



Exploring English Major Students' Perspectives on Blended Learning: A Multiple Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This undertaking aimed to elucidate the experiences and challenges encountered by English major students learning major subjects via blended Learning in Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology. It aimed to discover why they got involved in that situation, the challenges they experienced, how they coped with these challenges, and their insights regarding their conditions. This research employed a qualitative research method using the multiple case study approach. The study participants were the 3 English major students learning major subjects via blended Learning at Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology. Through the in-depth interviews, it was gathered that the participants had unforgettable experiences and challenges such as struggling to answer modules, slow internet connection, vocabulary knowledge, lack of practical learning applications, and stable internet connection. The findings also revealed that English major students cope with challenges by answering the modules simultaneously, seeking assistance from online resources, and being dedicated and self-motivated. Finally, the different insights of English major students learning major subjects via blended learning revealed that students should always seek assistance from teachers' consideration, seek effective learning, and seek emotional support.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary educational landscape, blended learning has emerged as a predominant methodology for teaching English as a foreign language, distinguished by its hybrid approach that amalgamates traditional face-to-face classroom instruction with virtual learning environments. This integration facilitates access to a vast array of systematically organized materials and resources, thereby revolutionizing the pedagogical process by adopting new technologies. Such advancements necessitate educators to innovate in the presentation of learning materials, aiming to complement the in-person learning experience with digital resources (Albiladi & Alshareef, 2019).

The context of English language learning in regions with limited exposure to the target language, such as Palestine, presents significant challenges. The confinement of language exposure to formal classroom settings has contributed to suboptimal student performance in English. This issue is exacerbated by limited access to online learning resources and technology, a predicament not exclusive to Palestine but prevalent in various countries where English is taught through blended learning modalities. Consequently, students who cannot participate in online classes exhibit diminished interest

in language learning, further impeded by inadequate vocabulary acquisition, a fundamental aspect of language proficiency ([Amour, 2019](#); [Rusmansyah et al., 2019](#); [Saepuloh et al., 2021](#)).

In the Philippines, adopting blended learning as a novel educational paradigm necessitates significant adjustment from English language learners. This model imposes a greater degree of self-directed study with minimal instructor support, underscoring the importance of positive attitudes and proficient technology use among students to harness the full potential of blended learning environments. Research indicates that learners with limited prior computer usage experience tend to approach blended learning with scepticism and apprehension, negatively impacting their learning outcomes ([Barrot, 2019](#); [Heilporn et al., 2021](#)).

The impetus for this study originates from the observable challenges faced by English major students at Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences, and Technology in navigating the complexities of modular and online learning environments. Difficulties engaging with core subjects, such as the Structure of English, arise from constrained interaction with instructors and the overwhelming volume of assigned tasks. These factors collectively contribute to academic stress and burnout among students, thus underscoring the urgent need for this research. Additionally, the findings of this study aim to inform school administrators and educators about the experiences and challenges of English language learners in blended learning contexts, providing a platform for their voices and experiences to be acknowledged and addressed.

Despite related research, the specific focus on the experiences of English language learners in a blended learning environment remains underexplored. Previous studies have predominantly concentrated on the efficacy of blended learning in enhancing student performance across various disciplines. Notable research includes the role of blended learning in expanding educational resources and accessibility, and studies by [Rachmijati et al. \(2019\)](#) and [Gulnaz \(2020\)](#) that investigated the impact of blended learning on language skills and the educational process, respectively. Distinct from these endeavours, the current study employs a qualitative, multiple-case approach to delve into the individual experiences of English language learners engaged in blended learning, offering novel insights into the specific challenges and opportunities within this educational framework.

This research is committed to an in-depth exploration of students' experiences in the English department as they engage with core courses via blended learning. By examining students' life experiences, adaptation strategies, and insights within this hybrid learning model, the study contributes meaningful recommendations and support to the academic community and practitioners in English language teaching. Through a nuanced understanding of these experiences, the research aims to enhance the efficacy and responsiveness of blended learning environments to the needs of English language learners.

METHODS

Design

The multiple-case qualitative research design was used as an approach. This research design is used as it will allow the researcher to achieve the study's objectives, which are to understand and explore the lived experiences of English major students in learning major subjects via blended learning. As explained, in this type of research design, a case can be an individual, an event, or an entity, as determined by the research questions. By this, a multiple case study includes two or more cases or replications across the cases to investigate the same phenomena ([Lewis-Beck et al., 2003](#)). Further, according to [Creswell \(2016\)](#), qualitative multiple-case studies provide the researcher with a better understanding of the research topic as they give deep insights and assist the discovery in obtaining appreciation of evolving the lived experiences of the English major students studying major subjects via blended learning in its natural, real-life context.

Participants

The study participants were English majors at Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology at Maniki, Kapalong Davao del Norte. Three (3) participants will come from secondary education majors in English, following the study's criteria. All three (3) participants will undergo in-depth interviews, and the researcher will interview each individual. This determined number was following the suggestion of [Creswell \(2015\)](#), who determined that the ideal number of participants in a

qualitative study ranges from 3 to 15. Data saturation was achieved in the data collection process by including this group of participants in a qualitative research study.

In this study, purposive sampling was used during the election of participants. Thus, participants were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: the participants must be an English major student of Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology, a male or a female, a working student, a full-time student, and a student with no internet connection. Furthermore, the researcher intentionally chose those students in different situations but at the same level who underwent higher experiences of difficulties in studying major subjects via blended learning to ensure the quality of the conduct and the findings of the study.

Data Collection Procedure

Before the interview process, the researcher undertook several critical preparatory steps to ensure compliance with ethical research standards and enhance the study's methodological soundness. The initial phase involved securing formal authorization to conduct the research. It entailed submitting a detailed proposal, including the study's aims, methods, and potential implications, to the institutional research ethics committee for review. Concurrently, the researcher sought endorsement from the academic advisor through a formal letter delineating the research's scope and methodology, ensuring alignment with educational standards and ethical guidelines.

Upon receiving the requisite approvals, the researcher proceeded to recruit participants. This step was facilitated by disseminating emails to a systematically selected sample of English major students at Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences, and Technology in Maniki, Kapalong, Davao del Norte. The selection process was underpinned by a random sampling strategy to minimize selection bias and enhance the sample's representativeness. The invitation email included a detailed informed consent form, which articulated the study's objectives, the voluntary nature of participation, the measures to safeguard participant confidentiality, and how the data would be utilized.

Following affirmative responses from the prospective participants, the researcher sought to finalize the interview instrument. It involved comprehensively validating the interview questions conducted in consultation with the academic advisor and subject matter experts. The objective was to ensure that the questions were constructively aligned with the research objectives and could elicit in-depth, meaningful responses. This step underscored the importance of rigorous instrument design in qualitative research.

The data collection phase was conducted through online interviews utilizing video conferencing technology. This mode was selected for its ability to facilitate real-time, interactive dialogue while accommodating the logistical and scheduling needs of both the researcher and the participants. Using a semi-structured interview format allowed for the exploration of pre-defined questions while providing the flexibility to delve into emergent themes and insights, enriching the depth and breadth of the collected data.

Data Analysis

The data for this case study was analyzed using thematic analysis, which was done by coding the participants' translated responses. As defined, thematic analysis identifies patterns or themes within qualitative data (Yeung & Yau, 2022). Further, coding is the process of categorizing responses to create a structure of thematic ideas related to the text. It is typically used when the researcher wishes to create an index of ideas from participant responses by analyzing the text, determining an appropriate conceptual understanding, and connecting everything (Naeem et al., 2023). The researcher relied on the transcribed and translated responses repeatedly during coding until a form of thematic analysis was obtained and established through the help of the data analyst. The ideas were sorted and analyzed based on their relationships, similarities, and oppositions. Research ethics were also observed during the data collection to ensure the privacy of the research participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Case 1: Working Student

The working student is composed of one female participant enrolled in a Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English at Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology. Working while studying is difficult, especially when balancing your time to complete all your school requirements while working to support your financial needs. The participant struggled with time management and understanding the lesson as she failed to attend the discussion during online classes while working on classes. Further, she also admitted that language learning in blended learning is ineffective as she could not apply what she learned because she only does modules and lacks practical learning application. Thus, she highlighted that language teaching in blended learning only enriches her vocabulary knowledge but not the core concept of the subject. Aiming to have a degree is her crucial motivation to keep going and achieve academic success despite difficulties.

Case 2: Student with No Internet Connection

Learning a language in blended learning without a solid internet connection is a student's most challenging situation in pursuing a college degree. The student with no internet connection is comprised of one female participant enrolled in a Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English. The study found that the participant struggled to attend online classes as she lived in a remote area with a slow internet connection. The participant mentioned that aside from a slow internet connection, the lack of practical application of learning is also her problem, as there is a lack of guidance from more knowledgeable individuals, resulting in her having self-doubt. Thus, her coping mechanism for her challenges is to answer the modules simultaneously and effectively manage her academic needs to achieve academic success.

Case 3: Regular/Full-Time Student

Learning major subjects in blended learning might be much easier for a regular and full-time student. Case 3 includes one female participant. The participant is a full-time and regular student who is financially stable. However, she still encountered the same problem: the lack of practical learning applications. The participant stated that learning a language while blended is challenging and exhausting as she learned independently without guidance from a more knowledgeable person. She also admitted that one way to overcome difficulties is to seek assistance from online resources and use proper time management. Despite the problems the participant encountered during her college experience, she still managed to keep going for her future goals.

Cross-Case Analysis on Experiences of English Major Students in Learning Major Subjects via Blended Learning

Five major themes emerged in this study regarding the experiences of English major students in learning major subjects in blended learning. It includes struggling to answer modules, having a slow internet connection, enriching vocabulary knowledge, lacking practical learning applications, and seeking a stable internet connection. With these themes, it can be inferred that most students struggle to implement both modular and online learning. With this, the academic institution must provide additional financial assistance for the students to access a good internet connection. The institution must also develop course modules that do minimal learning tasks but develop the students' holistic learning. In addition, it was highlighted that students lack practical application of the course. Hence, limited face-to-face must be conducted to allow these students to develop their practical skills with the guidance and help of their teachers. For further elaboration of the results and data, Table 1 was presented.

Table 1. Cross-Case Analysis on Experiences of English Major Students in Learning Major Subjects via Blended Learning

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
Struggling in Answering Modules	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "It is hard because, uhm, to tell you honestly, I didn't learn that much through blended learning. I find it hard answering modules, especially because I am working." (IDI-01)2. "I am doubting my answer. I wonder if the answer that I gave is correct. That is why I'm not even satisfied with what I've learned." (IDI-02)
Having a Slow Internet Connection	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "The number one challenge I face is the slow signal because there's a virtual class, especially in majors. I have a hard time coping up, and I have a hard time joining because the signal is prolonged." (IDI-02)2. "My common challenges are usually just like when I said the module is difficult, so I used to google it. The internet connection in our house is prolonged because we're almost living in the mountains. That is why Globe is very slow. We used Globe. Those are my common challenges, such as the internet connection, just like when there's a Google Meet. Just like during classes, there are times that the instructor will have their class, utilizing Google Meet, and then the signal will slow down, so you will be out of Google Meet. It is also one of my common challenges." (IDI-03)
Enriching Vocabulary Knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "It enhances our vocabulary because you are forced to read because, of course, no one is teaching you, so you are the one to read and read and do research." (IDI-01)2. "So, in terms of language learning, the positive effect for me is that I was forced to strive harder to learn the words I encountered, which I am clueless about. It would help if you remembered it. Yes, it widens my vocabulary." (IDI-02)
Lack of Practical Application of Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "Then, the negative effect of this blended learning is that I cannot practice because I only do modules and always read, but there is no one to talk to. I cannot practice what I've learned. Yes, there's no application on what I have learned or if...which is not that many to start, to begin with. I do not learn so much, and I cannot apply what I've learned because I have no one to talk to." (IDI-01)2. "The negative effect is since it became a self-study, so it was like you are not exposed to the language." (IDI-03)
Seeking Stable Internet Connection	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "There are many things I have to consider... because for example uhm... my time then my internet connection... then uhm...what do you call this...like resources." (IDI-01)2. "Ah, another consideration is the signal. I considered it because I hope... For example, if I go to WifiVendo, I ensure the signal is strong enough to join. Sometimes climbing... climbing in higher areas to use data." (IDI-02)

The first theme that emerged was the struggle to answer modules. It highlights that English language learners struggle to answer modules in blended learning as they cannot learn due to doubted answers and feel answering modules is exhausting and difficult. It relates to the second theme, having a slow internet connection, which is the most common difficulty in learning a language through blended learning as they fail to attend online classes and have a tough time coping with the topics discussed due to a slow internet connection. It relates to a study which explained that worldwide, millions of students are affected, and some have already given up their student status. One of the biggest challenges in

addressing the problem regarding learning is the availability of technological gadgets and slow internet connectivity that hinders classroom learning participation ([Aboagye et al., 2021](#)).

Additionally, the third theme made the students admit that learning major subjects in blended learning enriches their vocabulary knowledge as they were forced to read and discover the meaning of the words. It aligns with the findings of the study about the effects of blended learning instruction on vocabulary knowledge of Thai primary school students, which found that blended learning instruction can improve the students' vocabulary knowledge and that students had positive attitudes toward blended learning instruction on vocabulary teaching ([Katasila & Poonpon, 2022](#)). The fourth theme that emerged is the lack of practical application of learning, which made blended learning ineffective in learning a language as there was no formal exposure to the language they were learning. The fifth and last theme that emerged is seeking a stable internet connection as one of their considerations when attending online classes in blended learning. Slow internet connection is one of the students' complaints in learning a language via blended learning, wherein students go up on mountains and hilltops to catch signals, especially those students in remote places ([Karie et al., 2021](#)).

Cross-Case Analysis on Coping Mechanism of the English Major Students in Learning Major Subjects through Blended Learning

Three major themes emerged in this study regarding the coping mechanisms of English major students in learning major subjects in blended learning. It includes answering modules simultaneously, seeking assistance from online resources, and having dedication and self-motivation. From these coping mechanisms, it can be inferred that the students developed independent learning, which allowed them to continue and complete their studies. They have utilized all the available learning resources, making them practical and efficient in their learning experiences. Hence, the institution must also provide free seminars and workshops for these students regarding the available online and printed materials. The school may teach them how to properly navigate online tools, making them feel at ease while completing their course modules and learning tasks. For discussion and simplification of the findings, Table 2 is presented below.

Table 2. Cross-Case Analysis on Coping Mechanism of the English Major Students in Learning Major Subjects through Blended Learning

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
Answering Modules Simultaneously	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "I really cannot make a module every Monday to Friday. I really cannot make it, to be honest. I do it all on Saturday and Sunday. If I can cope, I finish my modules in that period, but sometimes it is because I cannot. It is because I cannot do it from Monday to Friday. After all, I am working." (IDI-01) <li>2. For example, when I open the online platforms, I download all of the teachers who have posted on their subject. After downloading it, I wrote down examples in a notebook, for example, Eng. 106 module 1 lesson 1, module 1 lesson 2, and everything was there. Then, I put a dash if it is done or submitted and check if I really submitted it. So that is my idea. I wrote it down in a notebook or paper and then answered it simultaneously." (IDI-02)
Seeking Assistance from Online Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "I browsed the internet to find references because I was not sure if the idea on my mind was correct, and since I was doubtful, what I did was, of course, it was difficult for me to become clueless. Number one is the internet. I always rely on the internet, but I do not copy it; I look at it based on how it was done or paraphrase it." (IDI-02) <li>2. "It seems like I was relying on my cellphone, I mean on Google. Even though, just like I said, there is an abstract, right? Sometimes, I do not

	read the abstract. I directly go to Google for answers or Google, which serves as a guide in answering.” (IDI-03)
Having Dedication and Self-Motivation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. “I just put in my mind that it is okay I can go home this Saturday. Saturday is approaching. I can go home. I can do it finally.” I do it like that.” (IDI-01)2. “So, of course, all of us are struggling. I always put that in my mind. There is a time when you think you want to give up, and then all I can say is, “It is okay. You are not struggling alone. There are also others.” I just encouraged myself.” (IDI-02)

The first theme that emerged is answering modules simultaneously. Even though it is difficult for language learners to answer the modules without the assistance of a more knowledgeable person, answering modules simultaneously became their technique in language learning through blended learning as their coping mechanism. The second theme is about seeking help from online resources. Browsing online is the most immediate technique for students learning a language through blended learning, wherein they use online resources as their reference in answering modules. They even wholly relied on the Internet as there was no guidance from a teacher. It relates to the study of [Aldosemani et al. \(2018\)](#), which claims that ICT is not confined to its functions of delivering high-quality data, but it also offers a platform for using a variety of instructional tools that is significant for distance learning among students such as in the case of blended learning approach ([Geng et al., 2019](#); [Hassan et al., 2021](#); [Rivera, 2017](#)). The third theme mentioned dedication and self-motivation. Dedication and self-motivation are the most essential coping mechanisms, as they will keep you going through all your difficulties. Effective learning strategies such as answering modules simultaneously, seeking assistance from online resources, and being dedicated and self-motivated help students develop their learning results. English language learners who maximize the use of different strategies are more likely to successfully learn a language through blended learning ([Su et al., 2018](#)).

Cross-Case Analysis on Insights of the English Major Students in Learning Major Subjects through Blended Learning

After conversing with the informants, the researcher established four emerging themes regarding the insights of English major students in learning major subjects through blended learning. It includes always doing their best, seeking teachers’ consideration, practical knowledge, and emotional support. With this, it can be noted that the participants are mature enough to conquer and overcome the challenges that implementing blended learning has brought. They have built a positive attitude and emulate good virtues and values to continue college. It further entails that teachers must be lenient and understanding of their student’s learning progress and development as they do their best to succeed and finish college. The institution must also provide mental health seminars and academic breaks for these students so that academic burnout will lessen and fewer students will stop going to school because of pressure and stress.

Table 3. Cross-Case Analysis on Insights of the English Major Students in Learning Major Subjects through Blended Learning

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
Always Doing Their Best	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. “Of course, on what I have experienced that I have shared here, my weaknesses and notable experiences about lightning, so they should never give up on their life. That is all.” (IDI-02)2. “Just do your best and stop thinking that there is no hope. They said, “If you want, there is a way. If you do not, there are many reasons.” If you are struggling, do not be ashamed to ask for help from classmates or friends, or maybe search on Google. If you are ashamed to ask for help, search on Google. You are the only one who can help yourself.” (IDI-03)

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
Seeking Teachers' Consideration	1. "For me, teachers' attention in teaching, then consideration to the students." (IDI-01) 2. "That is the only feedback I can give that I hope they will understand, they will pass a little like what our teacher said, we are still learning. That is that we just need them to understand us." (IDI-03)
In Search for Effective Learning	1. "I cannot tell it is effective because I just learn a little. Then, that little thing I have learned is what you call it. I cannot understand the whole lesson. I only rely almost on the internet. I did not learn because of that." (IDI-01) 2. "I realized that I did not learn that much. Yes, I learned something because, of course, I am reading, studying, that's all... it's not enough, and I easily forget it." (IDI-03)
Seeking Emotional Support	1. "Aside from giving modules, I have classes like that. They should also have conferences addressing the emotional or mental health of the students who experience difficulties coping with this type of learning because it is not easy." (IDI-01) 2. "I would like to encourage the parents and teachers to motivate the students, even if you have low scores. Give them positive quotes or inspirational quotes that either say during classes or at the end of the modules. That little quote can make us happy." (IDI-02)

The first theme that emerged under Insights is always doing their best. Learning a language is challenging, and blended learning makes it more challenging. The informants admitted that the last thing you can do in every difficult situation is always do your best no matter what happens. It is indeed that if there is a will, then there is always a way. The second theme is about seeking teachers' consideration. It is essential for students if the teachers will consider them in terms of submission of modules as they are struggling in answering it and the need always to consider the internet connection, so it would be a major help for students, especially language learners, to receive the considerations of their teachers. It relates to the study, which explained that in the context of online learning, learners can access the learning materials regardless of time and space with the assistance of their teachers. Thus, teachers and students are being mediated with ICT in implementing blended learning instruction. It implies that teachers and students are part of the virtual classroom irrespective of geographical separation and face-to-face classroom meetings ([Lalima & Dangwal, 2017](#)). The third theme also mentions the need to search for effective learning. The informants confirmed and admitted that learning major subjects through blended learning is ineffective as they cannot practice the language they are learning because they are less exposed to it. The fourth theme revealed the need to seek emotional support because language learners need learning aids such as conferences that address emotional and health issues and experience difficulties coping with the new learning arrangement. It just implies that besides academic struggles, English language learners are also suffering from mental health problems ([Islam et al., 2020](#)).

CONCLUSION

The cross-case analysis gave an overview of the experiences of English major students learning major subjects through blended learning. As highlighted in the study, this sudden shift of educational set-up is one of the most common problems in today's new educational setting in higher education. The experiences of English major students in this study are a significant avenue for many educational authorities. It is a promising avenue for revising and revisiting their programs' policies and guidelines to obtain and assure quality education despite the sudden shift in the educational setting and the curriculum. It is based on the findings that English major students faced numerous difficulties in implementing blended learning as they were not oriented and prepared before the implementation.

In addition, learning a language via blended learning was determined by how the researcher sees it as suitable for this case study. However, the more significant number of English major students

learning major subjects through blended learning can be highly desirable to invite diversity and validity to the results. This study aims to determine whether a vast number of language learners in blended learning who have slow internet connection affect their learning outcomes and see if there can be differences in learning a language in blended learning and face-to-face classes. This future endeavour is a reliable source of policy-making and curriculum development which answers the emerging needs of society and the demands of the brave new world. With that, educators will be safeguarded with essential data to help them craft and make research-based curricula.

Lastly, it can be noted in the study that these students have different coping mechanisms and strategies to overcome the challenges they face in implementing blended learning. They have used various online resources and sought assistance from their teachers as they have emulated positive virtues and attitudes amid atrocity and chaos in education. Hence, academic institutions must be lenient in these trying times as students struggle with this sudden shift. Schools must provide financial assistance and scaffolding among many students so that these students will be motivated and dedicated to pursuing and continuing their education.

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