

Blended Learning in Iraqi EFL Classrooms: Pedagogical Challenges and Opportunities

Ali Dayekh Abdul Ameer
Assistant Lecturer, Ministry of Education, Open Education College – Najaf Centre, Iraq

* Corresponding Author: **Ali Dayekh Abdul Ameer**

Article Info

E-ISSN: 3107-7129
Volume: 02
Issue: 06
Received: 14-09-2026
Accepted: 12-10-2026
Published: 10-11-2026
Page No: 60-67

Abstract
Blended learning integrates face-to-face instruction with online activities and digital resources, offering new possibilities for English language teaching. This study examines the main pedagogical challenges and opportunities associated with implementing blended learning in Iraqi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. It focuses on challenges related to technological infrastructure, internet accessibility, teachers' digital and pedagogical competence, students' digital literacy, time management, assessment, and institutional support. It also explores the potential of blended learning to enhance learner engagement, interaction, autonomy, flexibility, collaboration, and access to diverse learning resources. Particular attention is given to the teacher's role in designing and facilitating meaningful learning activities and to students' active participation in both face-to-face and online learning environments. Drawing on relevant literature and studies conducted in Iraqi and international EFL contexts, the paper argues that blended learning should not be understood simply as the addition of technology to conventional instruction. Rather, it requires purposeful pedagogical integration in which face-to-face and online components complement one another and serve clearly defined language-learning objectives. Iraqi evidence indicates promising effects on language skills and reading achievement, while also identifying student, teacher, psychological, technological, and institutional barriers. The study concludes that effective blended learning in Iraq depends on adequate technological resources, teacher preparation, student digital readiness, appropriate instructional design, continuous feedback, and institutional support. Carefully designed blended learning practices can contribute to more interactive, flexible, collaborative, and learner-centered English language classrooms in Iraq.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.54660/.IJHSI.2026.2.6.60-67

Keywords: Blended Learning, EFL Classrooms, English Language Teaching, Iraq, Pedagogical Challenges, Pedagogical Opportunities, Digital Learning

1. Introduction

The rapid development of digital technologies has transformed educational practices and encouraged teachers and institutions to reconsider how learning is organized. In language education, this transformation is particularly significant because language learning depends on repeated exposure, interaction, practice, feedback, and access to meaningful communicative resources. Blended learning has emerged as one response to these demands because it combines the social and instructional advantages of face-to-face teaching with the flexibility and resource richness of online learning. Rather than replacing classroom instruction, a well-designed blended model distributes learning activities across physical and digital environments so that each environment performs functions for which it is most appropriate.

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, blended learning can create additional opportunities for learners to encounter authentic language, practise skills beyond classroom time, communicate through digital platforms, receive feedback, and manage parts of their own learning. Reviews of EFL research have reported benefits related to language proficiency, motivation, learning behaviour, digital skills, autonomy, and satisfaction, although implementation problems remain substantial. A 2026 systematic review of EFL blended-learning studies published between 2020 and 2025 found promising effects across academic performance, engagement and motivation, learner autonomy, psychological well-being, and satisfaction, while also noting methodological limitations in the existing evidence.

The Iraqi context deserves particular attention. English is taught as a foreign language across Iraqi educational institutions, but opportunities for authentic English communication outside formal classrooms may be limited. Digital environments can potentially extend exposure to English beyond the physical classroom. At the same time, successful implementation cannot be assumed merely because students possess smartphones or teachers can use online platforms. Connectivity, device availability, digital literacy, teacher competence, institutional policies, assessment practices, workload, and students' ability to regulate their learning all influence the quality of blended instruction.

This paper therefore examines blended learning in Iraqi EFL classrooms from a pedagogical perspective. It synthesizes conceptual literature and relevant empirical studies, with particular attention to Iraqi evidence. The central argument is that blended learning becomes educationally valuable when technology is integrated around language-learning purposes rather than used as an end in itself.

2. Background and Context

Blended learning has developed from earlier forms of computer-assisted language learning, distance education, e-learning, and technology-enhanced instruction. Its contemporary form is commonly associated with the deliberate combination of face-to-face and online learning experiences. The concept is broader than simply assigning digital homework. The online and face-to-face components are expected to interact pedagogically: information introduced online may be discussed in class; classroom practice may be extended online; assessment data may guide subsequent teaching; and students may use digital resources to prepare for communicative tasks.

The growth of blended learning in English language teaching is supported by the particular characteristics of language learning. Digital resources can provide audio, video, interactive exercises, electronic texts, dictionaries, corpora, pronunciation models, discussion spaces, and opportunities for asynchronous communication. At the same time, classroom interaction remains important for spontaneous speaking, immediate clarification, collaborative activities, teacher modelling, and social learning. A review of the literature on English teaching and learning concluded that blended learning can support language-skill development, enrich the learning environment, and increase motivation when the two modes are appropriately combined.

The Iraqi educational environment presents both reasons for considering blended learning and reasons for proceeding carefully. Iraqi learners increasingly encounter digital media in everyday life, but educational institutions differ in their technological capacity and support. Iraqi research has reported positive outcomes from blended approaches. For example, Nuri and Bostanci studied 40 Iraqi EFL learners and reported improvements in listening, speaking, reading, and writing for the experimental group receiving blended instruction compared with the traditional group.

These findings should not be generalized to every Iraqi classroom. A single intervention cannot establish that blended learning will automatically succeed under all conditions. Instead, it provides evidence that blended instruction can be effective when the design, participants, resources, and implementation conditions are appropriate. This distinction is important because the purpose of the present paper is not to promote technology uncritically, but to identify the conditions under which it can become pedagogically useful.

3. Problem Statement, Aims, and Research Questions

3.1. Problem Statement

Although blended learning offers considerable pedagogical potential, its implementation in Iraqi EFL classrooms may be constrained by technological, pedagogical, psychological, organizational, and assessment-related factors. Teachers may have access to digital tools without sufficient preparation for instructional design. Students may own mobile devices but lack the skills needed for independent academic learning. Institutions may encourage digital learning without providing reliable infrastructure, technical support, or realistic workload arrangements. Consequently, the presence of technology does not necessarily produce better language learning.

The problem addressed in this paper is therefore the gap between the potential of blended learning and the conditions required for its effective pedagogical implementation in Iraqi EFL settings. The study seeks to organize the major challenges and opportunities into a coherent framework that can guide teachers, curriculum designers, and educational institutions.

3.2. Aim of the Study

The main aim is to critically examine the pedagogical challenges and opportunities associated with blended learning in Iraqi EFL classrooms and to identify principles that can support effective implementation.

3.3. Objectives

- To clarify the concept and major models of blended learning in EFL education.
- To examine the pedagogical benefits of combining face-to-face and online English instruction.
- To identify technological, teacher-related, student-related, psychological, assessment, and institutional challenges.
- To review empirical evidence concerning blended learning in the Iraqi EFL context.
- To propose practical principles for implementing blended learning in Iraqi classrooms.
- To identify areas requiring further empirical research in Iraq.

3.4. Research Questions

- What are the principal pedagogical opportunities offered by blended learning in Iraqi EFL classrooms?

- What are the main challenges that may hinder its effective implementation?
- How can teachers integrate face-to-face and online activities around meaningful language-learning objectives?
- What forms of institutional and professional support are needed?
- What research gaps remain in the Iraqi EFL context?

4. Review of Related Literature

Research on blended learning in EFL education has expanded substantially. Earlier reviews identified recurring themes involving benefits, implementation problems, learner perceptions, teacher roles, interaction, and instructional design. Altay and Altay's systematic review of EFL blended-learning studies identified benefits, problems, and implementation implications as major themes. More recent reviews have broadened the evidence base and examined the design of blended English courses, technologies used, participants, and learning effects.

A systematic review of 69 studies on blended learning in English courses in higher education organized the literature into four major areas: blended-learning design, participants, technologies, and effects. The review emphasized that the effectiveness of blended learning depends on how models and approaches are designed and implemented rather than on technology alone. This is especially relevant to EFL because digital tools can support many activities, but only pedagogically coherent tasks are likely to contribute consistently to language development.

Research has also highlighted learner autonomy. Online components can allow students to control the pace, timing, and sequence of some learning activities. However, autonomy should not be confused with leaving learners alone. Students need clear instructions, achievable deadlines, feedback, monitoring, and guidance in selecting and evaluating online resources. Without these structures, flexibility may become procrastination or superficial participation.

Teacher preparation is another recurrent theme. A systematic review of challenges in blended English instruction found increased workload, time demands, lack of experience, and insufficient technology skills among important instructor challenges, while staff training, support, and professional networking were identified as useful responses. These findings reinforce the idea that professional development should address both technical skills and pedagogical decision-making.

5. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

5.1. Constructivist Perspective

Blended learning is compatible with constructivist views of learning because it can position learners as active participants who construct knowledge through interaction, exploration, practice, reflection, and collaboration. In EFL classrooms, students can encounter language input online and then use classroom time for communicative tasks that require interpretation and production. Conversely, classroom experiences can generate questions or tasks that students investigate through digital resources.

5.2. Interaction and Social Learning

Language is fundamentally social. Effective EFL learning requires opportunities to interact with teachers and peers and to use language for meaningful purposes. Blended learning can extend interaction across time and space through discussion boards, messaging, collaborative documents, recorded speaking tasks, and peer feedback. However, digital communication does not automatically guarantee meaningful interaction. Teachers must design tasks that require students to respond, negotiate meaning, collaborate, and produce language rather than merely consume content.

5.3. Learner Autonomy and Self-Regulation

A successful blended environment requires learners to manage time, monitor progress, complete online tasks, and seek help when necessary. These are dimensions of self-regulated learning. Digital flexibility can support autonomy, but autonomy develops progressively and requires scaffolding. Teachers can support it through weekly learning plans, checklists, reflective journals, progress indicators, and structured self-assessment.

5.4. TPACK Perspective

The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework is useful for understanding teacher competence in blended EFL instruction. Teachers need content knowledge about English, pedagogical knowledge about how languages are learned and taught, and technological knowledge about digital tools. More importantly, they need the ability to integrate these domains. Iraqi evidence involving university EFL instructors found favorable attitudes toward hybrid learning but comparatively weaker technological and technological-content knowledge, suggesting a need for stronger digital preparation.

6. Blended Learning Models in EFL

Different blended-learning models can be adapted to EFL instruction. The appropriate model depends on learning objectives, institutional resources, class size, learner age, teacher competence, and available technology.

6.1. Flipped Classroom

In a flipped model, students encounter selected instructional content before class through videos, readings, presentations, or online exercises. Classroom time is then used for application, discussion, problem solving, speaking, writing, and feedback. In EFL, this model can be particularly useful when grammar explanations, vocabulary previews, or listening materials are provided before class so that classroom time can focus on communicative practice.

6.2. Rotation Models

Rotation models distribute students among different learning activities, which may include teacher-led instruction, collaborative work, individual digital practice, and assessment. Such models may work well when a school has limited digital resources because not every learner needs to use a device simultaneously.

6.3. Flex Model

In a flex model, online learning constitutes a substantial component while the teacher remains available for face-to-face support. This can provide flexibility but requires high levels of student self-regulation and reliable infrastructure. It may therefore be less suitable where connectivity is inconsistent.

6.4. Enriched Virtual and Other Forms

Other models combine periodic face-to-face meetings with substantial online learning. The key principle is not selecting a fashionable label but matching the balance between modes to instructional needs. In Iraqi EFL contexts, a modest and sustainable blend may be preferable to a technologically complex model that institutions cannot maintain.

7. Pedagogical Opportunities of Blended Learning

7.1. Increased Exposure to English

Digital resources can increase learners' exposure to English beyond scheduled classroom hours. Students may listen to authentic materials, read online texts, review vocabulary, practise pronunciation, and watch instructional videos repeatedly. Repetition is particularly valuable in language learning because learners differ in the amount of exposure they require.

7.2. Engagement and Motivation

Interactive multimedia may make learning more varied and provide immediate responses. However, motivation is not created by technology itself. Activities must be meaningful, appropriately challenging, and connected to learners' goals. A systematic review published in 2026 reported positive effects of blended learning on engagement, motivation, and satisfaction across EFL studies, while also calling for stronger research designs.

7.3. Learner Autonomy

Blended learning can give students greater control over when and how they practise. Learners can revisit difficult material and move more quickly through familiar content. This is particularly valuable in mixed-ability classes, where a single classroom pace may not suit everyone.

7.4. Interaction and Collaboration

Online discussion, peer review, collaborative writing, group presentations, and recorded speaking tasks can extend interaction beyond classroom time. Teachers can also use asynchronous tasks to give quieter learners opportunities to prepare their responses before participating.

7.5. Differentiation

Teachers can provide different levels of texts, optional extension activities, additional explanations, and targeted practice. Such differentiation can support students with different proficiency levels without completely separating them into different classes.

8. Blended Learning and the Four Language Skills

8.1. Listening

Online audio and video materials allow repeated listening and exposure to different accents and speech rates. Teachers can design pre-listening tasks online and reserve classroom time for interpretation, discussion, and pronunciation work. Learners can replay difficult sections, which is difficult to achieve at the same scale during a single classroom presentation.

8.2. Speaking

Speaking can be supported through recorded responses, online discussion, voice messages, paired video activities, and classroom conversations. Digital tools may lower anxiety for some learners because they can rehearse before sharing. Nevertheless, live face-to-face interaction remains essential for spontaneous communication and negotiation of meaning.

8.3. Reading

Digital reading provides access to graded texts, authentic materials, hyperlinks, glossaries, and interactive comprehension activities. Iraqi evidence is especially relevant: Al-Mamoori and Hosseinpur studied 62 fifth-preparatory students in Diyala and reported statistically significant differences favoring the blended-learning group in reading comprehension.

8.4. Writing

Blended instruction can support process writing through online drafting, teacher comments, peer review, revision, and electronic portfolios. Students can submit multiple versions rather than treating writing as a single examination event. Teachers should nevertheless teach academic integrity, citation, revision, and responsible use of digital tools.

8.5. Vocabulary and Grammar

Digital quizzes and spaced practice can support vocabulary retention and grammar practice. The teacher's role is to move beyond isolated exercises toward meaningful use: students should apply vocabulary and grammatical forms in speaking and writing tasks.

9. Technological and Infrastructural Challenges

Technology is one of the most visible dimensions of blended learning, but it is also a major source of inequality and interruption. Reliable internet access, electricity, suitable devices, platform availability, and technical support all affect continuity. A lesson that depends entirely on a live connection may fail when students experience weak connectivity. Consequently, resilient blended design should provide downloadable or low-bandwidth alternatives whenever possible.

9.1. Device Access

Students may rely on smartphones rather than computers. Smartphones can be useful for communication and short activities, but extended reading, writing, file management, and multimedia production may be more difficult on small screens. Teachers should therefore avoid assuming that all devices provide equivalent learning opportunities.

9.2. Internet Accessibility

Connectivity can influence whether students can attend synchronous sessions, upload assignments, stream videos, or access large files. A fair blended course should not penalize students simply because they cannot maintain continuous connectivity. Downloadable materials, compressed files, asynchronous deadlines, and offline tasks can reduce this problem.

9.3. Platform Reliability

Using too many platforms may create cognitive and organizational overload. Teachers should select a limited set of tools and establish clear routines for announcements, assignments, feedback, and assessment. Simplicity is often more sustainable than technological complexity.

9.4. Technical Support

Institutions need mechanisms for solving technical problems. Teachers should not be expected to function simultaneously as language specialists, instructional designers, and full-time technical support personnel. Institutional technical assistance can reduce workload and improve continuity.

10. Teacher-Related Pedagogical Challenges

The teacher's role changes substantially in blended learning. Instead of being the sole source of information, the teacher becomes a designer, facilitator, monitor, feedback provider, and organizer of learning across two environments. This expanded role can increase workload, especially when teachers are unfamiliar with digital instructional design.

10.1. Digital Competence

Knowing how to operate a platform is not equivalent to knowing how to teach through it. Teachers need to understand how to select tools according to objectives, create accessible materials, moderate online interaction, provide feedback, protect student privacy, and evaluate digital resources. Iraqi research with EFL instructors indicates that technological knowledge can lag behind pedagogical and content knowledge, reinforcing the need for targeted professional development.

10.2. Instructional Design

Teachers must decide what should happen face-to-face and what should happen online. If the same lecture is simply delivered twice, the blend adds workload without adding pedagogical value. Online tasks should prepare, extend, reinforce, or assess classroom learning.

10.3. Workload and Time

Preparing digital materials, responding to online messages, monitoring submissions, and giving individualized feedback may require substantial additional time. Research reviews identify increased time devotion and workload as recurring instructor challenges.

10.4. Assessment Literacy

Teachers must design assessment that measures learning rather than digital access. Online quizzes may be efficient, but speaking and writing require richer evidence. Teachers should combine formative assessment, performance tasks, portfolios, projects, quizzes, and classroom observation where appropriate.

11. Student-Related and Psychological Challenges

11.1. Digital Literacy

Students may be familiar with social media but still lack academic digital literacy. Academic digital literacy includes searching for credible information, managing files, communicating appropriately, using learning platforms, protecting passwords, citing sources, and evaluating online content.

11.2. Self-Regulation

The flexibility of blended learning creates responsibility. Students must manage deadlines and resist distraction. Without explicit training, some learners may postpone online tasks or complete them superficially. Teachers can address this by using short, structured tasks, weekly schedules, reminders, progress checks, and reflection activities.

11.3. Motivation and Anxiety

Not all learners respond to digital environments in the same way. Some may become more motivated by multimedia and flexible learning, while others may experience anxiety or frustration. Psychological support therefore involves predictable routines, accessible instructions, opportunities for questions, and a balance between independent and supported learning.

11.4. Participation Inequality

Online participation may be affected by home conditions, device availability, family responsibilities, or connectivity. A pedagogically responsible model should provide multiple ways to participate and avoid treating continuous online presence as the only evidence of engagement.

Iraqi research has identified student, psychological, teacher, and institutional factors as barriers to successful blended English learning, highlighting the fact that implementation is multidimensional rather than purely technical.

12. Institutional and Curricular Challenges

Blended learning cannot be sustained by individual teachers alone. Institutional leadership influences infrastructure, professional development, workload, assessment policy, digital platforms, and quality assurance. If an institution promotes blended learning without allocating resources, teachers may adopt fragmented practices that vary widely between classrooms.

12.1. Professional Development

Training should be continuous and practice-oriented. Workshops should not focus only on how to click buttons; they should model blended lessons, demonstrate assessment strategies, and help teachers redesign existing units. Peer mentoring and communities of practice can support longer-term improvement.

12.2. Curriculum Alignment

The curriculum should clearly identify which outcomes are expected from online and face-to-face activities. If examinations measure only memorization, teachers may have little incentive to use collaborative or communicative blended tasks. Curriculum, teaching, and assessment should therefore be aligned.

12.3. Quality Assurance

Institutions should establish minimum standards for online course organization, accessibility, feedback, academic integrity, and communication. At the same time, standards should allow teachers sufficient flexibility to adapt activities to their learners.

12.4. Leadership and Support

Institutional leaders can support implementation by providing stable platforms, technical assistance, training time, recognition of teachers' additional work, and opportunities to share successful practices. Blended learning should be treated as an institutional pedagogical project rather than an individual experiment.

13. Evidence from the Iraqi EFL Context

The Iraqi evidence base, although smaller than the international literature, provides useful indications. Nuri and Bostanci (2021) [9] conducted an experimental study with 40

Iraqi EFL university learners and reported improvements in listening, speaking, reading, and writing among learners taught through a blended approach. The study compared an experimental group with a traditional-instruction control group over a three-month period.

Al-Mamoori and Hosseinpur (2023) [2] investigated 62 fifth-preparatory students in Diyala and reported a significant advantage for the blended-learning group in reading comprehension. Their intervention combined conventional English instruction with computer- and internet-based learning, while the comparison group followed textbook-based traditional instruction.

Mahmood (2023) [8] examined Iraqi EFL university instructors' attitudes toward hybrid learning using a TPACK-oriented instrument. The study reported generally favorable attitudes and relatively stronger content and pedagogical knowledge than technological and technological-content knowledge. This suggests that positive attitudes alone are insufficient; teachers also need opportunities to develop technology-related competence.

More recent Iraqi research has examined factors that hinder blended English learning. A study of fourth-year EFL students at the University of Anbar categorized barriers into student, psychological, teacher, and institutional factors. These findings are consistent with the broader literature, which treats blended learning as a system involving learners, teachers, technology, curriculum, assessment, and institutional support.

Taken together, Iraqi studies provide encouraging but not conclusive evidence. The studies differ in participants, educational levels, designs, duration, and outcome measures. Therefore, future research should use larger samples, longer interventions, mixed methods, and comparisons across Iraqi regions and educational levels.

14. A Proposed Pedagogical Framework for Iraqi EFL Classrooms

Based on the reviewed literature, an effective Iraqi blended-learning framework can be organized around eight principles:

1. Start with learning outcomes: Teachers should identify the language outcome first and select digital or face-to-face activities afterward.
2. Assign a clear function to each mode: Online activities should prepare, practise, extend, or assess learning; classroom activities should exploit interaction and immediate feedback.
3. Keep the technology manageable: A small number of reliable tools is preferable to a large collection of disconnected platforms.
4. Design for low-bandwidth access: Whenever possible, provide downloadable texts, compressed audio/video, printable alternatives, and asynchronous options.
5. Scaffold learner autonomy: Provide schedules, models, checklists, examples, reminders, and gradual increases in independent work.
6. Integrate communication: Blended English learning should include meaningful speaking, writing, reading, listening, and interaction rather than passive content consumption.
7. Use continuous formative assessment: Frequent low-stakes checks can identify problems early and guide teacher feedback.
8. Evaluate and improve the blend: Teachers should review participation, achievement, student feedback, and workload to revise the design.

A practical weekly unit might begin with a short online vocabulary and listening activity, continue with face-to-face collaborative speaking and problem solving, and finish with an online writing or reflection task. The following classroom meeting can begin by using evidence from the online task to address common errors. In this way, the two environments become connected rather than parallel.

15. Practical Application: A Blended EFL Unit

A sample unit on "Travel and Communication" illustrates how the framework can be implemented. Before the classroom session, students access a short reading and listening text about travel. They complete a vocabulary activity and answer comprehension questions. Students are asked to record a short response using selected target expressions. The purpose of the online stage is preparation rather than replacement of instruction.

During the face-to-face lesson, the teacher begins with a brief diagnostic review based on common online errors. Students then work in pairs to plan a trip, negotiate choices, ask for information, and solve a communication problem. The teacher observes interaction and provides feedback. A short pronunciation activity addresses difficulties identified in students' recordings.

After class, students complete a short written task such as an email requesting travel information. They submit a first draft online, receive teacher or peer comments, and revise the text. A short self-reflection asks students what they learned, which language items remain difficult, and what strategy they will use to improve.

15.1. Assessment of the Unit

Assessment should combine several forms of evidence: vocabulary checks, listening comprehension, speaking performance, writing quality, participation, and reflection. The teacher can use a simple rubric covering accuracy, fluency, task completion, vocabulary use, interaction, and organization. Online quizzes should support learning but should not become the only form of assessment.

15.2. Teacher Role

The teacher coordinates the learning sequence, selects resources, explains expectations, monitors participation, provides feedback, and adjusts subsequent lessons. The teacher is therefore not reduced by technology; rather, the nature of professional work changes from primarily delivering information to designing and facilitating learning.

16. Discussion

The literature suggests that the central question is not whether blended learning is inherently better than traditional instruction, but how effectively it is designed and under what conditions it is implemented. Evidence from international EFL research indicates positive outcomes in achievement, engagement, autonomy, and satisfaction, and Iraqi studies similarly report promising results for language skills and reading.

However, the same evidence also demonstrates that technology can introduce new problems. Teachers may

experience additional workload, students may struggle with self-regulation, and institutions may lack adequate technical support. A systematic review of English instruction challenges identified lack of technology skills, increased time demands, and limited experience as important instructor problems. Thus, implementation should be gradual and supported rather than imposed as a purely technological reform.

The Iraqi context makes pedagogical alignment especially important. Where internet connectivity or institutional infrastructure is inconsistent, highly complex models may be less sustainable than simple designs using widely available tools and downloadable resources. A practical blended model should be resilient: if connectivity fails, students should still be able to access essential materials and demonstrate learning.

Another important issue is teacher competence. Iraqi instructors may have strong English-language and pedagogical knowledge while needing further development in technological integration. Professional development should therefore connect technology to actual English teaching problems—for example, how to teach pronunciation through recorded speech, how to provide writing feedback online, how to design collaborative speaking tasks, or how to use digital reading resources effectively.

Finally, blended learning should be evaluated in terms of educational value. More online activity does not necessarily mean better learning. The strongest design is the one that uses each mode strategically and reduces unnecessary duplication.

17. Recommendations

- Develop institutional blended-learning policies that define responsibilities, quality standards, and support mechanisms.
- Provide continuous professional development combining digital skills, EFL pedagogy, assessment, and instructional design.
- Prioritize reliable, low-cost, and low-bandwidth technologies that are sustainable in local conditions.
- Train students in digital literacy, time management, online communication, source evaluation, and self-regulated learning.
- Use blended learning to increase meaningful language practice rather than simply transfer lectures to digital platforms.
- Design assessments that measure actual language performance and not merely completion of online activities.
- Provide downloadable and offline alternatives to reduce the effect of connectivity problems.
- Encourage teacher collaboration and sharing of successful blended-learning materials.
- Conduct longer and larger Iraqi studies across schools, universities, regions, and proficiency levels.
- Investigate how blended learning affects speaking, writing, motivation, autonomy, critical thinking, and long-term retention.

18. Limitations of the Present Study

This paper is literature-based and does not present new questionnaire, interview, experimental, or classroom-observation data. Its conclusions are therefore interpretive and depend on the quality and scope of the available literature. Iraqi studies remain fewer and more heterogeneous than the international literature, which limits broad generalization. In addition, blended learning encompasses multiple models and technologies, so findings from one implementation should not automatically be transferred to another. These limitations reinforce the need for empirical research conducted in diverse Iraqi educational settings.

19. Conclusion

Blended learning offers a promising direction for Iraqi EFL education because it can connect the strengths of classroom teaching with the flexibility, accessibility, and resource richness of digital learning. The literature indicates potential benefits for language achievement, engagement, autonomy, interaction, and access to learning materials. Iraqi studies provide encouraging evidence, including improvements in language skills and reading achievement. Nevertheless, blended learning is not a technological shortcut to educational improvement. Its success depends on purposeful design, teacher competence, learner preparation, appropriate assessment, reliable resources, and institutional support.

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How to Cite This Article

Abdul Ameer AD. Blended learning in Iraqi EFL classrooms: pedagogical challenges and opportunities. International Journal of Humanities and Sustainable Innovation. 2026;2(6):60-67. doi:10.54660/.IJHSI.2026.2.6.60-67.

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