НАУЧНЫЙ ЖУРНАЛ
«IN SITU»

Цена свободная. Распространяется по подписке.

Все статьи проходят экспертную проверку. Точка зрения редакции не всегда совпадает с точкой зрения авторов публикуемых статей.

Авторы статей несут полную ответственность за содержание статей и за сам факт их публикации. Редакция не несет ответственности перед авторами и/или третьими лицами за возможный ущерб, вызванный публикацией статьи.

При использовании и заимствовании материалов, опубликованных в научном журнале, ссылка на журнал обязательна

ФИЛОЛОГИЯ

ФИЛОЛОГИЯ

Dương Thuý Hường
Nguyễn Thị Thảo
Hanoi University of Mining and Geology

BLENDED LEARNING IN ESP FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS: INSIGHTS FROM TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Abstract

This paper explores the integration of blended learning (BL) in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses for technical students, focusing on insights gathered from semi-structured interviews with experienced ESP instructors. As technical disciplines demand both linguistic and domain-specific competence, blended learning has emerged as a flexible pedagogical approach capable of addressing diverse learner needs. The literature review highlights the pedagogical foundations of BL, evolving definitions of ESP, and the synergy between the two frameworks. The findings from teacher interviews reveal both opportunities, such as increased learner autonomy and contextualized instruction, and challenges, including technological limitations and the need for pedagogical training. The study emphasizes that effective implementation of BL in ESP requires alignment between instructional design, technological infrastructure, and learner readiness. Implications for curriculum design and teacher professional development are also discussed.

1. Introduction

As English has become the global language of science, technology, and industry, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has gained increasing importance in technical education. For technical university students, proficiency in specialized English is not merely an academic requirement but a decisive tool for future professional success. ESP courses, therefore, are designed to focus on language skills directly related to students' technical fields, enabling them to access specialized materials, communicate effectively in professional settings, and participate in international projects.

At the same time, blended learning, combining traditional classroom instruction with online learning components, has emerged as a promising approach to enhance language education. It offers flexibility, promotes learner autonomy, and creates a more dynamic learning environment, which is especially valuable for students with diverse needs and schedules, such as those in technical disciplines. Despite the advantages, the effective application of blended learning in ESP teaching still poses challenges. Teachers play an important role in implementing blended learning models, adapting content, and supporting students' learning experiences. Their insights are crucial for understanding both the benefits and the difficulties encountered in real classroom settings.

This paper investigates teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the application of blended learning in ESP courses for technical students. By analyzing qualitative data from teacher interviews, the research provides practical insights for improving ESP instruction and optimizing the integration of blended learning in technical universities.

2. DEFINITIONS OF BLENDED LEARNING AND ESP

2.1. Definition and Principles of Blended Learning

Blended learning (BL), as hybrid learning, combines face-to-face classroom methods with online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online (Graham, 2006). It is not merely an additive

combination of learning modes but rather a strategic integration that seeks to capitalize on the strengths of both formats. Graham (2006) defines blended learning as "a combination of face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction" (p.5), a definition reaffirmed by Garrison and Vaughan (2008), who stress that BL is characterized by a deliberate shift in the teaching paradigm, promoting active student engagement and deeper learning.

The core principles of BL include learner autonomy, flexibility in access, personalization, and continuous feedback loops. As Hrastinski (2019) notes, BL enhances learning outcomes by encouraging students to participate more actively and by facilitating differentiated instruction. These qualities are especially relevant in higher education, where diverse student populations and increasingly complex professional demands necessitate adaptive learning environments.

2.2. Definitions of ESP

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a branch of English language teaching that focuses on the specific linguistic needs of learners within particular disciplines or professions. Strevens (1988) outlines ESP as having absolute characteristics, including "being designed to meet specified needs of the learner," and variable characteristics such as "being centered on the language appropriate to those activities" (p.1).

Similarly, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) conceptualize ESP as a learner-centered approach grounded in the analysis of learners' occupational or academic needs. They argue that ESP instruction should be based on authentic materials and tasks reflective of real-world communicative situations in the target field. In the context of technical students, this entails instruction in reading technical manuals, composing reports, and delivering presentations, often within specific scientific or engineering registers.

ESP is typically divided into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), with further specialization possible. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) emphasize that ESP is not defined by the existence of a special vocabulary or syntax, but rather by its pedagogical approach and relevance to learners' goals.

2.3. Blended Learning in ESP Contexts

The convergence of BL and ESP offers promising educational outcomes, especially in technical disciplines where both language and content mastery are required. According to Basturkmen (2010), ESP learners benefit most when instruction is contextualized within their disciplinary discourse communities. In such cases, BL provides a platform where authentic materials, such as engineering case studies or lab reports, can be integrated into online learning components and discussed further in face-to-face sessions.

González-Lloret (2011) highlights how task-based instruction in ESP can be effectively facilitated through blended models, particularly with the use of technology-enhanced simulations and collaborative writing tools. In engineering education, Mortera-Gutiérrez (2006) found that blended formats significantly improved students' command of genre-specific writing and oral presentation skills when the instruction was contextualized and supported with scaffolding both online and in person.

Furthermore, the flexibility offered by BL aligns well with the time constraints and varied pacing needs of technical students, many of whom manage heavy workloads or internships. Studies by Vo et.al. (2017) confirm that blended models tend to outperform fully face-to-face or fully online models in terms of learning outcomes in higher education technical programs.

2.4. Challenges and Opportunities of BL in ESP for Technical Students

Despite its advantages, implementing BL in ESP presents notable challenges. One critical issue is the dual demand on teachers to master both content-specific pedagogy and digital literacy. Harding (2007) emphasizes that ESP instructors must understand the learners' disciplinary knowledge well enough to design relevant language tasks, a demand amplified in BL environments that require fluency with online learning platforms and tools.

Oliver and Trigwell (2005) caution against adopting BL as a superficial technological overlay, emphasizing that integration must be pedagogically sound and aligned with clear instructional goals. Similarly, Akkoyunlu and Soylu (2006) report that students, while appreciating the flexibility of BL, often face difficulties such as technological unreliability and insufficient immediate feedback.

Nevertheless, the opportunities are substantial. Teachers can use learning management systems (LMS) to track learner progress, deliver individualized resources, and foster asynchronous discussions that deepen understanding. Garrison and Vaughan (2008) argue that when properly designed, BL "can support deeper approaches to learning and facilitate a more reflective and collaborative learning environment" (p. 38), aligning well with the needs of technical ESP students.

Ultimately, aligning pedagogical design with students' learning styles, motivation, and technological competence is crucial to realizing the full potential of blended ESP instruction.

3. Methodology

This paper aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore teachers' perceptions of the advantages and challenges of using blended learning in ESP instruction for technical students.

2. To understand how teachers implement blended learning strategies in their ESP classes.

3. To identify factors that support or hinder the effective use of blended learning in the ESP context at technical universities.

To achieve the above objectives, the research addresses the following questions:

1. What are teachers' views on the benefits and difficulties of applying blended learning to ESP teaching for technical students?

2. How do teachers integrate blended learning into their ESP courses?

3. What challenges do teachers face when applying blended learning, and what strategies do they suggest to overcome them?

This study adopts a qualitative research design, using semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth insights from ESP teachers about their experiences with blended learning. A qualitative approach was selected to get a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions, challenges, and strategies in real teaching contexts.

Seven ESP teachers working at a technical university in Vietnam were chosen to participate in the interviews to get data for the study. These teachers were selected using purposive sampling based on their teaching ESP experience and their involvement in blended learning practices. All participants had at least five years of experience in ESP instruction and had incorporated online learning tools into their teaching.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted either face-to-face or via online calls, depending on participants' availability. The interview questions focused on three main areas: (1) perceived advantages and challenges of blended learning, (2) practical strategies for integrating blended learning into ESP teaching, and (3) recommendations for improving blended learning implementation.

Each interview lasted approximately 30- 40 minutes and was recorded with participants' consent for transcription and analysis purposes. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key patterns and themes related to teachers' perceptions and experiences. Data coding was conducted manually, and emerging themes were cross-checked to ensure reliability and consistency. Ethical considerations, including confidentiality and voluntary participation, were strictly observed throughout the research.

4. Findings and discussions

This section presents the findings from the interviews with ESP instructors and a detailed analysis based on the three main themes: (1) Benefits of Blended Learning for ESP, (2) Strategies for Implementing

Blended Learning, and (3) Challenges Faced by ESP Teachers in Implementing Blended Learning. The discussion will examine how blended learning enhances teaching and learning experiences in ESP courses, particularly in technical disciplines.

4.1. Benefits of Blended Learning for ESP

Blended learning was unanimously seen as a powerful tool for improving the ESP learning experience, particularly in technical disciplines where language skills are intertwined with specialized knowledge. All teachers highlighted how the combination of online and face-to-face learning gives teachers and students the ability to interact with modern technologies and access learning resources more efficiently. "Blended learning allows students to revisit complex technical materials at their own pace. This flexibility is especially beneficial in fields like petroleum engineering, where the language is highly specialized."(Teacher 1)

Teachers 2 & 3 stated that students in technical fields are more accustomed to using technology, so they adapt quickly to online learning. It makes them more engaged with the content, and teachers can introduce them to new tools and resources, such as simulation software or professional databases, that are crucial for their future careers. This perspective reflects the natural inclination of technical students to adopt new technologies, making them more motivated to engage in blended learning environments.

Additionally, the integration of modern technology is seen as an opportunity to modernize the learning process. Teacher 5 commented, "Thanks to the university's investment in IT infrastructure, such as high-speed internet and smart classrooms, we can deliver interactive and multimedia-rich content that is both engaging and informative." He also added that this is particularly helpful in subjects like mining engineering, where visual aids are essential for understanding complex processes.

4.2. Strategies for Implementing Blended Learning

Teachers employed some strategies to integrate blended learning effectively into their ESP instruction. A common strategy was the combination of online resources and face-to-face classes to create a well-rounded learning experience. Teacher 7 stated, "I create online quizzes and discussion boards for students to practice technical vocabulary and concepts before coming to class. This helps them prepare for in-class activities and ensures they can apply the knowledge in practical tasks."

Moreover, many teachers also used real-world technical scenarios to facilitate the application of ESP in context. Teacher 2 explained that he assigns online projects where students have to create a report on a technical issue in English. This way, students learn the technical vocabulary in context, and they can immediately see how it applies to their field. Furthermore, teachers acknowledged the need for balancing synchronous and asynchronous components to maintain engagement. Teacher 6 noted, "In-class activities are important for reinforcing the online learning, but I also use asynchronous learning to allow students to study at their own pace, especially when it comes to reading technical articles."

These strategies highlight how blended learning can be used to address the specific needs of technical students by combining flexibility with real-world application.

4.3. Challenges Faced by ESP Teachers in Implementing Blended Learning

Despite the advantages, teachers reported several challenges in integrating blended learning into ESP courses. These challenges were divided into: (1) limited class time, (2) varying levels of English proficiency among teachers, and (3) the lack of support for ESP instructors from subject-specific faculties.

Limited Class Time for ESP

All teachers expressed frustration with the limited time allocated for ESP courses. Teacher 4 noted, "Our students have a packed curriculum, and there are only a few hours dedicated to ESP. It's difficult to cover all the technical vocabulary and language skills needed for their professional lives in such a short period." This time limitation, according to the teachers, makes it challenging to integrate both online and face-to-face activities effectively. As a result, the full potential of blended learning cannot always be realized.

Varying Levels of English Proficiency Among Teachers

Another significant challenge was the varying levels of English proficiency among ESP teachers. While teachers in specialized fields such as mining or petroleum engineering are subject-matter experts, many reported feeling less confident in their English language teaching abilities. Teacher 3 explained, "As an instructor in geotechnical engineering, my focus is on content, but my English teaching skills are not as strong. This can make it difficult to teach ESP effectively, especially when the online resources require higher level English proficiency."

Teacher 6 added, "Teaching ESP requires a solid understanding of both the technical content and the language. For subject-specific faculty, it can be overwhelming to teach both at the same time." This is particularly problematic for students who need precise technical vocabulary for their future careers.

Lack of Support from Subject-Specific Faculty

A critical challenge faced by many teachers was the lack of support from subject-specific faculty in the implementation of blended learning. Teacher 2 noted, "We are often asked to teach ESP without receiving adequate training or assistance from the university. Additionally, we come from non-linguistic backgrounds, which makes it harder to teach English effectively." This finding highlights the need for greater collaboration between English language instructors and subject-specific faculty to ensure that ESP courses are aligned with the specific needs of students in technical fields.

Moreover, the technical barriers of blended learning, such as the reliability of online platforms, the need for regular updates to technology, and students' ability to navigate these systems, were also mentioned as challenges. Although the classrooms are equipped with internet systems, technical issues still arise. Some students face difficulties using the platforms, which interrupts the flow of the learning process.

4.4. Some Suggestions for Better ESP Blended Learning Implementation

Based on the findings from the interviews with ESP teachers and the analysis of current challenges in implementing blended learning, several practical suggestions are proposed to improve ESP instruction at technical universities. These solutions focus on addressing both the pedagogical and infrastructural aspects of ESP teaching, ensuring that students are better prepared for the demands of the job market and capable of using English effectively in their professional environments.

Investing in Faculty Training for ESP Teaching

A suggestion from the teachers was the need for more comprehensive training for ESP instructors, especially those from technical faculties. Many teachers noted that while they are experts in their technical fields, they often lack specialized training in teaching English effectively. Teacher 4 emphasized, "We need more training in language teaching methods, especially in how to integrate technical content with language skills. Without this, we can't fully take advantage of blended learning platforms."

To address this, universities should organize workshops and training sessions focused on ESP teaching methodologies, including using online learning platforms, technical vocabulary acquisition, and strategies for integrating ESP into specific fields. This will enable ESP instructors to feel more confident in their ability to deliver content that is both linguistically accurate and technically relevant, which is essential for preparing students to meet the high standards required by employers.

Enhancing Collaboration Between ESP and Subject-Specific Faculties

One of the challenges identified was the lack of collaboration between ESP instructors and faculty members from technical disciplines. Teachers expressed that coordination is crucial to ensure that ESP courses are aligned with the technical needs of students. Teacher 2 noted, "If we could work more closely with the engineering faculty to understand the specific terms and concepts used in their field, we could design ESP courses that are more targeted and relevant to the students."

A solution to this would be to foster stronger partnerships between language and technical faculties,

encouraging joint workshops or co-teaching opportunities. Collaboration could help instructors gain insights into the specific needs of students and allow technical faculty members to provide input on the types of language students will need in their professional careers. This interdisciplinary approach will ensure that the ESP courses not only teach the necessary language skills but also integrate those skills with the technical content that students will encounter in their future jobs.

Expanding the Use of Technology and Online Resources in ESP Courses

Blended learning, with its emphasis on technology and online learning, was widely seen as beneficial, especially in a technical university setting. As noted by Teacher 5, "With blended learning, students can use technology to enhance their understanding of technical subjects in English. This is especially helpful because many of the resources available online are in English, and students can access them anytime, anywhere."

To optimize the use of blended learning, it is crucial for universities to expand their IT infrastructure and invest in modern teaching tools. This includes upgrading e-learning platforms, providing students with access to specialized software, and ensuring reliable internet access for all students. Furthermore, interactive online tools such as quizzes, video tutorials, and virtual labs should be integrated into the curriculum. These resources would allow students to engage more deeply with the technical content while also improving their English proficiency in the process.

Focusing on Real-World Applications and Career-Oriented English Skills

Given the demands of the job market, ESP courses must focus on real-world applications of English in the workplace. Many teachers pointed out that employers expect graduates to be able to communicate effectively in English in professional contexts. Teacher 6 highlighted, "Employers are looking for graduates who can not only understand technical content but also express themselves clearly and confidently in English."

To meet these needs, ESP courses should incorporate industry-specific scenarios and case studies that simulate real-world challenges students will face in their careers. This could include projects where students must collaborate on technical reports, present findings in English, or participate in discussions about industry trends. By using authentic materials and real-life scenarios, students will not only improve their technical English skills but also develop the confidence to use the language effectively in professional settings.

Increasing Class Time for ESP and Balancing Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning

A key challenge highlighted by all teachers was the limited class time allocated to ESP courses, which often hinders the depth and breadth of content that can be covered. Teacher 3 mentioned, "There is so much technical language to cover, but we just don't have enough time in class to cover it all thoroughly."

To address this, universities should consider expanding the number of hours dedicated to ESP instruction, especially in the earlier years of a student's academic program. Additionally, blended learning can be utilized to make better use of students' time outside of class. By assigning online activities such as vocabulary exercises, video watching, and reading assignments, students can engage with course materials at their own pace, allowing in-class time to be more focused on practical applications and interactive learning activities.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that while blended learning offers significant benefits for ESP instruction, especially in technical fields, its implementation is not without challenges. The flexibility of blended learning, combined with access to modern technology, can engage students and improve their learning outcomes. However, time constraints, inconsistent English proficiency levels among instructors, and the lack of institutional support for subject-specific teachers hinder its effectiveness. To optimize the benefits of blended learning, universities must invest more in faculty training, enhance collaboration between ESP instructors and subject-specific faculty, and ensure that both students and teachers have access to reliable technological resources. By

implementing these suggestions, technical universities can significantly improve the effectiveness of their ESP programs, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the professional world.

References:

1. Anderson, T. (2013). The theory and practice of online learning (2nd ed.). Athabasca University Press. Retrieved from: https://www.aupress.ca.

2. Akkoyunlu, B., & Soylu, M. Y. (2006). A study of students' perceptions in a blended learning environment based on different learning styles. Educational Technology & Society, 9(1), 183–193.

3. Alammary, A. (2019). Blended learning models for introductory programming courses: A systematic review. PLOS ONE, 14(11), e0221765. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0221765

4. Basturkmen, H. (2010). Developing courses in English for specific purposes. Palgrave Macmillan.

5. Bergmann, J., & Sams, A. (2012). Flip your classroom: Reach every student in every class every day. International Society for Technology in Education.

6. Boelens, R., De Wever, B., & Voet, M. (2017). The influence of learning management system use on students' perceived cognitive load and learning outcomes. Computers & Education, 105, 28-41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2016.11.003.

7. Chung, G. K. W. K., & Tsai, C. C. (2018). Blended learning in higher education: A review of the literature. Journal of Educational Technology & Society, 21(4), 93-102.

8. Donnelly, R., & O'Rourke, K. (2015). Blended learning in practice: A review of the literature. Journal of Educational Technology & Society, 18(2), 16-29.

9. Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (1998). Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach. Cambridge University Press.

10. Garrison, D. R., & Kanuka, H. (2004). Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education. The Internet and Higher Education, 7(2), 95-105. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2004.02.001

11. Garrison, D. R., & Vaughan, N. D. (2008). Blended learning in higher education: Framework, principles, and guidelines. Jossey-Bass.

12. González-Lloret, M. (2011). Task-based language teaching and technology. In N. Arnold & L. Ducate (Eds.), Present and future promises of CALL: From theory and research to new directions in language teaching (pp. 167–194). CALICO.

13. Graham, C. R. (2006). Blended learning systems: Definition, current trends, and future directions. In C. J. Bonk & C. R. Graham (Eds.), Handbook of blended learning: Global perspectives, local designs (pp. 3-21). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer Publishing.

14. Harding, K. (2007). English for specific purposes. Oxford University Press.

15. Hrastinski, S. (2019). What do we mean by blended learning? TechTrends, 63(5), 564–569. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-019-00375-5

16. Huertas-Abril, C. A., & Marine-Roig, E. (2018). Blended learning in ESP: An assessment proposal. Language Value, 10(1), 196–223. https://doi.org/10.6035/languagev.2018.10.10

17. Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-Centred Approach. Cambridge University Press.

18. Moore, M. G., Dickson-Deane, C., & Galyen, K. (2011). e-Learning, online learning, and distance learning environments: Are they the same?. The Internet and Higher Education, 14(2), 129-135.

19. Mortera-Gutiérrez, F. J. (2006). Faculty best practices using blended learning in e-learning and face-to-face instruction. International Journal on E-Learning, 5(3), 313–337.

20. Oliver, M., & Trigwell, K. (2005). Can 'blended learning' be redeemed? E-Learning and Digital Media, 2(1), 17–26. https://doi.org/10.2304/elea.2005.2.1.17

21. Oleinik, N. (2020). Blended learning: A critical review of current research on its impact and application in

higher education. Journal of Educational Technology Development and Exchange (JETDE), 13(1), 35-46. https://doi.org/10.18785/jetde.1301.04

22. Strevens, P. (1988). ESP after twenty years: A reappraisal. In M. Tickoo (Ed.), ESP: State of the art (pp. 1–13). SEAMEO Regional Centre.

23. Vo, H. M., Zhu, C., & Diep, A. N. (2017). The effect of blended learning on student performance at course level in higher education: A meta-analysis. Studies in Educational Evaluation, 53, 17 28. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2017.01.002.

©Dương Thuý Hường, Nguyễn Thị Thảo, 2025

Gurbanova Melile, student.
Turkmen National Institute of World Languages named after Dovletmammet Azadi.
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
Yalkabova Humay, student.
Pedagogical secondary vocational school named after Berdimuhamed Annayev of Arkadag city
Arkadag, Turkmenistan

TEACHING CHILDREN: FOUNDATIONS, METHODS, AND THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENTAL PEDAGOGY

Abstract

Teaching children requires a specialized pedagogical approach that takes into account their cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. Unlike adolescents or adults, children learn best through play, repetition, sensory engagement, and interpersonal interaction. This article explores the principles and methods of teaching young learners, emphasizing child-centered pedagogy, active learning strategies, developmental psychology, and the importance of creating a safe and nurturing classroom environment. It also discusses the integration of arts, storytelling, and technology in primary education, and highlights the role of the teacher in fostering curiosity, confidence, and foundational skills for lifelong learning.

Keywords:

early childhood education, child development, active learning, teaching methods, child-centered pedagogy, primary school, foundational skills, play-based learning.

A key principle in teaching children is the use of child-centered pedagogy. This approach prioritizes the interests, experiences, and developmental stages of the child. Rather than imposing rigid curriculum structures, child-centered teaching encourages exploration, experimentation, and inquiry. It recognizes that children learn at different rates and in different ways—some through movement, others through visuals, and many through interaction and storytelling. The role of the teacher shifts from information-giver to facilitator and guide, supporting learning through observation, encouragement, and adaptive instruction.

In addition to play, storytelling and narrative instruction play a crucial role in teaching children. Stories not only improve language development and listening skills, but they also teach morals, cultural traditions, and emotional understanding. Children respond to stories that mirror their experiences, spark their imagination, or help them cope with challenges. Teachers use read-alouds, puppet shows, digital story apps, and class discussions to build literacy and comprehension while fostering emotional intelligence.

The integrationof technology and multimedia can enhance children's learning when used