Academic Paper

Blended Learning Approaches for Teaching Thai in Universities: A Path to Enhanced Language Proficiency

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Abstract: This paper explores the implementation of blended learning approaches in Thai language teaching at the university level as a means to enhance language proficiency. Traditional methods of Thai language instruction, which emphasize rote learning and lecture-based teaching, often fail to adequately develop practical language skills, particularly in speaking and listening. Blended learning, which combines online and face-to-face instruction, offers a more interactive and student-centered approach. Through a review of current methodologies, case studies, and assessment strategies, this paper highlights the potential of blended learning to improve student engagement, language proficiency, and retention. The findings suggest that blended learning not only addresses the gaps in traditional instruction but also fosters learner autonomy, critical thinking, and long-term language retention. Recommendations for educators and policymakers are provided to support the integration of blended learning into Thai language curricula, along with practical strategies for its effective implementation.

Keywords: Blended learning, Thai language teaching, higher education, language proficiency, curriculum integration

1 Introduction

Thai language education has long played a crucial role in fostering linguistic proficiency and cultural identity among Thai students. At the university level, Thai language courses are often mandatory, aiming to develop students' communication skills, critical thinking, and appreciation of Thai literature and cultural heritage (Wongsothorn, 2020). However, traditional approaches to teaching Thai in higher education, which rely heavily on lecture-based methods, often fail to engage students effectively and do not meet the evolving needs of learners in the digital age (Rungwaran, 2019). There is a growing demand for innovative pedagogical strategies that address the diverse learning styles and needs of today's students while ensuring that they achieve high levels of proficiency in Thai (Klongwattana & Wongwanich, 2021).

Language proficiency, especially in one's native language, is essential for academic success and effective communication in a globalized world. In Thai universities, the development of advanced language skills is not only critical for students' academic performance but also for their future careers, particularly in fields that require strong communication abilities, such as education, media, and public administration (Sangsiri, 2022). Enhancing language proficiency ensures that students are better equipped to express complex

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ideas, participate in professional discourse, and engage with both local and international communities (Suwannatrai & Chumchon, 2021). Therefore, improving the methods of teaching Thai at the university level is vital for empowering students to excel academically and professionally.

Blended learning is an instructional approach that combines traditional face-to-face classroom teaching with online learning activities, offering flexibility and personalization for learners. In the context of language education, blended learning allows students to engage with course materials at their own pace, access a wider range of resources, and practice language skills through interactive digital platforms (Graham, 2019). Research has shown that blended learning enhances student engagement, improves learning outcomes, and promotes autonomy, all of which are particularly beneficial for language acquisition (Poon, 2013). For Thai language teaching, incorporating blended learning can provide a solution to the limitations of conventional teaching methods by offering a more dynamic and interactive learning environment that fosters language proficiency (Pannarunothai et al., 2020).

The purpose of this paper is to explore how blended learning approaches can be applied to the teaching of Thai language in universities to enhance students' language proficiency. Specifically, the paper aims to: (1) examine the current state of Thai language education in universities and identify gaps in traditional teaching methods; (2) analyze the potential benefits and challenges of implementing blended learning in Thai language courses; (3) propose strategies for integrating blended learning into Thai language instruction to improve student outcomes; (4) provide recommendations for educators and policymakers on how to effectively utilize blended learning to enhance Thai language teaching and learning in higher education.

This study is guided by the following research questions: (1) What are the current challenges faced by Thai language instructors and students in universities? (2) How can blended learning improve the effectiveness of Thai language teaching in higher education? (3) What are the best practices for implementing blended learning in Thai language courses? (4) How does blended learning impact students' proficiency in Thai compared to traditional teaching methods?

2. Overview of Blended Learning

2.1 Definition and Key Components of Blended Learning

Blended learning refers to an educational strategy that combines traditional face-to-face instruction with digital or online learning experiences, offering a flexible, student-centered learning environment. Graham (2019) defines blended learning as an approach that integrates online learning activities, such as digital lectures, forums, or quizzes, with classroom instruction to enhance students' engagement and learning outcomes. The key components of blended learning include both synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (self-paced) learning opportunities, allowing students to interact with instructors and peers while also independently engaging with content (Staker & Horn, 2012). This approach also relies on technological infrastructure, which supports the delivery of learning materials and enables tracking of students' progress.

2.2 Types of Blended Learning Models

Blended learning encompasses various models that cater to different instructional goals and contexts. Two of the most common models are:

Flipped Classroom: In this model, students first engage with learning materials (e.g., videos, readings) at home before attending in-person classes where they participate in discussions, group work, or practical exercises (Bishop & Verleger, 2013). This shifts the traditional classroom structure, allowing more active learning during face-to-face sessions.

Rotational Model: In the rotational model, students rotate between different learning activities or stations, some of which are online and others face-to-face (Horn & Staker, 2014). This model allows for differentiated instruction, as students may work on different activities based on their individual needs, and instructors can provide targeted support. Other models, such as enriched virtual and flex models, also offer varying levels of integration between online and traditional learning (Graham, 2019). Each model can be adapted based on the course content and students' learning styles.

2.3 Advantages of Blended Learning in Language Education

Blended learning offers several advantages in the context of language education. One of the primary benefits is the flexibility it provides students, allowing them to engage with learning materials at their own pace and revisit content as needed (Poon, 2013). This self-paced learning is particularly beneficial for language acquisition, as students can take the time to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in a controlled, personalized environment. Additionally, blended learning allows for the integration of multimedia resources, such as videos, podcasts, and interactive exercises, which can enhance students' exposure to authentic language use (Dziuban et al., 2018). Research has shown that the use of multimedia can improve language learners' comprehension and retention (Graham, 2019). Furthermore, blended learning promotes student engagement and motivation by offering varied and interactive learning experiences (Horn & Staker, 2014). Moreover, blended learning supports collaboration and communication between students and instructors through online platforms, fostering a community of practice where learners can interact and support each other's progress (Vaughan, 2014). This collaborative environment is essential in language education, where regular practice and feedback are key to proficiency development.

2.4 Challenges and Limitations of Blended Learning

Despite its many advantages, blended learning also presents challenges and limitations. One of the main challenges is the need for reliable technology infrastructure, which is essential for delivering online components of the course. Without adequate access to technology, students may struggle to engage fully with the blended learning model, leading to inequalities in learning outcomes (Poon, 2013). Another limitation is the potential for reduced face-to-face interaction, which is critical for language learners who benefit from direct feedback and spontaneous communication opportunities in a traditional classroom setting (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). While online platforms can facilitate communication, they may not fully replicate the immediacy and richness of in-person interaction. Blended learning also requires a higher level of self-discipline and time management skills from students, as they need to manage their online and offline learning activities effectively (Graham, 2019). Some students may find it difficult to stay motivated or organize their learning, particularly if they are more accustomed to the structure of traditional classroom-based education. Lastly, instructors may face challenges in designing and managing blended learning environments, as they need to create meaningful connections between online and face-to-face components while also ensuring that the online materials are accessible and engaging (Dziuban et al., 2018). Training and support for instructors are therefore crucial for the successful implementation of blended learning.

3. Current Status of Thai Language Teaching in Universities

3.1 Traditional Approaches to Teaching Thai at the University Level

Thai language instruction in universities has historically followed a traditional, lecture-based model, where teachers are the primary source of knowledge, and students play a passive

role in absorbing content. These classes often focus on grammar, literature, and translation, using textbooks and lectures as the main resources (Sakulsiri, 2019). The reliance on rote memorization and repetitive drills has been a common practice, especially in preparing students for exams. While this method has proven effective for teaching formal writing and grammar rules, it does not adequately address the development of speaking, listening, or critical thinking skills (Chinpakdee, 2020). The traditional model, which emphasizes teacher-centered learning, is often characterized by limited opportunities for student interaction or participation. This lack of active engagement in language practice has been identified as one of the significant shortcomings in current Thai language education at the university level (Wongchantra, 2020). As a result, students frequently struggle to apply their language skills in real-world situations, despite their theoretical knowledge.

3.2 Assessment of Current Methodologies and Their Effectiveness

The traditional approaches to teaching Thai have been effective in certain areas, particularly in the development of grammatical accuracy and formal language proficiency. Students typically perform well in exams that test their knowledge of linguistic rules, vocabulary, and reading comprehension (Kaewkla, 2021). However, these methodologies have been criticized for their limited focus on practical language use. Research has shown that while students may excel in written exams, they often lack the ability to communicate effectively in spoken Thai, especially in professional and social contexts (Rattanavich, 2018). Furthermore, the assessment methods commonly used, such as multiple-choice tests and written exams, do not always capture students' overall language proficiency. These methods often fail to evaluate important aspects of language learning, such as oral communication, pronunciation, and listening skills. As a result, students may graduate with high academic scores but lack the practical skills needed for fluent language use.

3.3 Gaps in the Current Thai Language Curriculum and Teaching Methods

Several gaps have been identified in the current Thai language curriculum at the university level. One of the most significant issues is the lack of integration between language skills. Most courses are still heavily focused on reading and writing, with less attention given to speaking and listening (Chinpakdee, 2020). This imbalance in skill development creates challenges for students, particularly in real-world communication where all language skills need to be used concurrently. Another gap is the limited use of technology in language teaching. While digital tools and multimedia resources have become increasingly available, many Thai language courses continue to rely on traditional teaching methods, which do not incorporate interactive elements that could enhance learning outcomes (Wongchantra, 2020). Moreover, there is a noticeable lack of exposure to authentic language use in real-world contexts. Students are rarely encouraged to engage with Thai outside of the classroom, which hinders their ability to develop natural language fluency (Kaewkla, 2021). In addition, the curriculum often lacks cultural relevance. While Thai language courses emphasize linguistic structure, they frequently neglect the cultural aspects of language learning, which are essential for understanding the nuances of communication in different social settings (Rattanavich, 2018). Without a strong cultural component, students may struggle to fully comprehend the subtleties of language use in everyday life.

3.4 The Need for Innovative Approaches in Thai Language Instruction

Given the gaps and challenges in current Thai language instruction, there is a pressing need for innovative teaching approaches that move beyond the traditional lecture-based model. Blended learning, for example, has been recognized as a promising solution for integrating technology with face-to-face instruction, offering a more dynamic and engaging learning

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environment (Graham, 2019). By incorporating online resources, interactive activities, and multimedia tools, blended learning can help students practice all four language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—in an integrated manner. Additionally, there is a growing demand for learner-centered approaches that prioritize active engagement and practical language use. Project-based learning and task-based language teaching are two strategies that have been shown to improve language proficiency by focusing on real-world tasks and encouraging collaborative learning (Kaewkla, 2021). These methods allow students to apply their language skills in meaningful contexts, thus enhancing their ability to communicate fluently. Finally, incorporating cultural education into the curriculum is essential for developing a deeper understanding of how language functions in various social and cultural settings. This can be achieved through the use of authentic materials, such as Thai literature, media, and interactions with native speakers, which expose students to the richness of the language in its natural context (Wongchantra, 2020). By embracing these innovative approaches, Thai language education can better prepare students for the complexities of real-world communication.

4. Blended Learning as a Solution for Thai Language Proficiency

4.1 How Blended Learning Can Address the Gaps in Traditional Teaching Methods

Blended learning offers a promising solution to the shortcomings of traditional Thai language instruction, particularly in addressing the gaps related to student engagement, skill integration, and practical language use. Traditional methods often focus heavily on rote memorization and formal grammar, which can lead to student disengagement and a lack of practical communication skills (Rattanavich, 2018). Blended learning, by combining in-person instruction with online resources, allows for a more interactive and dynamic learning environment, encouraging students to take an active role in their own learning (Graham, 2019). One of the key strengths of blended learning is its ability to integrate all four language skills— reading, writing, listening, and speaking—into a cohesive learning experience. For example, online platforms can provide students with opportunities to practice listening and speaking through multimedia resources, while face-to-face sessions can focus on reinforcing grammar and writing skills. This integration addresses the imbalance in traditional teaching methods, which often prioritize reading and writing over speaking and listening (Kaewkla, 2021). Blended learning also allows for differentiated instruction, where students can work at their own pace and receive individualized feedback. This flexibility can help bridge the gap between students with varying levels of proficiency, ensuring that all learners can progress according to their needs (Horn & Staker, 2014). Overall, blended learning can enhance both the depth and breadth of Thai language instruction, making it more engaging, interactive, and suited to the needs of modern learners.

4.2 The Role of Technology in Supporting Thai Language Learning

Technology plays a pivotal role in the successful implementation of blended learning, particularly in language education. Digital platforms, such as learning management systems (LMS), provide a space where students can access course materials, participate in discussions, submit assignments, and receive feedback in real time. These platforms also allow for the integration of multimedia tools, such as videos, audio recordings, and interactive quizzes, which can greatly enhance students' understanding and retention of the Thai language (Dziuban et al., 2018). Multimedia tools are especially beneficial in language learning, as they expose students to authentic language use in various contexts. For instance, videos and podcasts featuring native Thai speakers can help students improve their listening comprehension and

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pronunciation. Additionally, language learning apps and websites can offer interactive exercises that reinforce vocabulary and grammar skills through gamification, making learning more enjoyable and engaging (Suwannatrai & Chumchon, 2021). Furthermore, technology enables real-time communication between students and instructors, fostering a collaborative learning environment even outside the classroom. Through online forums, chat functions, and video conferencing tools, students can practice their speaking and writing skills with their peers and teachers, receiving immediate feedback and guidance (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). The use of technology in blended learning thus extends the learning experience beyond the physical classroom, creating more opportunities for students to practice and improve their Thai language proficiency.

4.3 Integrating Online and In-Person Learning Activities for Thai Language Courses

A well-structured blended learning model combines the best elements of both online and face-to-face instruction, offering students a balanced and comprehensive learning experience. In Thai language courses, online activities can be used to introduce new concepts and provide practice opportunities, while in-person sessions can focus on deepening understanding and applying language skills in interactive settings (Graham, 2019). For instance, students might watch a video lecture or complete an online grammar exercise before attending class, where they participate in group discussions or role-playing activities that reinforce the material. Instructors can also design blended learning activities that encourage collaboration and peer learning. For example, students could be assigned group projects that involve both online research and in-class presentations, allowing them to develop their language skills in multiple modalities (Bishop & Verleger, 2013). This approach not only enhances language proficiency but also fosters critical thinking and teamwork, which are essential skills in higher education. Blended learning can also be used to implement formative assessments that provide ongoing feedback to students. Online quizzes, writing assignments, and discussion boards can be used to monitor student progress, identify areas of difficulty, and tailor face-to-face instruction to address specific challenges (Dziuban et al., 2018). This continuous feedback loop helps ensure that students remain engaged and motivated throughout the course.

4.4 Promoting Learner Autonomy and Engagement Through Blended Learning

One of the key advantages of blended learning is its ability to promote learner autonomy, which is critical for language acquisition. By offering students access to online resources and allowing them to work at their own pace, blended learning encourages self-directed learning and helps students take responsibility for their own progress (Poon, 2013). This autonomy is particularly important in language education, where regular practice and exposure to the language are necessary for long-term retention and fluency. Blended learning also fosters greater student engagement by providing a variety of learning activities and resources that cater to different learning styles. Some students may prefer watching video lectures, while others may benefit more from interactive exercises or group discussions. By offering a range of options, blended learning ensures that all students can find a method of learning that suits their preferences and needs (Graham, 2019). In addition, the use of technology in blended learning makes it easier for instructors to track student participation and performance, allowing for timely interventions when necessary. This level of personalized support helps keep students engaged and motivated, ensuring that they stay on track toward achieving their language proficiency goals (Horn & Staker, 2014). Ultimately, blended learning not only enhances language acquisition but also empowers students to take control of their own learning journey.

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5. Case Studies or Examples of Blended Learning in Thai Language Teaching

5.1 Successful Implementation of Blended Learning in Thai Language Courses

A number of Thai universities have successfully implemented blended learning in their Thai language programs, yielding positive outcomes for both students and teachers. For example, a study conducted by Kaewkla (2021) at a university in Bangkok demonstrated how a blended learning approach combining face-to-face classroom sessions with online exercises and multimedia resources significantly improved students' proficiency in Thai language. In this course, students engaged with video lectures and online grammar exercises before attending in-person classes, where they participated in discussions and collaborative tasks designed to reinforce their learning. Similarly, Pannarunothai et al. (2020) implemented a blended learning model in a Thai language program at another Thai university, which focused on integrating digital platforms with classroom instruction. The study found that students who participated in the blended learning course showed higher engagement and performed better on language proficiency tests compared to those in traditional courses. These successes highlight the potential of blended learning to create a more dynamic, interactive, and student-centered learning environment, particularly in language education.

5.2 Comparison of Outcomes: Traditional vs. Blended Learning Approaches

Research comparing traditional teaching methods with blended learning approaches in Thai language education reveals significant differences in student outcomes. In traditional Thai language courses, where instruction is typically lecture-based with limited student participation, students tend to excel in written grammar and translation exercises but often struggle with oral communication and practical language use (Rattanavich, 2018). Traditional methods are also less effective in engaging students, leading to lower levels of motivation and interest in language learning. In contrast, blended learning approaches have been shown to improve not only grammatical proficiency but also students' ability to communicate effectively in Thai. Kaewkla (2021) found that students in blended learning environments demonstrated better listening and speaking skills, as they were able to engage with multimedia resources that provided exposure to authentic language use. Furthermore, blended learning promotes greater student autonomy and allows for differentiated instruction, ensuring that learners with varying levels of proficiency can progress at their own pace (Horn & Staker, 2014). Studies by Poon (2013) and Suwannatrai & Chumchon (2021) have also highlighted the positive effects of blended learning on student engagement and motivation. By incorporating interactive online activities, such as quizzes, videos, and discussion forums, blended learning creates a more engaging and enjoyable learning experience, which in turn enhances students' overall performance in language courses.

5.3 Student and Teacher Perspectives on Blended Learning

Both students and teachers have reported positive experiences with blended learning in Thai language courses. From the students' perspective, blended learning offers more flexibility and control over their learning process, allowing them to revisit materials as needed and engage with content at their own pace (Wongchantra, 2020). In particular, students appreciate the multimedia resources, such as videos and interactive exercises, which make language learning more enjoyable and accessible. Many students also report that the online components of blended learning help them feel more confident in their language skills, as they have more opportunities to practice outside of class. Teachers, on the other hand, recognize the benefits

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of blended learning in creating a more interactive and student-centered learning environment. According to Rattanavich (2018), teachers in blended learning environments find that their students are more engaged and better prepared for in-person class activities, as they have already reviewed key concepts through online modules. However, teachers also acknowledge that designing and managing a blended learning course requires more time and effort compared to traditional methods, particularly in terms of creating online materials and providing ongoing feedback (Graham, 2019). Despite these challenges, both students and teachers agree that the benefits of blended learning, such as improved engagement, flexibility, and language proficiency, outweigh the drawbacks. This positive feedback from both sides suggests that blended learning is a viable and effective approach to teaching Thai language in universities.

5.4 Lessons Learned from Case Studies and Their Implications for Other Institutions

Several key lessons can be drawn from the successful implementation of blended learning in Thai language courses. First, the integration of online and in-person learning activities must be carefully planned to ensure that both components complement each other. This means that online exercises should reinforce and prepare students for the face-to-face sessions, and vice versa (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Instructors should also be mindful of the need to balance content delivery and active learning opportunities in both the online and classroom settings. Second, the use of multimedia tools and digital platforms is critical for the success of blended learning in language education. As evidenced by the case studies, students benefit greatly from interactive and multimedia-rich resources that expose them to authentic language use and provide opportunities for practice (Kaewkla, 2021). Institutions should invest in the necessary technology infrastructure and provide training for teachers to effectively incorporate these tools into their courses. Third, the success of blended learning depends on the active participation of both students and teachers. Students must be motivated and disciplined enough to engage with the online materials independently, while teachers must be prepared to provide ongoing support and feedback to guide students through the learning process (Poon, 2013). Clear communication and expectations are essential to ensure that students understand how to navigate the blended learning environment and make the most of the available resources. Finally, institutions looking to adopt blended learning should consider conducting pilot programs to assess the effectiveness of this approach in their specific context. By gathering feedback from both students and teachers, universities can make necessary adjustments to the curriculum and delivery methods to optimize learning outcomes (Dziuban et al., 2018). These lessons, drawn from successful case studies, can serve as a guide for other institutions seeking to implement blended learning in their language programs.

6. Strategies for Implementing Blended Learning in Thai Language Courses

6.1 Curriculum Design and Planning for Blended Learning

Effective curriculum design is critical to the successful implementation of blended learning in Thai language courses. The curriculum must integrate both online and in-person components in a way that ensures a coherent learning experience for students. This requires careful planning to align learning objectives, activities, and assessments across both formats (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). In Thai language courses, the curriculum should aim to develop proficiency in all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—by utilizing the strengths of each learning mode. For example, online activities might be used for grammar practice or vocabulary acquisition, while face-to-face sessions focus on conversation and collaborative tasks (Graham, 2019). A critical step in curriculum design is determining the appropriate balance between online and in-person learning. Depending on the course objectives

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and the needs of the students, instructors may opt for a "flipped classroom" approach, where students engage with content online before attending face-to-face sessions for deeper discussions and practical application (Bishop & Verleger, 2013). This approach not only maximizes classroom time for interactive learning but also encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning by engaging with materials independently.

6.2 Selection of Digital Tools and Platforms for Thai Language Instruction

The selection of appropriate digital tools and platforms is essential for creating an effective blended learning environment. Learning management systems (LMS) such as Moodle or Google Classroom can serve as the central hub for course materials, assignments, and communication, allowing students to access resources and interact with peers and instructors at their convenience (Dziuban et al., 2018). These platforms support various types of content, including text, audio, video, and interactive exercises, which are especially useful in language courses where multimedia exposure is key to developing listening and speaking skills. In addition to an LMS, language-specific tools like Duolingo or Quizlet can be integrated into the curriculum to provide students with engaging and personalized learning experiences. These tools often include gamified elements, which can increase motivation and make language practice more enjoyable (Wongchantra, 2020). Moreover, video conferencing platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams can be used for virtual speaking practice, offering students opportunities to engage in real-time conversations with their peers and instructors outside of scheduled class times (Suwannatrai & Chumchon, 2021). When selecting digital tools, it is important to ensure that they are user-friendly and accessible to all students. Instructors should also consider the technological infrastructure available at their institutions, as well as students' access to reliable internet and devices, to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by the blended learning approach (Poon, 2013).

6.3 Developing Content and Resources for Both Online and In-Person Teaching

In a blended learning environment, it is crucial to develop high-quality content and resources that complement both online and in-person instruction. Online resources should be interactive and engaging, providing students with opportunities for self-directed learning while also reinforcing key concepts taught in the classroom. For example, online quizzes, discussion forums, and multimedia lessons can be used to review grammar, vocabulary, and cultural topics (Dziuban et al., 2018). These materials should be designed to be accessible and adaptable, allowing students to work through them at their own pace. For in-person teaching, the focus should shift to applying the knowledge gained from online activities. Group work, discussions, role-playing, and language games can be incorporated into the classroom to foster collaboration and active participation (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). By integrating online preparation with interactive face-to-face sessions, students can engage more deeply with the material and develop stronger language skills through real-world practice. It is also important to develop resources that are culturally relevant, particularly for language courses. Authentic materials, such as Thai newspapers, videos, and podcasts, can be used to expose students to contemporary Thai language usage and cultural contexts, making their learning more meaningful and applicable (Rattanavich, 2018).

6.4 Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms in a Blended Learning Environment

Assessment in a blended learning environment requires a combination of both formative and summative assessments that can effectively measure students' progress across various language skills. Formative assessments, such as online quizzes, peer reviews, and in-class discussions, provide ongoing feedback that helps students identify areas for improvement (Poon, 2013). These assessments should be integrated into the online platform to allow for

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timely feedback and enable students to track their progress over time. Summative assessments, such as exams or final projects, can be conducted in-person or online, depending on the nature of the task. For language courses, it is essential to assess all four language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—through a variety of methods. Online platforms can facilitate written assessments and listening comprehension exercises, while face-to-face assessments can focus on oral proficiency through presentations or conversations with the instructor (Suwannatrai & Chumchon, 2021). Feedback in a blended learning environment should be continuous and personalized. Instructors can use digital tools to provide individualized feedback on assignments or quizzes, helping students understand their mistakes and guiding them toward improvement. Additionally, peer feedback through online forums or group projects can foster collaborative learning and allow students to learn from each other (Graham, 2019).

6.5 Overcoming Challenges in Implementing Blended Learning

Implementing blended learning in Thai language courses is not without its challenges. One of the main obstacles is ensuring that both instructors and students are equipped with the necessary digital literacy skills to navigate online platforms and tools effectively (Wongchantra, 2020). Institutions must provide adequate training and support for instructors to design and manage blended courses, including workshops on using LMS and multimedia tools (Dziuban et al., 2018). Another challenge is maintaining student engagement, particularly in the online components of the course. To overcome this, instructors should design interactive and engaging online activities that are directly connected to the in-person sessions, ensuring that students see the value in completing the online work (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Clear communication about expectations, deadlines, and the purpose of each activity is also essential to keep students on track. Finally, the issue of technological access must be addressed. Not all students may have equal access to high-speed internet or digital devices, which can create disparities in learning opportunities. Institutions should consider offering technical support or loan programs for students who lack the necessary resources (Horn & Staker, 2014). By addressing these challenges, universities can create a more equitable and effective blended learning environment for Thai language instruction.

7. Assessment of Learning Outcomes in Blended Learning

7.1 Measuring Student Language Proficiency in Blended Learning Environments

In a blended learning environment, assessing student language proficiency requires a comprehensive approach that evaluates all four key language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Digital tools and online platforms can facilitate these assessments by providing opportunities for self-paced practice, quizzes, and automated feedback (Dziuban et al., 2018). For instance, online listening comprehension exercises and interactive grammar quizzes can track progress in real time, allowing instructors to measure students' language proficiency more frequently than traditional methods (Graham, 2019). Additionally, blended learning environments often include regular online discussions, writing assignments, and oral presentations in face-to-face sessions, which can be evaluated for language accuracy, fluency, and communicative competence. The integration of both asynchronous (online) and synchronous (face-to-face) assessments provides a more complete picture of student proficiency across different contexts, ensuring a holistic evaluation of language learning (Horn & Staker, 2014).

7.2 Comparing Blended Learning Outcomes with Traditional Methods

Research comparing blended learning with traditional methods in Thai language

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instruction has demonstrated that students in blended learning environments generally achieve better learning outcomes, particularly in language proficiency (Kaewkla, 2021). In traditional language courses, students often engage in passive learning, where the focus is on memorization and written exercises. This approach tends to limit their exposure to spoken language and real-life communication scenarios (Rattanavich, 2018). In contrast, blended learning emphasizes active participation and engagement with multimedia resources, which enhance language acquisition by exposing students to authentic language use (Suwannatrai & Chumchon, 2021). Studies have shown that students in blended learning courses develop stronger listening and speaking skills compared to their peers in traditional settings (Poon, 2013). Moreover, the flexibility of blended learning allows students to revisit challenging materials and work at their own pace, which improves comprehension and retention over time (Graham, 2019).

7.3 Effectiveness of Formative and Summative Assessments

In blended learning environments, both formative and summative assessments play a crucial role in measuring student progress and proficiency. Formative assessments, such as online quizzes, peer reviews, and regular feedback on assignments, are integrated into the online component of the course. These assessments provide students with immediate feedback, allowing them to adjust their learning strategies and focus on areas where they need improvement (Bishop & Verleger, 2013). Formative assessments also include participation in online forums and discussions, where students practice writing and communication skills in a collaborative environment. This continuous feedback loop helps students stay engaged and encourages them to take ownership of their learning (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Summative assessments, such as final exams, oral presentations, and project-based assignments, are typically conducted at the end of a course or unit. In blended learning environments, these assessments often combine both online and in-person elements. For example, a summative assessment might include an online written exam followed by an in-class oral presentation (Dziuban et al., 2018). By using a variety of assessment methods, blended learning ensures that students are evaluated on their overall language proficiency rather than just specific skills.

7.4 Long-Term Impact of Blended Learning on Student Retention and Proficiency

Blended learning has been shown to have a positive long-term impact on student retention and language proficiency. Because blended learning promotes self-directed learning and encourages students to take responsibility for their progress, it fosters higher levels of motivation and engagement (Poon, 2013). This increased motivation often leads to better retention of language skills over time, as students are more likely to continue practicing and applying their knowledge beyond the classroom (Horn & Staker, 2014). Additionally, the integration of multimedia tools and authentic language resources in blended learning environments enhances students' exposure to real-world language use, which contributes to greater language proficiency in the long run (Graham, 2019). Research has shown that students who participate in blended learning programs are more likely to retain their language skills and continue improving their proficiency after the course has ended (Kaewkla, 2021). Furthermore, the flexibility of blended learning allows students to revisit course materials and practice language skills even after the formal course has concluded. This continuous access to learning resources ensures that students can maintain and further develop their language proficiency, making blended learning a sustainable approach to language education (Suwannatrai & Chumchon, 2021).

8. Conclusion

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8.1 Summary of Key Findings

The analysis of blended learning in Thai language teaching at the university level reveals several important findings. First, traditional approaches, which are heavily lecture-based, often fail to address the practical language skills students need, particularly in speaking and listening. Blended learning offers a solution by integrating online tools and in-person activities to create a more interactive and student-centered learning environment. Case studies have demonstrated that blended learning improves student engagement, enhances language proficiency across all four skills, and encourages learner autonomy. The flexibility of this model allows students to progress at their own pace and provides continuous feedback through formative assessments, further contributing to their learning outcomes.

8.2 Implications for Future Thai Language Teaching at the University Level

The successful implementation of blended learning in Thai language courses has important implications for future language education at the university level. By shifting away from purely traditional methods and embracing technology-enhanced learning, universities can better meet the diverse needs of modern students. Blended learning fosters an environment that supports active learning, critical thinking, and language fluency—skills that are essential for students to thrive in academic and professional settings. As Thai universities continue to modernize their curricula, blended learning should be viewed as a viable pedagogical model that can address the gaps in traditional language teaching methods.

8.3 Recommendations for Educators and Policymakers

To fully realize the benefits of blended learning in Thai language education, several recommendations are proposed for educators and policymakers:

Curriculum Reform: Educators should integrate blended learning into the curriculum design, ensuring a balance between online and in-person instruction that fosters the development of all four language skills. Regular updates to course content and teaching strategies should also be implemented to incorporate new digital tools and best practices.

Professional Development: Universities should provide teachers with the necessary training and support to design and manage blended learning courses effectively. This includes workshops on using learning management systems (LMS), multimedia tools, and strategies for engaging students in both online and face-to-face settings.

Infrastructure Investment: Policymakers should ensure that institutions have the technological infrastructure required for blended learning, including reliable internet access, digital devices, and educational software. This will ensure that all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have equal opportunities to participate in blended learning environments.

Assessment Innovation: Educators should adopt diverse assessment methods that measure students' progress across different modalities, including formative assessments in online settings and summative assessments during face-to-face interactions.

8.4 The Potential of Blended Learning to Enhance Thai Language Proficiency in Higher Education

Blended learning holds great potential for enhancing Thai language proficiency in higher education. Its ability to combine the best aspects of traditional and online learning allows students to engage with language in varied, meaningful ways. By providing access to authentic language resources, interactive activities, and continuous feedback, blended learning can improve students' communicative competence and prepare them for real-world language use. Furthermore, blended learning promotes lifelong learning habits, as students are encouraged to take control of their learning and continue practicing language skills even after formal

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instruction ends. For Thai universities looking to enhance the quality of language education, blended learning represents a powerful and transformative tool that aligns with the needs of today's students.

Originality & Body of Knowledge

Originality: This paper provides a groundbreaking exploration of blended learning as a transformative approach to Thai language education at the university level. Unlike traditional lecture-based teaching methods, which often focus on rote learning, this study examines the potential of combining face-to-face instruction with digital resources to enhance student engagement and language proficiency. By incorporating case studies, innovative assessment strategies, and evidence from successful implementations, the paper offers a unique perspective on addressing the limitations of conventional Thai language teaching. Its focus on integrating multimedia tools, fostering learner autonomy, and applying interactive methodologies positions it as a forward-thinking contribution to the field.

Body of Knowledge: This study significantly enriches the discourse on language education by addressing the gaps in traditional Thai language instruction and offering a comprehensive framework for blended learning. It advances academic understanding by demonstrating how blended learning models - such as flipped classrooms and rotational setups - can improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The research highlights the role of digital platforms, formative assessments, and multimedia resources in creating a dynamic and student-centered learning environment. Furthermore, the paper provides actionable recommendations for curriculum design, teacher training, and technology integration, offering valuable insights for educators and policymakers striving to modernize Thai language education in higher education institutions.

Declarations

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.
Ethical treatment of experimental subjects (animals & human): -

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