In part 3, there was only one question asking about the percentage of online and face-to-face teaching that students prefer. The questions in the questionnaire are presented below.

Table 2
Questions in the Questionnaire

	Items	1	2	3	4	5
	STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF BL					
P1	Suitable for students' interest in using mobile devices					
P2	Convenient for students' self-study					
P3	Ensures the interaction between students and lecturers, students and students					
P4	Provides students with more chances to share their opinions through forums in the LMS					
P5	Provides students with more chances to practice through apps in the LMS					
	STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES					
D1	Not familiar with the LMS, need training					
D2	Limited IT skills					
D3	Not fully accessible to the LMS with their devices					
D4	Unstable internet connection					
D5	Easily distracted by other websites when online					

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1401.0.0.375.7]
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	Items	1	2	3	4	5
Q11	What is the percentage of face-to-face and online teaching that EFL students prefer? ☐85% face-to-face + 15% online ☐80% face-to-face + 20% online ☐70% face-to-face + 30% online					

The questionnaire was reviewed by two lecturers to ensure the content validity. Both of them have taught English in higher education for over 15 years and have much experience in applying ITC in language teaching.

3.3 Data Analysis

The collected data were computed and analyzed using the SPSS program. Means, standard deviation, and t-tests were calculated to answer the first two research questions about students' perceptions of BL and the difficulties they have. Before analyzing the mean, standard deviation, and t-tests of each group of items, Cronbach's Alpha scale was also used to measure the reliability of the items. The data collected for the third research question was analyzed with frequencies to figure out the percentage of face-to-face and online learning that students prefer. The results are presented to answer the research questions as follows

4. Results

4.1. The Reliability of Variables

Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the reliability of the two groups of variables: the Scales of Students' Perceptions of BL and the scales of Students' Difficulties with BL. The first group includes 5 questions from P1 to P5, and the second has 5 questions from D1 to D5. The results are presented in Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5 below.

4.1.1 Cronbach's Alpha for the Scales of Students' Perceptions of BL

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1401.0.0.375.7]
[DOI: 10.48311/LRR.15.5.35]

Table 3

Cronbach's Alpha for the Scales of Students' Perceptions of BL

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.706	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
P1	15.38	4.478	.454	.661
P2	15.48	4.627	.536	.637
P3	15.62	4.478	.377	.696
P4	15.42	4.179	.495	.644
P5	15.37	4.304	.479	.650

(Source: SPSS20 data processing results)

The analysis results in Table 3 show that Cronbach's Alpha for the scales of Students' Perceptions of BL = 0.706 (greater than 0.7), which ensures reliability. In addition, all component variables have coefficients corresponding to the combined observed variables (Corrected item – Total correlation > 0.3), and the Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted coefficient of the component variables is smaller than Cronbach's Alpha, so the component variables are all meaningful and will be included in the next analysis.

4.1.2 Cronbach's Alpha for the Scales of Students' Difficulties with BL

Table 4

Cronbach's Alpha for the Scales of Students' Difficulties with BL

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.708	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
D1	14.75	6.055	.495	.653
D2	15.22	5.291	.612	.598
D3	15.20	5.451	.561	.620
D4	14.52	5.610	.467	.659
D5	14.98	6.186	.252	.756

(Source: SPSS20 data processing results)

The results in Table 4 show that Conbach's Alpha for the scales of Students'

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difficulties with BL = 0.708 (greater than 0.7), which indicates the scale's reliability. However, the analysis also shows that the Corrected Item-Total Correlation coefficient of the variable D5 = 0.252 < 0.3 and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient if Item Deleted of D5 = 0.756 > 0.708, so the variable D5 will be eliminated and conducted a second Cronbach's Alpha analysis for the scales of Students' difficulties with BL.

Table 5

Cronbach's Alpha for the Scales of Students' Difficulties with BL, the Second Analysis

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.756	4

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
D1	11.07	4.131	.525	.716
D2	11.53	3.609	.596	.675
D3	11.52	3.644	.581	.683
D4	10.83	3.667	.518	.721

(Source: SPSS20 data processing results)

The results in Table 5 show that Conbach's Alpha for the scales of Students' difficulties with BL = 0.756 (greater than 0.7), which ensures reliability. In addition, all component variables have coefficients corresponding to the combined observed variables (Corrected item – Total correlation > 0.3), and The Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deteted coefficient of the component variables is smaller than Cronbach's Alpha, so the component variables are all meaningful and will be included in the next analysis.

In summary, the results of the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test for the variables show that most variables used by the research model have satisfactory reliability coefficients. However, the variable D5 belonging to "the Students' difficulties with BL" was eliminated due to its unreliable reliability. Thus, 9 out of 10 observed variables meet the requirements and are retained for the next steps (Table 6).

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1401.0.0.375.7]
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Table 6

Summary of Cronbach's Alpha Analysis Results

	Variables	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha	Eliminated variables
Students' Perceptions of BL					
1	P1	.454	.661		
2	P2	.536	.637		
3	P3	.377	.696	.706	
4	P4	.495	.644		
5	P5	.479	.650		
Students' difficulties with BL					
6	D1	.495	.653		
7	D2	.612	.598		
8	D3	.561	.620	.708	D5
9	D4	.467	.659		
10	D5	.252	.756		

(Source: SPSS20 data processing results)

4.2 Hypothesis testing of Students' Perceptions of BL and Students' difficulties with BL

To examine students' perceptions of BL and the difficulties they have when they learn in BL environments, a statistical hypothesis testing technique namely a One-sample T-test was applied. The value in the T-test was identified based on the distance among the values of the 5-level Likert scale, which means the following.

1.00 -1.80: Completely disagree

1.81 – 2.60: Disagree

2.61 – 3.40: Neutral

3.41 – 4.20: Agree

4.21 – 5.00: Completely agree

It was hypothesized that students agreed with the variables in the two groups, so the value in the T-test was 3.41. The results of the T-test are presented in Table 7 and Table 8.

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1401.0.0.375.7]

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Table 7

T-test of Students' Perceptions of BL

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
P1	60	3.93	.733	.095
P2	60	3.83	.615	.079
P3	60	3.70	.809	.104
P4	60	3.90	.796	.103
P5	60	3.95	.769	.099

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 3.41

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
P1	5.527	59	.000	.523	.33	.71
P2	5.330	59	.000	.423	.26	.58
P3	2.777	59	.007	.290	.08	.50
P4	4.767	59	.000	.490	.28	.70
P5	5.442	59	.000	.540	.34	.74

(Source: SPSS20 data processing results)

Based on the results presented in Table 7, the Sig value (2-tailed) of P3 (BL ensures the interaction between students and lecturers, students and students) = 0.007 >0.05, while the Sig values (2 – 2-tailed) of other variables are equal to 0.000 <0.05. This means that there is no difference between the mean of P3 and the value 3.41, but there is a significant difference between the mean of P1, P2, P4, and P5 and the value 3.41. The results also reveal that all variables have a mean higher than 3.41, and have positive mean differences, which infers students agree with some benefits BL can bring them. In particular, students perceive that BL can provide them with more chances to practice through apps in the LMS with a mean score of 3.95. Students also believe that BL is suitable for their interest in using mobile devices and can provide them with more chances to share their opinions through forums in the LMS. The mean score for these items is approximately 3.90. The results also indicated that BL is quite convenient for students' self-study and can ensure the interaction between students and lecturers, students and students with a mean score of 3.83 and 3.70 respectively.

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1401.0.0.375.7]

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Table 8
T-test of Students' Difficulties with BL

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
D1	60	3.92	.720	.093
D2	60	3.45	.832	.107
D3	60	3.47	.833	.108
D4	60	4.15	.880	.114

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 3.41

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
D1	5.451	59	.000	.507	.32	.69
D2	.372	59	.711	.040	-.17	.25
D3	.527	59	.600	.057	-.16	.27
D4	6.516	59	.000	.740	.51	.97

(Source: SPSS20 data processing results)

The results of Table 8 reveal that the Sig values (2-tailed) of D2 (Limited IT skills) and D3 (Not fully accessible to the LMS with their devices) are 0.711 and 0.600 respectively, higher than 0.05, while the Sig values (2 – tailed) of D1 (Not familiar with the LMS, need training) and D4 (Easily distracted by other websites when online) are equal to 0.000 <0.05. This means that there is no difference between the means of D2, D3, and the value 3.41, but there is a significant difference between the means of D1 and D4 and the value 3.41. It can also be seen that all variables have a mean higher than 3.41, and have positive mean difference, which infers that students agree with the four difficulties presented in the questionnaire. Particularly, unstable internet connection is students' biggest concern with a mean score of 4.15. Students also think that they have more difficulties with the LMS system because they are not familiar with LMS and need to be trained. The mean score for this item is 3,92. The other two difficulties, with mean scores of 3.45 and 3.47 respectively, relate to students' mobile devices and IT skills. Students worry their devices cannot fully access the LMS and their limited IT skills will make studying online challenging.

4.3. The Percentage of Face-to-face and Online Learning That Students Prefer

Students' preference for the percentage of face-to-face and online learning is revealed in Figure 3. Although participants were interested in teaching and

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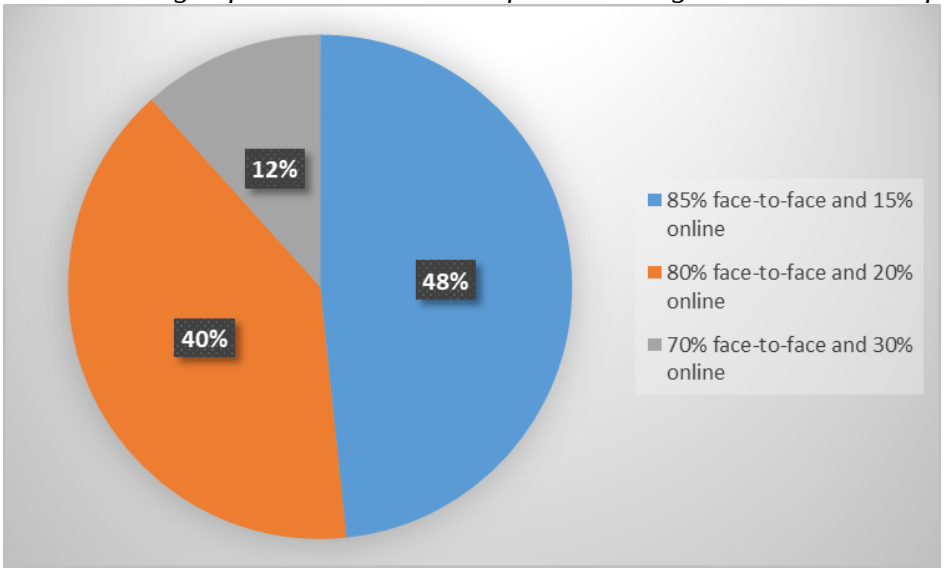
learning in the LMS with the combination of face-to-face and online teaching, they did not prefer online teaching too much. Nearly 50% of participants preferred the combination of 85% face-to-face and 15% online, 40% of participants preferred the combination of 80% face-to-face and 20% online, and only around 11% of them preferred the combination of 70% face-to-face and 30% online.

Figure 1

The Percentage of Online and Face-to-face Teaching That Students Prefer (n=60)



5. Discussion

Most participants showed a positive attitude to the combination of face-to-face and online teaching environments. In concurrence with Ha (2019) and Bakeer (2018), it is suggested that the combination of face-to-face and online teaching can help students "take responsibility for their learning". The findings were also in line with Wright (2017) that students' interest in using the internet encourages them to choose online learning integrated with face-to-face one. This study also had a similar finding to previous studies by Shykina (2015) that students can use discussion forums to share ideas or ask for help. In terms of difficulties, this study agreed with Kaur (2013) that internet connection is a big concern as "participants need advanced workstations and a high-speed connection" when they study online in a virtual classroom.

Although the variable "students are easily distracted by other websites when

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1401.0.0.375.7]
[DOI: 10.48311/LRR.15.5.35]

online" was eliminated due to a lack of reliability, it is also very important for lecturers to attract students from other distractors when they are online. Besides the preparation for LMS and materials to provide interesting lessons and activities in the LMS, students' attitudes and lecturers' instructional strategies are extremely important. Lecturers' instructional strategies play a key role in each lesson, but the lesson will be unsuccessful without students' cooperation. Therefore, investigating the EFL lecturers' instructional strategies in both face-to-face and online teaching environments to attract students' attention and engage students' motivation is also very significant research in the future.

The findings of this study significantly contribute to the research on teaching EFL in the combination of face-to-face and online teaching environments (BL), but there are some limitations. First, the study used only a questionnaire to collect data from a relatively small population of EFL students. Future studies should utilize some other data collection instruments to triangulate the data, as well as a wider population to enhance the validation of the studies. Second, this study just focused on how students think of BL, the difficulties they think they have when they study in the LMS, and the percentage of face-to-face and online that students prefer. It is more meaningful to investigate the perception of lecturers and their instructional strategies to enhance the quality of students' learning in both face-to-face and online teaching environments.

Despite these limitations, this study has some fundamental implications for EFL lecturers who are going to integrate online lessons into face-to-face lessons. The findings indicate that implementing online teaching and learning via LMS is appropriate for students' preferences for using mobile devices in their learning. Students learning through LMS also increases their self-study and provides them with more chances to practice and express their opinions. In addition, the findings showed some students' main concerns about the difficulties they will have with learning in LMS and how much face-to-face and online teaching they prefer. Therefore, lecturers should consider teaching and learning conditions before implementing online teaching in practice.

6. Conclusion

The combination of face-to-face and online teaching environments or BL is a potentially valuable model that can be used in EFL teaching and learning. It is

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[DOI: 10.48311/LRR.15.5.35]

believed to be convenient for students to enhance their self-learning, give them more chances to exchange opinions and practice their English language skills via LMS, and suit their interest in using mobile devices to access the internet whenever and wherever they want. In addition, it allows students to interact with each other or with teachers with less pressure. However, students are worried about some difficulties in their learning. They show a deep concern about unstable internet connection and limitation of IT skills. Unfamiliar LMS and poor functional devices are also things that are believed to cause obstacles to students' online learning. Overall, students show positive perceptions of BL despite some concerns, but they do not prefer to study online too much. The percentage of face-to-face and online that students prefer is 85% face-to-face and 15% online.

To implement BL in EFL teaching and learning, three major factors must be well prepared. First, the LMS used at educational organizations must sufficiently meet the needs of both lecturers and students. It should be easy to use and have a friendly display. Second, educational organizations should offer a good internet system so that students can access LMS and participate in online activities easily and effectively. Last but not least, participants are the most important factor that makes a BL course successful. Lecturers should be trained to use the functions in LMS appropriately to create interesting activities that can attract students from other distractors on the Internet. They also need to update their teaching techniques so that they can improve and enhance their teaching practice to engage and motivate students. Before implementing the BL course, an introductory course on using LMS should be introduced to students to help them get accustomed to using the functions that the LMS provides. When all people participating in a BL EFL course have been well-prepared with the necessary knowledge and skills, and the needed technology has been equipped, the course will likely be successful. The only concern left is the attitude of students when they perform in the BL environment.

In summary, due to students' perception of the combination of face-to-face and online teaching, it is suggested that online lessons can be integrated into face-to-face lessons if students are fully prepared to use most of the functions in LMS and have suitable devices with good internet connection.

[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1401.0.0.375.7]
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[DOR: 20.1001.1.23223081.1401.0.0.375.7]
[DOI: 10.48311/LRR.15.5.35]