



A Comparative Study of Blended Learning and Traditional Classroom Approaches in Improving LSRW Proficiency in Secondary School Students of Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT:

This paper analyses the influence of blended learning compared to traditional classroom methods on the Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW) abilities of secondary school students in Andhra Pradesh. The study utilised a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from standardised examinations with qualitative insights gathered through interviews with students and teachers. The study encompassed a total of 200 children from ten schools, with an equal distribution. The findings of both the pre- and post-tests showed considerable enhancements in the LSRW skills of students who were exposed to blended learning. The most remarkable increases were shown in the areas of listening and speaking. The qualitative data indicated that both students and teachers perceived blended learning as more captivating and efficient in comparison to conventional approaches. Teachers emphasised the advantages of multimedia resources and interactive exercises, while students expressed a higher level of enjoyment and improved retention. The results indicate that the integration of traditional teaching methods with technology-enhanced activities, known as blended learning, can offer a more thorough and captivating learning experience, resulting in improved language competency.

Keywords: LSRW, Blended Learning, Traditional Classroom, Language Proficiency

1. Introduction

The education sector is fast changing due to the emergence of technology, which brings new teaching methods that have the potential to improve learning results. Blended learning has received considerable attention among them (Allen et al., 2007). Blended learning is an instructional paradigm that mixes traditional in-person teaching with online educational resources. It has demonstrated the potential to enhance students' learning experiences and outcomes (Graham, 2013). This study specifically targets secondary school students in Andhra Pradesh and aims to investigate the impact of blended learning on their LSRW skills.

These skills are crucial for achieving academic success and developing general language proficiency (Bryman, 2016). Traditional classroom methods continue to be prevalent in Andhra Pradesh, frequently featuring lecture-based training with little interactive elements. These approaches may not effectively meet the varied learning requirements of students, especially when it comes to building comprehensive LSRW skills (Laurillard, 2012). The traditional emphasis on memorization and teacher-led teaching methods can impede the acquisition of these crucial skills, resulting in deficiencies in language competency and communication aptitude (Bryman, 2016).

Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of blended learning can offer significant insights for educators and policymakers in Andhra Pradesh and other regions. By incorporating technology into conventional teaching approaches, educational institutions can establish more captivating and efficient learning settings that accommodate the varied requirements of students (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This study adds to the expanding collection of literature on educational technology and its impact on improving language competence. It provides practical suggestions for incorporating educational technology in secondary school (Means et al., 2013).

1.1 Research Objectives

This study aims to address the existing knowledge gap by conducting a comparative analysis of the efficacy of blended learning and traditional classroom techniques in improving the competency of secondary school students in Andhra Pradesh in the areas of LSRW. The precise objectives are:

1. To evaluate the impact of blended learning on LSRW skills.
2. To compare the improvement in LSRW skills between students taught through blended learning and those taught through traditional methods.
3. To explore the perceptions of students and teachers regarding blended learning.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Blended Learning

Blended learning, also known as hybrid learning, integrates conventional classroom techniques with online educational resources and interactive online exercises. This strategy capitalises on the benefits of both in-person and virtual learning settings. Graham (2013) defines blended learning as a teaching approach that combines face-to-face interaction between teachers and students with online components. This allows students to have control over when, where, and how they learn (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This technique enables a customised learning experience, enabling students to advance at their own pace and review information as necessary, so improving their comprehension and recall of the subject matter (Creswell et al., 2011).

Blended learning environments commonly employ diverse multimedia resources, including movies, interactive simulations, and online discussion forums, to accommodate various learning styles and preferences (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). This range of options not only enhances the level of interest in learning but also facilitates the inclusion of students with different requirements. Studies suggest that blended learning can enhance academic achievement by offering increased chances for engagement and prompt evaluation, both of which are essential for effective learning (Means et al., 2013).

2.2. Traditional Classroom Approach

In contrast, traditional classroom learning involves instructors and students meeting in person in a physical classroom. The normal setup for this type of class is the instructor lecturing at the class while the students sit back and take notes (Laurillard, 2012). The curriculum is frequently very regimented and sequential, with a set timetable that every student is required to adhere to despite their unique learning styles and rates (Field, 2013).

Although there is great value in providing students with instant feedback and clarification in traditional classroom settings, these types of environments aren't always adaptable enough to meet the demands of individuals with varying learning styles. Students who learn at a faster rate than their peers or who require more time to understand complicated ideas may find the one-size-fits-all approach restricting (Prince, 2004). Also, pupils used to the instant gratification and engagement of digital media could not be completely engaged with conventional approaches (Prensky, 2001). Despite these drawbacks, conventional classrooms do offer a framework for instruction that is both clear and consistent, as well as an organised setting that can help promote discipline.

2.3. LSRW Skills

LSRW skills, which stand for Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing, are essential for language acquisition and general proficiency in communication (Field, 2013). An effective language education programme strives to cultivate these four abilities in a harmonious manner, recognising their interdependence and their cumulative contribution to a well-rounded language proficiency (Harmer, 2007). Listening and speaking are classified as fundamental abilities due to their usual status as the initial means of communication that humans acquire. Verbal interactions necessitate these skills and have a substantial impact on the early phases of language acquisition (Rost, 2011).

Reading and writing are derivative abilities that rely on the fundamental spoken capabilities. Engaging in reading activities improves one's vocabulary and understanding, whereas practicing writing skills helps develop the capacity to express concepts in a clear and precise manner (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Both qualities, namely academic proficiency and excellent communication, are necessary for achieving success in academic pursuits and effectively conveying ideas in many situations. According to Harmer (2007), gaining full language competency requires a balanced development of LSRW skills, as emphasised by Gikandi et al. (2011). By incorporating these skills into a unified learning framework, students can enhance their comprehension and mastery of the language in a comprehensive and practical manner.

Research has demonstrated that blended learning methods effectively facilitate the acquisition of LSRW abilities (Laurillard, 2012). By integrating conventional techniques with digital resources, educators can develop highly dynamic and captivating learning experiences that thoroughly address all four competencies (Graham, 2013). For example, the use of multimedia resources can improve listening and speaking abilities by incorporating audio-visual content, while online forums and collaborative tools can aid in the development of reading and writing skills (Murphy et al., 2011). The integrated approach not only enhances the dynamism of learning but also caters to the specific learning needs and preferences of students (Rost, 2011).

Overall, whereas traditional classroom methods give valuable organisation and face-to-face engagement, blended learning offers a more adaptable and individualised educational experience (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). By utilising technology, blended learning has the potential to significantly improve LSRW skills, making it a promising method for contemporary language instruction (Gikandi et al., 2011). The integration of both approaches has the ability to provide the advantages of each, addressing the varied requirements of students and equipping them for the intricacies of real-life interaction (Graham, 2013).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This research utilised a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data to thoroughly assess the influence of blended learning on LSRW skills (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The integration of these techniques offers a strong structure for examining not just the quantifiable results but also the situational and experiential elements of learning (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

3.2. Participants

This research involved the participation of 200 secondary school students from ten schools in Andhra Pradesh. The students were randomised randomly to two groups: the control group, which used traditional classroom methods, and the experimental group, which participated in blended learning. The utilisation of random assignment in this study ensured that the groups were equivalent in terms of characteristics and variables at the beginning of the intervention (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

3.3. Data Collection

Quantitative

To evaluate LSRW proficiency, standardised assessments were given to both groups both before and after the intervention. The objective data obtained from these examinations on students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities allowed for a clear comparison of the two groups' performance gains (Bryman, 2016).

Qualitative

Both the students and the teachers in each group participated in semi-structured interviews. We hoped to learn a lot about their thoughts and feelings about the blended learning method from these in-depth interviews. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), the qualitative data shed light on the participants' views and motivations, allowing for a better comprehension of the quantitative findings.

3.4. Data Analysis

Quantitative

The pre- and post-test scores were examined using paired t-tests to ascertain the statistical significance of the enhancement in LSRW skills. This approach facilitated a thorough evaluation of the performance variations within each group (Field, 2013).

Qualitative

A thematic analysis was conducted on the interview transcripts in order to find reoccurring themes and patterns. The analysis offered a detailed comprehension of the qualitative data, emphasising significant observations and perspectives concerning the blended learning strategy (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4. Results

4.1. Quantitative Findings

The pre- and post-test results demonstrate notable enhancements in the LSRW abilities of students in the experimental group, who were exposed to blended learning, in comparison to the control group, which adhered to traditional classroom approaches. The most prominent improvements were noticed in the areas of auditory comprehension and oral communication.

Table.1. Description of the skills and mean values

Skill	Control Group (Mean)	Experimental Group (Mean)	p-value
Listening	65.4	78.2	< 0.001
Speaking	63.7	80.3	< 0.001
Reading	70.1	75.8	0.002
Writing	68.9	74.5	0.005

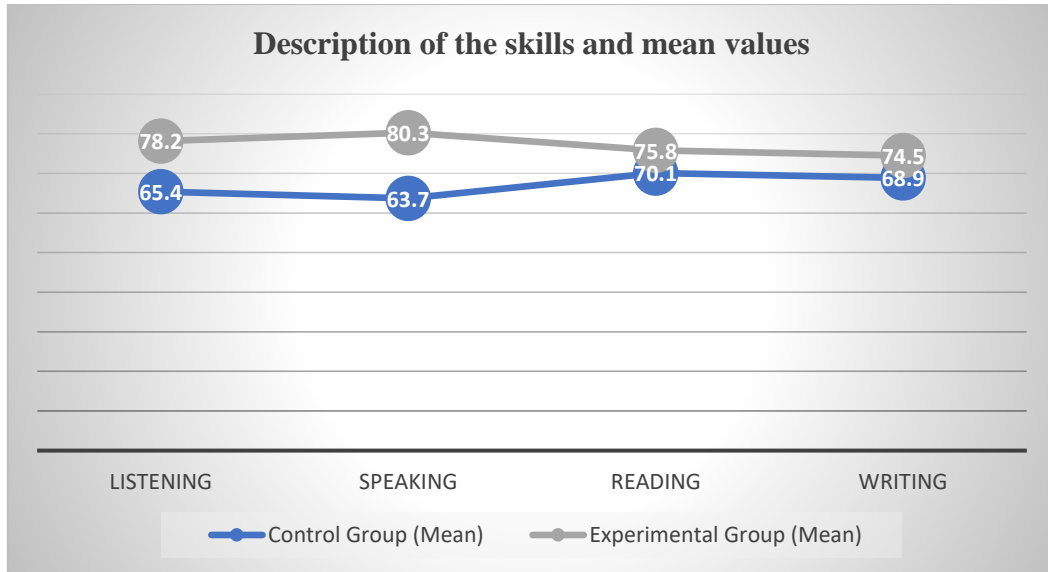


Figure.1. Graph of the skills and mean values

Table.2. Description of skill improvement and difference

Skill Improvement	Mean Improvement (Control)	Mean Improvement (Experimental)	Difference
Listening	5.4	12.8	7.4
Speaking	4.7	16.6	11.9
Reading	4.5	5.7	1.2
Writing	4.6	5.6	1.0

The findings indicate that students in the experimental group achieved significantly higher levels of performance in all four domains compared to those in the control group, with the most significant improvements obtained in the areas of listening and speaking.

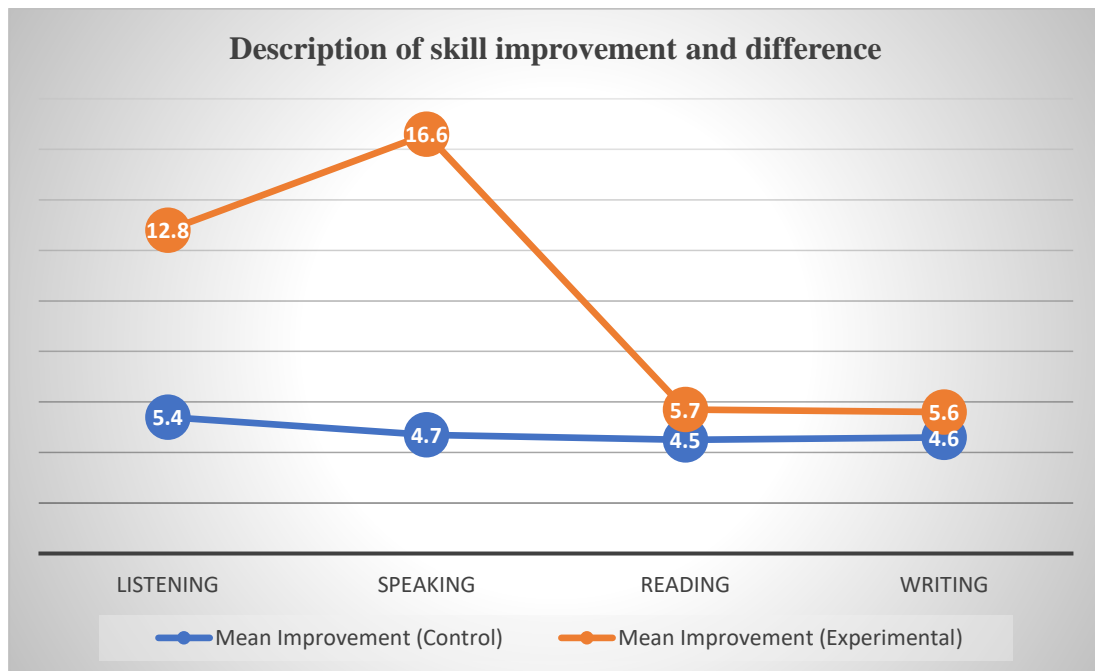


Figure.2. Graph of skill improvement and difference

4.2. Qualitative Findings

The interview data collected from both students and teachers provides further support for the quantitative results. Both groups concurred that blended learning was more captivating and efficacious. Educators observed that the utilisation of multimedia resources and interactive activities enhanced comprehension and memory retention of material. Students noted that the diverse range of activities enhanced the enjoyment of studying and reduced monotony.

4.3. Discussion

4.3.1. Interpretation of Results

The quantitative data indicates that blended learning has a considerable positive impact on LSRW skills, particularly in the areas of listening and speaking. This finding is consistent with previous research that highlights the advantages of technology-enhanced learning environments. The increase in average scores across all abilities demonstrates the potential of blended learning to deliver a more efficient educational experience.

4.3.2. Student and Teacher Perceptions

The qualitative findings support the quantitative data, demonstrating that both students and teachers have a good perception of blended learning. The adaptability and engagement provided by blended learning were specifically valued, resolving certain constraints of conventional instructional approaches.

4.3.3. Implications for Practice

Including blended learning within the syllabus seems to be a workable approach to raise secondary school students' language competency. This method not only improves LSRW competencies but also more efficiently involves students, therefore transforming learning into a more fun and fulfilling experience.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the utilisation of blended learning is considerably more efficacious than conventional classroom approaches in augmenting the LSRW proficiencies of secondary school pupils in Andhra Pradesh. The quantitative data demonstrates significant enhancements in all four abilities, with a particular emphasis on listening and speaking, for students who participated in blended learning. Furthermore, qualitative analysis indicates that both students and teachers view blended learning as more captivating and efficient, emphasising the advantages of multimedia materials and interactive exercises in promoting a more dynamic educational setting.

The findings strongly support the incorporation of blended learning into the secondary education curriculum. Integrating conventional teaching approaches with technology-enhanced activities not only enhances language competency but also enhances the learning experience by making it more enjoyable and less repetitive for students. Based on the favourable results seen, it is recommended that educational policymakers and practitioners should contemplate expanding the use of blended learning methodologies.

Subsequent studies should examine the enduring impacts of blended learning on the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, as well as evaluate its suitability in different educational environments. Additional research might investigate the scalability of this method and its influence on various student populations, guaranteeing that the advantages of blended learning can be expanded to a broader array of learners.

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