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# Learning Outcomes of Blended Learning in Business English Education: A Systematic Review of Major Categories, Assessment Approaches, and Supportive Factors (2020-2025)

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**Abstract.** Blended learning has increasingly gained attention in higher education, especially in applied language fields like Business English. Yet research evidence on its actual learning outcomes remains fragmented and inconsistent. Therefore, a systematic literature review was carried out in line with PRISMA 2020 guidelines. This study investigates the classifications of learning outcomes, measurement approaches, and the supportive factors that enhance these outcomes in blended Business English education. Boolean search strings that combined key terms, including “blended learning”, “Business English”, “learning outcomes”, and “higher education”, were employed across databases including Web of Science, Scopus, and ERIC. After applying predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, sixteen studies published between 2020 and 2025 were selected. Qualitative content analysis and thematic synthesis were employed to identify major types of learning outcomes, their assessment approaches, and the supportive factors associated with them. Our analysis reveals that language proficiency and academic performance continue to be the main indicators. Meanwhile, recent studies have begun to pay greater attention to comprehensive competencies, including higher-order thinking abilities and professional communication skills. As for assessment, learning outcomes are generally assessed by using mixed-method approaches, yet existing measurement frameworks remain fragmented and lack consistency in evaluation. Additionally, blended Business English learning outcomes appear to be shaped by interrelated technological, instructional, and learner-related factors. Overall, these results demonstrate that it is necessary to develop more standardized

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learning outcome frameworks, design more methodologically rigorous research with diverse participant groups, and further explore how different supportive mechanisms function together in blended Business English learning contexts.

**Keywords:** Systematic literature review; Blended learning; Business English education; Learning outcomes; PRISMA

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background

Digital technology now plays a central role in global higher education. It is no longer used only as a tool to support teaching and learning but has gradually become embedded in instructional processes (Mexhuani, 2025; Panda et al., 2025; Zolotarova et al., 2024). It offers opportunities such as enhanced access to educational resources, personalized learning experiences, improved student engagement, and the development of essential digital skills (Gyawali & Mehndroo, 2024). This transformation was further promoted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent global promotion of online teaching and learning, its feasibility and effectiveness in promoting educational accessibility and flexibility were demonstrated (Mustapha et al., 2021; Rashid & Yadav, 2020).

At the same time, the differences in students' motivation and engagement have become more distinct (Guppy, 2022). The use of innovative teaching technologies (such as video lectures, multimedia presentations, and social networks) can significantly enhance students' motivation and also improve learning outcomes (Shalgimbekova, 2024). Therefore, blended learning, which combines the two forms of on-site and online teaching and learning, has been widely accepted in higher education institutions in countries such as Asia, Europe and North America and has become an adaptive educational mode (Istencič, 2024; Mohtar & Yunus, 2022; Tonbuluğlu & Tonbuluğlu, 2023).

It has been shown that blended learning enhances academic achievement, learner self-regulation, and satisfaction compared to traditional approaches (Bao & Yunus, 2024; Shurygin et al., 2024). In addition, educators increasingly recognize this learning mode as one of the essential approaches for developing the complex real-world skills needed required in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce. Its potential to promote critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, intercultural communication, and problem-solving skills has been emphasized by researchers (Adera, 2025).

In higher education, learning outcomes are widely used to evaluate instructional effectiveness. They reflect students' acquisition of knowledge and skills and serve as reference for quality assurance and institutional accreditation (Lv & Li, 2024; Shi et al., 2025). Although some studies emphasize learning processes such as interaction and participation (Al-Mekhlafi, 2025; Shen, 2025), measurable outcomes remain the most direct evidence of instructional effectiveness. An emphasis on learning outcomes helps identify blended learning strategies that contribute to measurable improvements in students' academic performance and professional competencies.

## **1.2 Learning Outcomes, and its Assessment Instruments and Supportive Factors in Blended Business English Education**

This study examines the outcomes of blended learning in Business English education. Learning outcomes are defined as observable improvements in students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes resulting from instruction. These outcomes serve as a foundation for evaluating teaching effectiveness in higher education (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Kennedy, 2006).

Business English education aims to prepare learners to communicate effectively and address problems in authentic or simulated business contexts. In this regard, blended learning, combining online flexibility with face-to-face interaction, can support collaborative knowledge construction and deeper learning, enabling students to develop integrated professional skills (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008; Shen & Wu, 2025). Research shows that blended learning environments contribute to enhancing students' motivation, professional skills, including communication, collaboration, and critical thinking, which are essential in business settings (Alonso & Ruiz, 2025).

Blended Business English learning outcomes are perceived as being comprised of multiple dimensions, such as domain-specific language skills, measurable academic results, and professional competencies obtained through technology-supported work (Liu & Chen, 2025). This review clarifies these dimensions and synthesizes empirical evidence on blended learning effectiveness.

Regarding assessment instruments, this study draws on various tools to measure the effectiveness of blended learning in Business English education. Learning outcomes are typically assessed through academic performance tasks, competency-based evaluations, and self-reports (Cao & Phongsatha, 2025; Shen & Wu, 2025).

Supportive factors such as technological infrastructure, learning engagement, and peer interaction play a critical role in determining the effectiveness of blended learning. These factors influence the extent to which students can engage and achieve meaningful learning outcomes (Mukhithi & Ndlovu, 2025; Shoukat, 2024).

## **1.3 Current Status and Research Gaps**

Previous studies have also stated that blended learning increase student engagement, motivation and achievement (Porkodi & Tabash, 2024; Ramalingam et al., 2021). The learning experience can also be optimized by external factors such as technological and instructional support that promote the process of knowledge acquisition and enhance the initiative of learners (Chen, 2022; Feng et al., 2023; Teng & Wang, 2021).

For instance, educational courseware has been widely recognized for its ease of use and effectiveness in improving ESL learners' listening, speaking, reading, and paragraph-writing skills (Yunus et al., 2012). These skills are highly relevant to Business English. Additionally, intrinsic motivation, which is defined as internal engagement driven by interest and satisfaction, is reinforced through these

external supports, and contributing to more deep-level learning results (Wang et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2023).

In Business English education, blended learning is employed to replicate authentic business scenarios that foster vocational applied skills, for instance, in China, it emphasizes the cultivation of composite professionals who possess strong language proficiency, business literacy, and intercultural communication competence (Shen & Wu, 2025). Although research on blended learning has increased in recent years, several gaps remain. Many studies examine blended learning outcomes within general higher education contexts, while discipline-specific evidence in Business English remains relatively limited. In addition, studies do not yet show clear agreement on how learning outcomes in blended Business English should be categorized.

Another issue concerns the assessment of these outcomes and consistent approaches are still lacking. Although some research has explored supportive factors in blended learning environments, relatively few studies investigate how these factors relate to particular types of learning outcomes.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives and Questions**

This review examines empirical studies on blended Business English education with the aim of clarifying the types of learning outcomes investigated, the methods used to assess these outcomes, and the factors reported to support learning improvement. The analysis is guided by three key research questions:

**RQ1:** What types of learning outcomes have been investigated in blended Business English education?

**RQ2:** What assessment approaches have been employed to measure these learning outcomes?

**RQ3:** What supportive factors have been reported to contribute to improvements in learning outcomes?

The review also considers the temporal distribution, geographical contexts, and methodological features of the selected studies to better understand current research patterns in this field.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

To solve the above questions, the authors carried out a systematic literature review following PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021) to synthesize existing research on the learning outcomes of blended learning for Business English education. This approach was adopted as it provides a repeatable and scientific framework with transparent procedures for literature retrieval, screening, and analyzing literature so as to minimize subjective bias and ensure the reliability of the review results (Moher et al., 2015; Snyder, 2019).

### 3.2 Search Strategy

This review drew on three internationally recognized databases, Web of Science, Scopus, and ERIC, as the main data sources. These databases cover a wide range of educational research journals. As per PRISMA guidelines (see Figure 1), the research process consisted of a systematic search strategy, a screening protocol, and a data synthesis procedure.

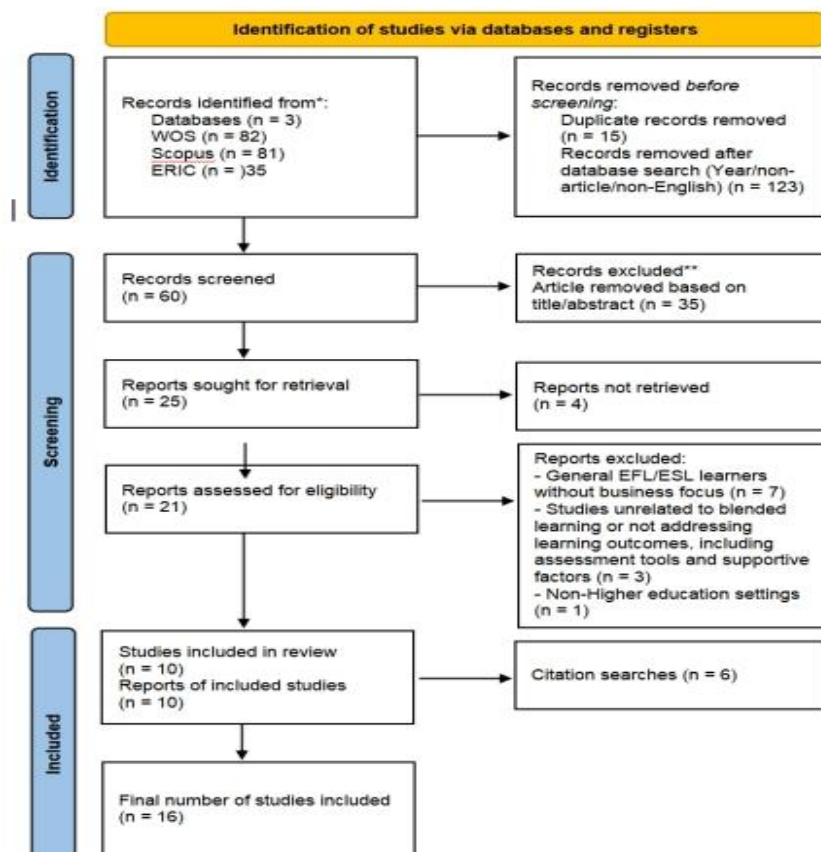


Figure 1: PRISMA flow diagram adapted from Page et al. (2021)

A systematic search strategy was used to combine three major concept groups: blended learning, Business English, and learning outcomes. Boolean operators (“AND” and “OR”) were used to combine the search strings. Searches were conducted in titles, abstracts, and keywords when available. Different keyword combinations were also tested to identify potentially relevant studies. The final search queries used are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Database search strings and keywords used

Blended Learning	Operator	Business English	Operator	Learning outcomes	Operator	Higher education
("blended learning") OR ("B-learning") OR ("blend education") OR ("Blend course") OR ("Blend program") OR ("Blend instruction") OR ("hybrid learning") OR ("mixed-mode learning")	AND	("Business English education") OR ("Business English course") OR ("Business English") OR ("Business English") OR ("English for Specific Purposes") OR ("ESP") AND ("Business English education") OR ("Business English course") OR ("Business English") OR ("Business English") OR ("English for Specific Purposes") OR ("ESP")	AND	("competence*") OR ("skill*") OR ("learning outcome*") OR ("performance") OR ("proficiency")	AND	("higher education") OR ("tertiary education") OR ("higher education institution*") OR ("university")

### 3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria (refer to Table 2) were established following JBI methodological recommendations (Aromataris et al., 2015), as well as an adapted Population-Concept-Context (PCC) framework (Peters et al., 2020). Eligible studies were those aimed at higher education students majoring in Business English or related courses, focused on blended learning and reported at least one measurable learning outcome, including the assessment approaches of such learning outcomes and its supportive factors. Studies outside higher education, exclusively online or offline learning, without empirical evidence or published as a book chapter, review, or without empirical data were excluded.

Table 2: Criteria for the selected studies

Criteria	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
<b>Publication Criteria</b>	English-language full-text articles published between 2020 and 2025	Non-English publications; studies outside the specified time frame; unavailable full texts
<b>Article Types</b>	Peer-reviewed empirical journal articles using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods designs	Reviews, meta-analyses, editorials, book chapters, dissertations
<b>Population</b>	Learners in Business English education or business-oriented ESP programs	General EFL/ESL learners without business focus
<b>Concept</b>	Studies focusing on blended learning in Business English contexts	Studies unrelated to blended learning
<b>Context</b>	Higher education settings	K-12, vocational training, corporate training contexts
<b>Outcomes</b>	At least one reported measurable learning outcome	Conceptual papers or descriptive studies without identifiable learning outcomes

A total of 198 records was initially obtained by the search. After eliminating 15 duplicates and excluding 123 non-article sources as well as non-English publications, it was narrowed down to peer-reviewed empirical journal articles between 2020 - 2025. This period was selected to catch the latest research results on blended learning application after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the development trend of business English competence requirements.

After screening titles and abstracts, 60 records remained for further consideration, of which 35 were excluded. Full texts were retrieved for 25 articles, but four were not available. Finally, after the evaluation of the eligible articles, 10 articles were included in the study after the full text was screened. For the extended search, citation-based supplementary searches were conducted by following up on the references of the included studies. This process helped find another six articles. So, the final set of data included 16 articles for subsequent analysis.

### 3.4 Quality Appraisal

During the review process, the included studies were evaluated using the quality appraisal framework proposed by Petticrew and Roberts (2006). Considering the focus of the present review, four aspects were examined: methodological rigor, relevance to the review topic, the validity of measurement and assessment approaches, and reporting clarity (Table 3). Each dimension was assessed using two indicators, with ratings assigned on a three-point scale (High, Medium, Low). Studies that received low ratings were excluded from the final analysis.

**Table 3: Quality appraisal framework for included studies**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Core Indicators</b>	<b>Rating Scale</b>
1. Methodological Rigor	(1) Appropriateness of the research design and analytical methods for investigating blended learning in Business English education. (2) Adequacy of the description of sample characteristics, data collection procedures, and analytical strategies.	High / Medium / Low
2. Relevance to the Review Focus	(1) Direct relevance to blended learning in Business English within higher education contexts. (2) Contribution to the review themes, including learning outcomes, assessment approaches, and supportive factors.	
3. Validity of Measurement Tools	(1) Clear identification of instruments used to evaluate learning outcomes. (2) Evidence of acceptable reliability or validity in the reported measurement procedures.	
4. Transparency and Completeness of Reporting	(1) Clarity and reproducibility of the reported research procedures, methods, and findings. (2) Conclusions supported by empirical evidence and accompanied by stated limitations.	

The rating of each dimension was determined by the combination of its two indicators. The dimension received a high rating when both indicators were rated high. Combinations of high-medium or medium-medium resulted in a medium rating, whereas medium-low or low-low combinations led to a low rating. Based on the ratings across the four dimensions, an overall quality level was then assigned to each study. A study was considered high quality when at least three dimensions were rated high.

The process was conducted by all researchers, and each reviewer independently assessed the selected articles using the predefined framework. Following the independent assessment, the reviewers compared their evaluations and discussed any discrepancies. Differences in ratings were resolved through discussion until full consensus was reached.

### **3.5 Data Extraction and Analysis**

A multi-level mixed-methods approach was used to address the research questions. Bibliometric and textual analyses were first conducted to examine publication trends, geographic distribution and methodological approaches. A structured literature matrix was then arranged systematically according to reference details, research context, sample features, blended learning tools,

learning outcome categories, methodologies, and main findings of the 16 included studies. Following this process, narrative and thematic synthesis was performed according to Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework to identify key research themes and summarize major limitations as well as future research directions. Table 4 presents the main information of the final article selection.

**Table 4: The final selection of articles for the review**

Article No.	References	Participants	Research Design
1	(Yang et al., 2022)	56 first-year undergraduate students in Applied Foreign Languages (aged 18–19)	Mixed Methods - Quasi-experimental
2	(Cao & Phongsatha, 2025)	472 undergraduate English majors in China (first- and second year)	Mixed Methods - Randomized Controlled Trial
3	(Alcalde-Peñalver & Santamaría-Urbieta, 2021)	25 fourth-year Modern Languages and Translation students	Mixed Methods - Case Study
4	(Spisiaková & Shumeiko, 2024)	102 undergraduate/master's students in Economics, Management, and related fields	Mixed Methods - Cross-sectional Survey
5	(Almansour & Al-Ahdal, 2020)	30 second-year ESP undergraduate students in Saudi Arabia (male)	Mixed Methods - Quasi-experimental
6	(Klymova et al., 2023)	42 first-year students in International Economic Relations and Public Administration	Mixed Methods - Action Research / Quasi-experimental
7	(Hrdličková, 2021)	241 first- and second-year Economics students	Mixed Methods - Quasi-experimental
8	(Le Vo, 2022)	62 Business English students in Vietnam (intermediate level)	Mixed Methods - Intervention Study
9	(Sun & Asmawi, 2023)	80 EFL undergraduate students in China (CEFR A1 level)	Mixed Methods - Quasi-experimental
10	(Zamborova & Klimova, 2023)	40 first-year Business English students in Slovakia (CEFR B2 level)	Mixed Methods - Randomized Controlled Trial
11	(Sun et al., 2024)	58 second-year English majors in China	Mixed Methods - Quasi-experimental
12	(Lan, 2024)	85 Business English speaking course students in Taiwan	Mixed Methods - Quasi-experimental
13	(Zhao & Song, 2022)	89 undergraduate Business English majors in China	Mixed Methods - Cross-sectional Survey
14	(Lu, 2025)	Third-year Comprehensive Business English course students	Mixed Methods - Qualitative Case Study
15	(Cheng, 2025)	Upper-year English majors (Business English Translation course)	Mixed Methods - Design-based Research
16	(Houat et al., 2025)	50 seventh-semester Business and Management students	Mixed Methods - Intervention Study

To ensure coding reliability, the research team established and refined the coding scheme throughout the analysis process. The synthesis of the data employed both descriptive statistical analysis and thematic analysis. Descriptive analysis was conducted to present the main characteristics of the selected studies, such as publication year, participant groups, research design, and main findings. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes on major types, assessment methods, and supportive factors, of learning outcomes, closely tied to the study's research questions. Relevant information was coded based on predefined categories, and recurring patterns were identified through iterative comparison, synthesized into broader themes corresponding to the research questions.

## 4. Results

This section presents the key findings from all the included articles.

### 4.1 Characteristics of Included Studies

#### 4.1.1 Temporal Distribution of Studies (2020-2025)

As shown in Figure 2, the number of publications in this field each year from 2020 to 2025 has been increasing gradually and steadily, and it is the highest to date in the most recent year. This upward trend indicates that there has been persistent and increasing attention from academia on the learning outcomes of blended learning in a Business English context.

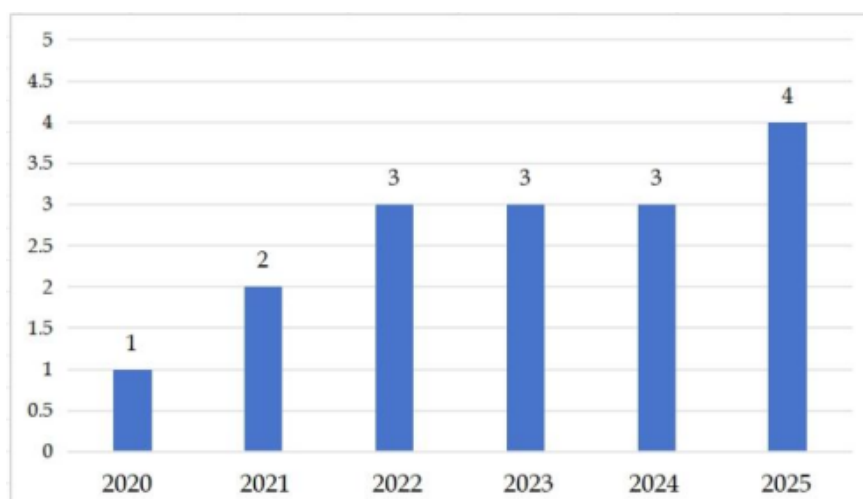


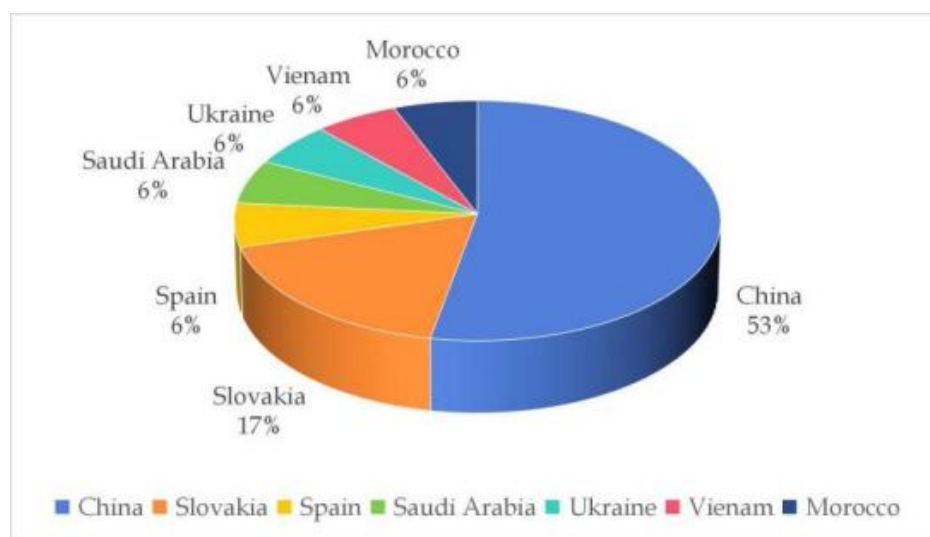
Figure 2: Number of published articles in the study period

Specifically, in the period of epidemic (2020-2022), most studies focused on the direct impact of blended learning on Business English speaking ability (Almansour & Al-Ahdal, 2020). Since 2021, there has been a slight increase in the quantity of studies, with attention also shifting to digital storytelling (Alcalde-Peñalver & Santamaría-Urbieta, 2021) and online resources (Hrdličková, 2021). Between 2022 - 2024, research became more solid, focusing on affective learning experience (Zhao & Song, 2022), simulated workplace tasks (Le Vo, 2022), platform supported writing (Sun & Asmawi, 2023), and cross-curricular language learning (Klymova et al., 2023). By 2025, research had reached its peak, with a

more diversified focus, covering collaborative learning (Lu, 2025), technology-enhanced translation (Cheng, 2025), and the combination of business model tools (Houat et al., 2025), and AI-driven teaching methods had become a prominent topic (Cao & Phongsatha, 2025).

#### 4.1.2 Geographical Distribution

A geographic analysis of the included studies shows a clear cross-regional distribution. According to Figure 3, Asia leads this field, with mainland China and Taiwan accounting for 53% of the research, reflecting strong academic interest and investment. In Europe, Slovakia is the foremost contributor (17%), followed by Spain, Ukraine, and Vienna, each representing 6%. Notable involvement can also be found in the Middle East and North Africa, with Saudi Arabia and Morocco accounting for 6% each.



**Figure 3: Geographic contribution of the selected articles**

The regional distribution of this study indicates that the worldwide practice and growing attention to blended Business English education. Chinese scholars have demonstrated the most active academic participation and research investment in this field.

#### 4.1.3 Methodological Approaches of the Included Studies

The 16 included studies have a clear methodological feature, that is all employed a mixed-methods research design (see Table 3). It demonstrates that most of the studies have come to an agreement to use mixture of quantitative methods and qualitative methods to jointly study the effectiveness of blended-based learning in the Business English field. This integration enables us to study the change of the measurement of learning results and to understand the complex experience and perception of the learners (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The reviewed studies address several key aspects of blended Business English education. Some studies examined the learning outcomes achieved in blended learning environments, others focused on the methods used to assess these

outcomes. Additionally, some research investigated the factors that support effective learning in blended contexts.

Based on these research directions, the findings of the selected studies are discussed in the following sections from three perspectives: types, assessment approaches, and supportive factors of learning outcomes.

#### 4.2 Key Learning Outcomes in Blended Business English Education

The reviewed studies report several types of learning outcomes in blended Business English education. These outcomes generally fall into three broad categories: language proficiency, academic performance, and comprehensive competencies. This classification reflects the diverse educational goals associated with Business English learning. Table 5 presents these categories together with the corresponding studies identified in the review.

**Table 5: Categories of learning Outcomes in blended Business English education**

Category of learning outcomes	Key Contents	Supporting Studies (No.)
(1) Language Proficiency	Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills; Oral proficiency and business presentation performance; Master of Business Professional Vocabulary and Terminology Translation accuracy rate	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16
(2) Academic Performance	Standardized test scores; Course examination results; Pass rate; Homework and task grading	1, 2, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16
(3) Comprehensive Competence	Professional and workplace application competence; Digital literacy; Cross-cultural literacy; Higher-order thinking skills; Collaborative competence; Self-directed learning ability	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16

Language proficiency has been investigated most frequently, appearing in 14 of the 16 reviewed studies. Core language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing were enhanced through blended learning. Oral communication and business writing, along with professional vocabulary acquisition, received particular emphasis. Results from pre- and post-test comparisons, together with control-group data, showed improvements in fluency, pronunciation, and grammatical accuracy (Almansour & Al-Ahdal, 2020; Sun & Asmawi, 2023). In addition, improvements in translation accuracy and the practical use of business terminology have also been reported in several studies (Cheng, 2025; Houat et al., 2025).

Academic performance has been identified as an important indicator of blended learning effectiveness as well, which was reported in eight studies. Standardized tests, course grades, assignment scores, and so on were used for the assessment of learning outcomes of the students (Lu, 2025; Yang et al., 2022). Compared with traditional instructions, learners in blended learning environments tend to get higher scores, as supported by statistical analyses reported in several studies.

In recent years, research has increasingly addressed broader competencies. Several dimensions, including critical and creative thinking, teamwork, digital competence, and cross-cultural communication, have been examined to some extent. These complex abilities tend to overlap and are measured through diverse methods. The increasing focus on these competences reflects a growing awareness of the multi-dimensional skills required in authentic business setting (Alcalde-Peñalver & Santamaría-Urbieta, 2021; Klymova et al., 2023; Le Vo, 2022). This trend highlights a move beyond traditional language and academic outcomes.

#### 4.3 Assessment Approaches Used in Evaluating Learning Outcomes

This study identified that there are a variety of assessment instruments being employed for measuring the three types of learning outcomes identified in the previous section, which fall into the following categories (refer to Table 6).

**Table 6: Assessment approaches for learning outcomes**

Learning Outcomes	ST	CT	LS	INT	OFC	ART	OBS	LOG	GRD
<b>【Language Proficiency】</b>									
1. Oral Proficiency	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
2. Writing Ability	√	√	√	√		√		√	√
3. Listening & Reading	√	√					√	√	
4. Vocabulary & Grammar	√	√		√		√	√		
<b>【Academic Performance】</b>									
5. Academic Achievement	√	√					√	√	
<b>【Comprehensive Competencies】</b>									
9. Self-directed Learning		√	√	√		√			
10. Digital & Tech Literacy		√	√	√	√				
11. Teamwork & Collaboration		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
12. Critical & Innovative Thinking		√	√	√	√				
13. Intercultural Competence		√	√	√		√			

Note: √ indicates that at least one of the 16 reviewed studies used the corresponding tool. Tool categories: ST/CT=Standardized/Course-embedded tests; LS/INT/OFC=Self-report/Interview/Open feedback; ART/OBS=Artifact/Observation analysis. LOG=Platform log data; GRD=Academic grades

Various instruments have been used to assess learning outcomes in blended Business English instruction, showing obvious differences in different dimensions (see Table 5). Language proficiency is commonly evaluated through standardized and skill-oriented tests, such as the Business English Certificate (BEC), speaking tests similar to IELTS, and oral and written scoring rubrics (Almansour & Al-Ahdal, 2020; Cao & Phongsatha, 2025). These assessments often employ a pre-

test/post-test design. The goal is to measure improvements in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary mastery.

Academic performance is mainly measured using quantitative course data such as final exam results, assignment grades, and task evaluations like the business model scoring (Houat et al., 2025). These scores are typically assigned by instructors or trained evaluators following uniform criteria and some studies have also reported inter-rater agreement (Sun et al., 2024).

Comprehensive competencies – including critical thinking, collaboration, and digital literacy – are often evaluated through qualitative and project-based tasks. The reviewed studies report approaches such as digital storytelling, terminology presentations, translation reports, reflective journals, peer feedback, and classroom observation (Alcalde-Peñalver & Santamaría-Urbieta, 2021; Lu, 2025). By contrast, quantitative measures are more commonly used to evaluate language proficiency and academic performance.

#### 4.4 Major Supportive Factors Influencing Learning Outcomes

The reviewed studies suggest that learning outcomes in blended Business English education are shaped not by a single source of support, but by a combination of structural and human-related factors embedded in the instructional environment. These supportive factors operate at different levels and contribute in different ways to the effectiveness of blended learning.

At a more general level, literature tends to organize such support into three domains with technological support, instructional support, and learner-related factors the most frequently discussed. An overview of these dimensions, together with their defining features and empirical coverage, is provided in Table 6.

**Table 6: Key supportive factors for blended Business English learning**

Supportive Factor	Main Characteristics	Supporting Studies (No.)
1. Technological Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated Platforms: LMS (Moodle, Google Classroom), collaboration tools (Microsoft Teams, DingTalk).</li> <li>• Specialized Tools: Business Model Canvas (BMC), digital storytelling apps, interactive response apps.</li> <li>• Authentic Materials: Business videos, TED talks, professional texts.</li> </ul>	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12
2. Instructional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role Shift: From knowledge transmitter to course designer, facilitator, and emotional supporter.</li> <li>• Structured Design: Creates pre-class/in-class/post-class blended pathways.</li> <li>• Scaffolding &amp; Feedback: Provides terminology explanations, demonstrations, and timely feedback.</li> </ul>	2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16

- Attitudes & Motivation: Positive perceptions, valuing flexibility, increased interest.
  - Affective States: Overall positive experience; anxiety can be reduced (e.g., in flipped classrooms).
  - Strategies & Autonomy: Enhanced self-regulated learning through digital resource use.
  - Collaborative Willingness: Increased, especially among introverted students.
3. Learner-related factors 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16
- 

#### 4.4.1 Technological Support

In blended Business English education, technological tools are generally considered to be important enabling conditions. Course organization and learner interaction are supported through the digital infrastructure and instructional resources. Multiple technologies often work together, rather than independently, to sustain instructional delivery. Learning platforms such as Moodle and Google Classroom are frequently integrated with collaboration tools, including Microsoft Teams and DingTalk. Through this integration, a stable environment is formed to support both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities (Cao & Phongsatha, 2025; Hrdličková, 2021; Spisiaková & Shumeiko, 2024).

Apart from general platforms, a number of task-oriented applications are utilized to promote skill development in particular domains. Tools such as the Business Model Canvas and digital storytelling applications provide interactive and visually mediated learning experiences that enhance student engagement (Alcalde-Peñalver & Santamaría-Urbieta, 2021; Houat et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2022). Some studies report the use of authentic multimodal resources in blended Business English instruction. They describe the use of business-related videos, TED talks, and professional texts to support the development of listening comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. These materials may also encourage greater learner autonomy (Hrdličková, 2021; Lan, 2024; Spisiaková & Shumeiko, 2024).

#### 4.4.2 Instructional Support

Several studies highlight the importance of instructional support in blended Business English education. Teachers are expected not only to coordinate learning activities but also to provide guidance and emotional encouragement for students (Lu, 2025). In many reported cases, courses are organized around three stages – pre-class preparation, in-class learning, and post-class consolidation – so that online activities can be meaningfully connected with face-to-face sessions (Cao & Phongsatha, 2025).

Within this structure, instructors often integrate language support with subject-related content. For example, terminology explanations, operational demonstrations, and the use of specialized tools help students understand professional concepts while developing relevant language skills (Alcalde-

Peñalver & Santamaría-Urbieta, 2021; Cheng, 2025; Houat et al., 2025; Spisiaková, 2025). Interactive learning activities are also frequently reported in literature. Online discussions, project-based tasks, and higher-order thinking exercises encourage collaboration and allow students to engage more actively with course content (Lu, 2025; Sun et al., 2024).

#### 4.4.3 Learner-related Factors

Learner-related factors have gained significant attention in research on blended Business English learning and studies frequently refer to students' attitudes toward blended learning, their willingness to participate in learning activities, and patterns of interaction with peers. In many cases, students describe blended learning as flexible and efficient, which appears to encourage greater engagement with business-related content (Spisiaková & Shumeiko, 2024; Sun & Asmawi, 2023; Yang et al., 2022).

Although some students respond positively to the format, certain instructional methods can introduce new challenges. Flipped classroom models, for example, are sometimes used in an attempt to reduce anxiety in speaking or writing tasks. However, technology-intensive environments may simultaneously reduce opportunities for direct emotional interaction, which can weaken learners' sense of engagement (Cao & Phongsatha, 2025; Lan, 2024; Zhao & Song, 2022).

Another issue discussed in the literature concerns learner autonomy. Digital learning tools often allow students to organize their learning activities more independently. At the same time, several studies report that students may initially struggle with unfamiliar technologies or show resistance to technology-oriented learning approaches (Houat et al., 2025; Hrdličková, 2021; Lu, 2025; Spisiaková & Shumeiko, 2024;). Collaborative activities are also widely incorporated into blended learning tasks. These activities may create opportunities for quieter students to participate more actively, although some learners still report discomfort with group interaction, suggesting that continued guidance is necessary for the development of collaborative skills (Alcalde-Peñalver & Santamaría-Urbieta, 2021; Lu, 2025).

## 5. Discussion

This section integrates the main findings, explores the limitations, and proposes directions for future research.

### 5.1 Interpretation of Key Findings

Learning effectiveness is often examined through relatively conventional indicators, particularly language proficiency and course performance. These indicators remain the most frequently adopted criteria when researchers attempt to evaluate the outcomes of blended instruction. At the same time, some scholars have started to pay attention to broader competencies connected with business practice and higher-level learning processes. Nevertheless, existing studies rarely provide clear or consistent definitions for these competencies, and commonly

accepted assessment criteria have not yet been fully established (Alcalde-Peñalver & Santamaría-Urbieta, 2021; Lu, 2025).

Earlier investigations of blended learning indicate a similar tendency. For instance, Almansour and Al-Ahdal (2020) and Sun et al. (2024) both rely primarily on linguistic achievement and course performance as indicators of instructional effectiveness. Such choices largely reflect traditional approaches to foreign language assessment, where measurable linguistic outcomes are typically prioritized. In more recent research, however, scholars have gradually begun to discuss competencies associated with authentic business communication as well as higher-order learning abilities (Alcalde-Peñalver & Santamaría-Urbieta, 2021; Cao & Phongsatha, 2025). Even so, considerable variation still exists in the way these competencies are conceptualized and evaluated across different studies.

When discussing how these competencies develop, several authors draw on theoretical perspectives such as Social Constructivism and the Community of Inquiry framework. These models are frequently applied to explain collaborative knowledge construction, cognitive engagement, and interactive learning processes in digital environments (Lu, 2025; Shen & Wu, 2025). However, there is limited empirical evidence regarding whether these frameworks can be implemented across different cultural contexts.

Regarding assessment approaches, the included studies commonly combine standardized tests with qualitative evaluations (Cheng, 2025; Sun et al., 2024). This mixed-methods approach corresponds with methodological recommendations in relative research, where quantitative indicators are often complemented by qualitative evidence to capture both learning outcomes and learning processes (Cheng, 2025). Although mixed approaches are commonly adopted, there are problems with the methods including small and relatively homogeneous samples, short intervention periods, and a strong reliance on self-reported data.

In terms of supportive factors, instructional support, technological support, and learner-related factors constitute the core enabling structure of blended Business English learning. This interpretation was also reported in previous studies that identify technological infrastructure, teacher guidance, and learner characteristics as key determinants of blended learning effectiveness (Mukhithi & Ndlovu, 2025; Shoukat, 2024). However, existing literature still lacks a framework that systematically explains how these influencing elements interact to influence learning outcomes.

## **5.2 Categories of Learning Outcomes**

Findings indicate that blended Business English research continues to focus primarily on language-related outcomes. This trend reflects the ongoing emphasis on foundational linguistic competence, a pattern also seen in English for Specific

Purposes (ESP) research, where linguistic competence remains a key benchmark for evaluating instructional effectiveness (Liu & Chen, 2025; Sun et al., 2024).

However, compared with the blended learning literature in higher education, which increasingly emphasizes transversal skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving (Wang et al., 2024), the outcome focus in Business English studies appears relatively narrow. This finding corresponds with previous studies demonstrating that blended learning environments can significantly improve student engagement, academic motivation, and participation in higher education contexts (Shen & Wu, 2025).. This result-oriented approach centered on language proficiency reflects that the research on business English is still deeply influenced by the traditional foreign language assessment paradigm.

Academic performance constitutes a second major outcome category in the reviewed studies. Although such indicators support claims of effectiveness, they mainly capture short-term, course-specific achievement. As a result, their capacity to explain learners' authentic business communication and integrative application remains limited. However, over-reliance on performance indicators may mask changes at the learning process level, such as learning engagement, strategy application, and ability transfer, which is not entirely consistent with the original intention of blended teaching, which emphasizes process support and continuous interaction.

Blended learning environments are increasingly recognized for their contribution to the development of higher-order, real-world competencies (Wang et al., 2024). Nevertheless, compared with language proficiency, both the conceptual boundaries and measurement practices for comprehensive competencies remain fragmented, which constrains cumulative analysis and systematic comparison across studies. This phenomenon indicates that the main challenge of current research is not whether to focus on comprehensive abilities, but rather the lack of a theoretical framework that can integrate external support, learn processes and learn outcomes, thereby limiting the systematic explanation of the effectiveness of blended Business English teaching.

### **5.3 Diverse Assessment Methods for Learning Outcomes**

Studies on blended Business English learning report an increasing variety of approaches used to assess learning outcomes. Researchers have proposed the use of multiple assessment approaches to better reflect the complexity of learning processes in digital environments. Cheng (2025), for example, argues that relying on a single assessment method may not adequately capture different dimensions of student learning.

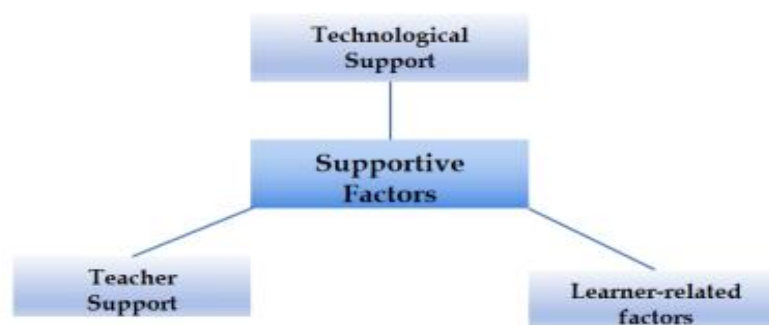
Language proficiency continues to be measured through standardized tests or skill-oriented assessments (Almansour & Al-Ahdal, 2020; Sun et al., 2024). These tools provide relatively clear indicators of learning outcomes. At the same time, however, they mainly capture final performance and offer limited information about learners' problem-solving processes or the transfer of skills to new contexts.

To evaluate comprehensive competencies, many studies rely on project-based tasks and qualitative forms of evidence (Alcalde-Peñalver & Santamaría-Urbieta, 2021; Lu, 2025).

This method is similarly applied in authentic assessment research within ESP contexts, where project work serves as a tool for assessing professional communication, collaboration, and applied problem-solving skills (Liu & Chen, 2025). Because these assessments depend heavily on context-specific criteria and interpretive judgment, the results reported in different studies are often difficult to compare directly.

#### 5.4 The Synergy of Supporting Factors

The reviewed studies identify three interrelated forms of support, as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Supportive factors of learning outcomes in blended Business English education**

Blended learning is increasingly framed in existing literature as a multidimensional system shaped by multiple interrelated forms of support. The studies analyzed in this paper echo this view, emphasizing that instructional guidance, technological infrastructure, and learner engagement together influence educational outcomes (Mukhithi & Ndlovu, 2025; Shen & Wu, 2025). Even so, few research efforts have systematically explored how these different support mechanisms work in tandem — creating a clear gap for further theoretical and practical investigation.

Technology serves as the foundational infrastructure of blended learning, and it is what enables flexible, contextually rich learning activities. That said, a number of studies warn that over-reliance on digital tools can pose challenges for learners who are still getting used to technology-mediated learning environments. Notably, less face-to-face interaction can erode learners' affective engagement if digital learning tasks lack clear instructional guidance (Shoukat, 2024). This means thoughtful course design and active teacher facilitation are still key to maintaining meaningful interaction and consistent participation in blended learning classrooms.

Teachers' roles have also shifted in this educational context. Instead of just delivering course content, instructors now often act as coordinators, linking

technological resources to student participation and supporting learners to stay cognitively and emotionally engaged throughout the learning process. Learner-focused support, by contrast, largely comes from learners' internal psychological and behavioral traits. Variations in motivation, adaptability, and self-regulatory skills help explain why the same blended learning models yield different results across different studies. These learner-related factors interact with instructional strategies and technological environments, and together they shape effective blended learning practices.

## **6. Implications and Future Directions**

Research highlights the growing need to develop a range of broader competencies that support authentic business communication and facilitate higher-order learning in the blended Business English settings. Therefore, it is necessary to establish and standardize both a comprehensive capability framework and assessment approaches that incorporate both quantitative and qualitative evaluations, in order to achieve standardized comparisons and integration among different studies.

Furthermore, the interaction among technical support, Instructional support, and the learner-related factors suggests that future instructional design should adopt a holistic system perspective, taking into account infrastructure, teaching strategies, and individual differences among learners. It's necessary to prioritize larger-scale, diverse, and longitudinal studies to investigate the long-term impacts of blended learning and assess its applicability across different cultural contexts.

## **7. Limitations of the Study**

When interpreting the results of this study, the following limitations should be considered. Some relevant research may have been overlooked due to the inclusion criteria and search strategy, such as studies in languages other than English. Also, recent technological changes after the search cutoff date of December 2025, such as the rapid development of generative artificial intelligence, are not fully reflected. These limitations indicate that there is a need for a larger and more representative data source in future research to show the development status of blended learning in the era of technology change.

## **8. Conclusion**

Research on learning outcomes shows that there is an obvious change in the focus on the development of individual language skill to integrated competencies. This change shows that Business English education is moving away from simply language acquisition to the cultivation of comprehensive abilities of professional practice combined with complex problem-solving. When it comes to assessment, using mixed methods enhances explanatory power in research, yet it also gives rise to issues such as fragmented assessment practices and the lack of a unified measurement framework for evaluating integrated skills. These shortcomings

limit the possibility of comparing and synthesizing research findings across different educational contexts.

It's suggested that learning outcomes in blended Business English education are shaped by a combination of technological resources, instructional practices, and learner-related characteristics, a mix of technological resources, instructional practices, and learner-related traits. These elements do not act in isolation; instead, they interact with one another to shape how effective blended learning environments are. Against this backdrop, blended learning has led to a gradual shift toward more integrated, learner-centered teaching approaches in Business English education.

Even though earlier studies have reported positive findings, there are still several issues that have not been adequately addressed. One key challenge lies in defining learning outcomes systematically in blended Business English settings—especially when it comes to balancing the development of broader competencies with the preservation of core language skills. Another problem is the absence of integrated support systems that link technological infrastructure, instructional design, and learner engagement in a cohesive, logical way.

Future research could focus on refining how comprehensive competencies are operationalized in practice, as well as developing more systematic evaluation methods tailored to blended Business English contexts. From a teaching perspective, course designs that integrate language learning with professional skill development may offer productive directions for future practice. Continued collaboration across disciplines, together with carefully designed empirical research, will be important for deepening understanding in this area. These efforts may contribute to improving blended learning models and better preparing Business English learners for communication in international professional settings.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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