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BLENDED LEARNING AND EFL SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER

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Abstract

Blended learning is a quite debatable mode of learning in the world. The researcher aims in this study to investigate the views of EFL Secondary School Teachers on Blended Learning. In the present study EFL is an abbreviation for "English as a Foreign Language". EFL is defined as the language of students learning English as foreign language. In India Gujarati language speaking students learning English language then for them its known as EFL(English as a Foreign Language). It also aims to investigate the views of the EFL secondary teachers on blended learning. Total EFL teachers of HimatnagarTaluka, Gujarat State, India are included in this study. The sample will be selected randomly. The sample will be provided hard copy or soft copy of the questionnaire. India is an orthodox type of country where tradition matters a lot. In some part of India male dominates the social system hence EFL teaching from gender perspective may have different impact. In such a developing country, women are gaining good position in the education field in metro cities. India has a strong social, caste and creed system hence women from different strata may not have equal opportunity in small town and rural part. It is very interesting to study the views of EFL teachers on blended learning in the context of gender and category and the interactive effect of gender*category. Indian social system is based on categories like SC, ST, SEBC and Open/General.

Keywords: Blended learning;EFL and TEFL; Category.

1. Introduction

Change is an essential part of life cycle. Changes in our life are affected by many factors like political situation, economic growth, advancement in technology, etc. Technology has powerful impact on life so Sethy, (2008) says "new findings are generated and become established at breathtaking speed". The impact of technology is so powerful that even the field of education is highly affected thus

Djiwandono (2013) writes, "Learning is no longer confined to the four walls and whiteboard of a classroom", because of various tools and resources that are used by the teacher to provide wider teaching-learning knowledge. It is prime focus to see what changes are there in teaching of English as foreign language. Teaching English as a second language is still centered on how to teach, not how to learn even today in some parts of India. In India the method of chalk and talk is still in existence. The chalk and talk method has certain limitations in learning the language. In India due to advancement in technology there is impact of technology aided English as second language learning. We should agree that technology aided learning also has some disadvantages like preventing individuals from socializing. It's because of the absence of face-to-face communication (Azizan, 2010).In order to balance face-to face learning and technology aided learning, we needed to find a new method and that is known as blended learning. In the present study, it is endeavoured to study impact on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) due to the increased use of blended learning, specifically at the secondary school teacher levels. It is tried to determine some of the critical factors that affect the teachers views on using blended learning and also to determine some of the factors that affect the teachers views on using blended learning. This is the first effort to study the views of the EFL secondary teachers on blended learning. Total EFL teachers of HimatnagarTaluka, Gujarat State, India.

2. Problem Statement

Blended Learning and EFL Secondary School Teacher

3. Research Question

The researcher aims to study the following mentioned questions-

1- Are there any significant differences between the views of EFL teachers on blended learning in the context of their gender and category?

4. Limitation of the Study

1. Population of the study: this study was limited to secondary school teachers of EFL only.

2. This study is confined to HimatnagarTaluka only.

5. Paper Theoretical Foundation and Related Literature

Blended learning has been defined variously by academician of the world. The simple definition of blended learning may be as the type of learning that synthesizes traditional face-to-face mode of learning with technology enabled mode of learning. It derives benefits from both mode of learning. Lim, Morris, and Kupritz (2007) write that it's a learning method that has more than one way to enhance learning outcomes with a low cost associated. So and Bonk (2010) believes that to design and apply blended learning in order to deliver efficient content and knowledge with full support of students, you have to make a clear integration between two components of the course (face-to-face and online). Lo, Johnson, and Tenorio (2011) write that when students use blended learning their perception level of deep thinking

and problem solving is higher. Moreover, this approach offers flexible resources which make the learning environment more active, by providing students with new experiences and outcomes. Chen and Jones (2007) mentioned that using web-based resources deepen students understanding of topics. Teachers (those are) new to blended learning fail to interact in online components with students because they feel that they are doing the same thing twice (Nakazawa, 2009).Teachers should focus on the outcomes and how to benefit more from the use of technology as a virtual extension of the classroom (Senior, 2010). It may be possible that enhancing blends of both modes cause some changes to the teaching learning experience but not a complete change. It is said that transforming blends of both modes results in a complete major changes in the teaching and learning.Badawi (2009) studied the effectiveness of the blended learning model in developing knowledge and performance knowledge and performance of EFL prospective teachers. Results showed that the blended learning model surpassed the traditional model group in developing pedagogical knowledge of prospective teachers. However, there were no significant differences between the two groups in developing the pedagogical performance of prospective teachers. Liu (2013) investigated blended learning in an Academic English Writing course (AEW) in terms of course design, material development and presentation, assignment submission and grading, student involvement, teacher reflection, and student evaluation in his study. Findings by Liu indicate that students favoured and appreciated blended learning in many ways, such as increasing student-student and student-teacher interactions, reducing or even eliminating communication anxiety, motivating them to become (more) independent and autonomous learners, and enhancing their academic English writing ability. Investigation by Djiwandono (2013) shows that the effectiveness of blended learning in vocabulary lessons and the opinions of students about the blended learning experience. Findings showed an apparent gain in students' command of 5000-level English words. Surprisingly, they did not make a similarly encouraging achievement in new words from the texts. Kuo, Belland, Schroder, and Walker (2014) tried to investigate the relationship between student perceptions of three types of interaction and blended learning course satisfaction. Results shows that students perceived interaction as important to their learning experiences and were moderately satisfied in their blended learning course. It also revealed that the personality of student is a major factor for interaction and satisfaction in this type of course design. Aldalalah, & Gasaymeh (2014) tried to investigate the effects of locus of control and anxiety level on Jordanian educational technology students' perceived blended learning competencies and obstacles. The results dhows that students with internal locus of control performed significantly better than external locus of control students in blended learning competencies (Knowledge &Technological) and blended learning obstacles. The findings also showed that moderate anxiety students performed significantly better than low and high anxiety students in blended learning competencies (Knowledge &Technology) and blended learning obstacles. It also concluded that there was no significant difference between the low and high anxiety students in blended learning obstacles. The study of previous literature shows that many studies have been conducted to explore the effectiveness of blended learning and how it affects performance of teachers and students. The findings were in favour of blended learning and also showing how it improves the performance of both.

6. Abbreviations

01 BL= Blended Learning

02 TEFL= Teaching of English as a Foreign Language.

03 EFL= English as a Foreign Language

04 ELF= English as a Lingua Franca

05 SC= Schedule Caste

06 ST= Schedule Tribes

07 SEBC= Socially and Economically Backward Class

08 Open/General= Those are not in SC/ST/SEBC are known as Open/General

7. Methodology

The aim of this research is to investigate the views of EFL teachers on Blended Learning so quantitative data was collected using non standardized questionnaire having 11 questions. The non-standardized, five-point-scale Questionnaire on the view of EFL teachers on blended learning (VETBL) was developed and used in both on-line and off-line form. The researcher has tried to study all the relevant information in the construction of the tool and also attempted to conduct personal interview with experts in order to develop the insight for the construction of the tool. The suggestions provided by the experts on the questionnaire were considered in the construction of the questionnaire. The research items were based on five-point-scale (1 for SD= Strongly Disagree, 2 for D=Disagree, 3 for U=Uncertain, 4 for A=Agree, 5 for SA=Strongly Agree) for each item on the questionnaire. The results for each scale were computed through a calculation of the mean, standard deviation and percentage scores. The statistical calculation provides the level of views of EFL teachers on BL in the following way:

1- Very Weak (V.W): Percentage from 00% to less than 20%.

2- Weak (W): Percentage from 21% to less than 40%.

3- Medium (M): Percentage from 41% to less than 60%.

4- High (H): Percentage from 61% to less than 80%.

5- Very High (V.H): Percentage from 80% to 100%.

8. Sample

The final sample consisted of 282 participants. 58 females and 62 males were from open/general category. In SC category there were 16 females and 22 males. 42 females and 34 males from SEBC category. In ST category there were 20 females and 28 males. In this way there were 136 females and 146 males in the sample for final study.
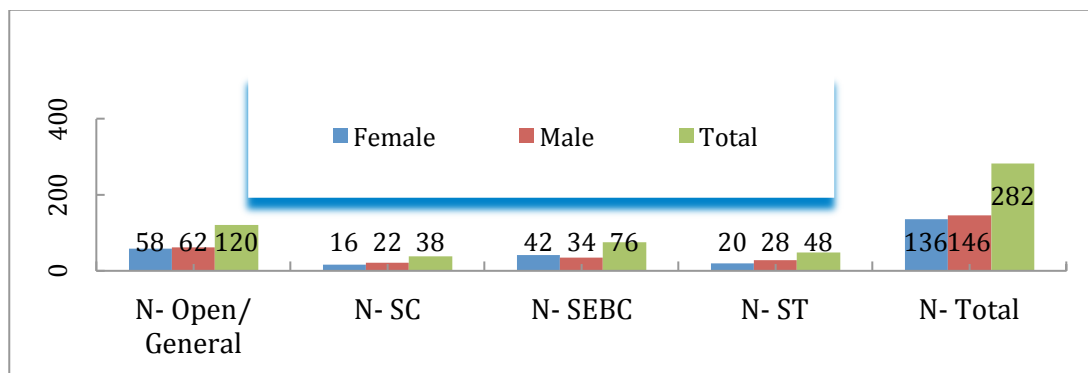
Fig. 1. Number of Sample

9. Statistical Treatment

The researcher tried to investigate the of views of EFL teachers on BL by means of a descriptive and analytical methodology. Quantitative research design was applied. The responses were generated in the MS Excel csv format. The value of each item was calculated in MS Excel. The data was calculated in ANOVA with the help of SPSS version 21. The effect of variables was analysed at 0.05 level and the HOs were tested. The data is presented in % calculation in tabular form wherever necessary.

10. Analyses and Results

The researcher tried to find the answer of the question " Are there any significant differences between the views of EFL teachers on blended learning in the context of their gender and category? The researcher formulated three Hos for the above question.

Ho1. There would be no significant differences between the views of EFL teachers on blended learning in the context of their gender.

In the following table, the sum of square, df, Mean square and F with sig. are shown for the effect of the variable of gender on blended learning.

Table 1. ANOVA for Gender

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Skills	0.90	1	0.90	1.21	0.273
	Easy to teach	**6.37**	**1**	**6.37**	**4.92**	**0.010***
	Interesting for Teacher	2.47	1	2.47	1.35	0.247
	Better Teaching	3.89	1	3.89	3.63	0.058
	Communication	0.94	1	0.94	0.62	0.432
Gender	Interaction among Students	0.82	1	0.82	1.50	0.222
	Convenient	0.35	1	0.35	0.47	0.492
	Free Expression	5.80	1	5.80	4.29	0.039
	Motivates Teacher	0.66	1	0.66	0.77	0.380
	Interesting for Students	1.14	1	1.14	1.45	0.230
	Motivates Students	0.98	1	0.98	1.07	0.302

*Significant at 05 level

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It is observed from the table above that the calculated value of male and female on blended learning is 0.010 for component of *Easy to teach*. It is concluded that the gender affects the components: *Easy to teach.*

Ho2. There would be no significant differences between the views of EFL teachers on blended learning in the context of their category.

In the following table, the sum of square, df, Mean square and F with sig. are shown for the effect of the variable of category on blended learning.

Table 2. ANOVA for Category

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Category	Skills	0.38	3	0.13	0.17	0.915
	Easy to teach	**11.01**	**3**	**3.67**	**3.34**	**0.020***
	Interesting for Teacher	6.16	3	2.05	1.12	0.341
	Better Teaching	2.27	3	0.76	0.71	0.549
	Communication	3.67	3	1.22	0.80	0.493
	Interaction among Students	**4.31**	**3**	**1.44**	**2.64**	**0.050***
	Convenient	1.76	3	0.59	0.80	0.493
	Free Expression	2.96	3	0.99	0.73	0.536
	Motivates Teacher	**15.51**	**3**	**5.17**	**6.05**	**0.001***
	Interesting for Students	2.47	3	0.82	1.04	0.375
	Motivates Students	7.05	3	2.35	2.55	0.056

*Significant at 05 level

It is observed from the table above that the calculated values of category of teachers on blended learning are 0.020 for the component of *Easy to teach,* 0.050 for the component of *Interaction among Students* and0.001 for the component of *Motivates Teacher*. It is concluded that the category of teachers affects the components: *Easy to teach, Interaction among Students* and *Motivates Teacher.*

Ho3. There would be no significant differences between the views of EFL teachers on blended learning in the context of the interaction of variables like gender*category.

In the following table, the sum of square, df, Mean square and F with sig. are shown for the effect of the interaction of the variables like gender*category on blended learning.

Table-3. ANOVA for Gender*Category

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender * Category	Skills	0.28	3	0.09	0.13	0.944
	Easy to teach	**4.60**	**3**	**4.87**	**4.43**	**0.005***
	Interesting for Teacher	0.71	3	0.24	0.13	0.943
	Better Teaching	1.06	3	0.35	0.33	0.805
	Communication	2.60	3	0.87	0.57	0.635
	Interaction among Students	0.04	3	0.01	0.03	0.994
	Convenient	0.95	3	0.32	0.43	0.730
	Free Expression	1.54	3	0.51	0.38	0.768

Motivates Teacher	0.23	3	0.08	0.09	0.966
Interesting for Students	0.32	3	0.11	0.13	0.940
Motivates Students	0.04	3	0.01	0.02	0.997

*Significant at 05 level

It is observed from the table above that the calculated value of the interaction of gender*category of teachers on blended learning is 0.005 for component of *Easy to teach*. It is concluded that the interaction of gender*category of teachers on blended learning affects the components: *Easy to teach.*

11. Discussion

After the intensive study on the views of EFL teachers on blended learning in the context of variables like gender and category, it can be said that the teachers believes that they feel the English courses easier to teach when applying BL in teaching. It is surprising to note that the teachers from various categories like open/general, SC, SEBC and ST believes that blended learning activities allow students to interact with each other in better way than the face to face mode of learning. It is also concluded that the teachers from various categories also are of opinion that blended learning content motivates them to teach better in competition with traditional mode of learning.

12. Conclusion

It is concluded that the teachers of EFL of HimatnagarTaluka of Gujarat State, India believes that blended learning makes their activity of teaching more easy. The EFL teachers thinks that there is more room for interaction because of blended learning that also results in the self-motivation to themselves. The research can be summed up by saying that the teachers of EFL are not in favour of teaching-learning activities in traditional mode but prefers blended learning mode.

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