

Original Article

# A Study on the Development and Application of Blended PBL in an Introductory Vietnamese Language Course

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## ABSTRACT

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**Objectives:** This study aimed to derive key educational implications by analyzing a Blended Problem Based Learning (PBL) class designed for beginner-level Vietnamese language learners and implemented in the Department of Vietnamese Studies during the second semester of 2024 and the first semester of 2025. **Methods:** Data were collected through surveys, reflection journals, and student outputs following course participation. **Results:** The analysis revealed that learners reported high levels of overall satisfaction and interest, with average scores exceeding 4.68. Scenario-based tasks rooted in real-life situations enhanced both the practicality and engagement of Vietnamese language acquisition. During team projects, learners demonstrated growth in collaboration skills and self-directed learning attitudes. Moreover, the integration of online and offline formats contributed to greater flexibility and efficiency in learning. **Conclusions:** This study provides empirical evidence that Blended PBL can serve as an effective instructional approach in foreign language education, fostering learners' reflective thinking and practical language application skills.

**Keywords:** Blended learning, Introductory Vietnamese, Language, Problem Based Learning(PBL), Vietnam

## 1. Introduction

With the emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the advancement of smart devices, society has entered an era of hyperconnectivity and hyperintelligence. In line with this transformation, the educational environment is also undergoing rapid change. Particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for online education has surged, and learning modes that transcend temporal and spatial limitations have become commonplace [1]. Within this context, higher education aims to cultivate convergent talents equipped with critical and creative thinking skills as well as problem solving abilities. To this end, various instructional and learning strategies are actively being explored.

Blended Learning, which combines the advantages of

online and offline instruction, has attracted attention for its ability to harmonize self directed learning with collaborative face to face engagement [2]. Problem Based Learning (PBL) enables learners to construct knowledge and solve problems grounded in real world contexts, fostering both critical thinking and learner autonomy. In particular, Blended PBL which integrates blended learning and problem based learning, has been proposed as an effective alternative to traditional instruction, as it enhances learners' engagement and participation [3,4].

In language education, instructional activities often emphasize repetition and passive reception, which may lead learners to internalize meaning unconsciously without developing critical awareness. In beginner-level Vietnamese courses, this tendency is particularly pronounced, as learners frequently rely on rote memorization of grammar and

vocabulary or repeated reading. As a result, they may struggle to maintain interest, apply the language in real-life contexts, and sustain long-term motivation. In this regard, Problem Based Learning (PBL) offers a promising approach, as it enables learners to engage with the language through authentic, real-world experiences while simultaneously enhancing their intrinsic motivation.

Although Vietnamese uses a Latin-based script, it presents specific challenges for beginners, particularly in mastering tonal distinctions and accurate pronunciation. Considering these characteristics, the application of a Blended PBL model that encourages analytical and creative thinking and fosters learners' critical receptive capacity carries significant pedagogical implications.

This study introduces a class model that integrates Blended Learning and PBL, designed to improve the language proficiency of students majoring in foreign languages. The instructional case is based on an introductory Vietnamese reading course for first year students in the Department of Vietnamese Studies at University A. This study aims to maximize educational effectiveness by leveraging the strengths of online learning, such as asynchronicity, learner autonomy, and interactivity, while integrating the learner centered and problem solving features of PBL.

Previous research has investigated the impact of video conferencing, blended learning in language education, and the application of Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies in online language classrooms [5]. These studies suggest that online education involves more than simply adding new technologies to traditional instruction; it requires restructuring of course design and careful planning of supplementary learning activities. Moreover, they emphasize the importance of tailoring learning materials and activities to the specific characteristics of the subject matter [6-8].

The effectiveness and potential of Blended PBL have been validated in diverse educational contexts. Studies in maritime education, social studies, dance performance, adapted physical education, English as a foreign language, and Korean current affairs classes have all reported positive outcomes regarding learners' agency and creativity. In maritime education, Blended PBL had a significant effect on academic achievement, indicating that problem focused instruction enhances both learners' understanding and engagement [9]. In dance performance classes, the blended environment fostered active learner participation, improved collaboration skills, and provided affordances for behavioral engagement. Learners' participation and immersion in reading activities also increased. However, limitations were noted, particularly regarding the inability of Blended Learning to fully replace hands on instruction. Challenges such as improving the effectiveness of online performance training and developing personalized content

were highlighted [10]. A case study in adapted physical education explored the applicability of Blended PBL using unstructured interviews and various qualitative data. Analysis of reflection journals, team activity logs, field visit records, and interview transcripts revealed that this model effectively promoted learner engagement and reflection, even in special education settings [11].

In language education, a notable case involved a Korean current affairs course that applied Blended PBL. Through a hybrid approach combining flipped learning and PBL, students engaged in online pre class study of news content and carried out problem solving and presentation tasks during offline sessions, resulting in significant improvements in language proficiency [12]. A reading project conducted in a Chinese EFL context demonstrated that a technology based blended PBL design led to enhanced reading skills, self directed learning, and collaboration, confirming the potential of integrating technology and language education [13]. This study also provides evidence that Blended PBL can serve as an effective complement to traditional language instruction.

In the field of social studies, a Blended PBL model was designed based on constructivist principles. By integrating the strengths of face to face PBL and electronic PBL and utilizing online programs, the model improved instructional design competencies and promoted learner interaction. Recommendations for further development included the creation of digital content and the establishment of institutional infrastructure [14].

These previous studies suggest that Blended PBL is an effective pedagogical method for enhancing both cognitive and social competencies across various educational contexts. Particularly in language education, where active meaning making is essential, this approach offers a strategic means of developing practical language use skills that go beyond rote memorization.

## 2. Research Method

### 2.1. Participants

This study implemented a Blended PBL approach targeting 34 students (32.4% female, 67.6% male) who were enrolled in the "Elementary Vietnamese Reading" course offered during the second semester of the 2024 academic year and the first semester of the 2025 academic year in the Department of Vietnamese Studies at University A in Korea. The participants were first- and third-year undergraduate students. Prior to the implementation, students were informed about the purpose and procedure of the study. At the end of the semester, informed consent was

obtained for the collection and use of personal data, followed by the administration of a survey. Basic demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Participant demographics**

Category		Frequency(%)
Gender	Male	11(32.4)
	Female	23(67.6)
Grade	1st year	55(91.1)
	3rd year	52(5.9)
Total		34(100.0)

## 2.2. Measure

The survey consisted of ten items, categorized into three main domains: satisfaction, participation awareness, and learning effectiveness. Each item was measured using a five-point Likert scale. To gain a deeper understanding of the course experience and collect qualitative data, open-ended questions were included, such as “What did you find helpful?” and “What could be improved?” These open-ended responses provided foundational data for qualitative analysis. The composition of the survey items for each domain is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Contents of the questionnaire for survey**

Category	Items	Type of item	Number of item
Satisfaction	Overall satisfaction, interest, fun, task performance, class management	Likert question	4
Participation awareness	Participation in class, identification of insufficient competencies, motivation to participate in class	Likert question	3
Learning effectiveness	Additional knowledge, understanding, effectiveness	Likert question	3
Open-ended	What was good about the class and what could be improved	subjective questions	2
Total			12

In addition, students’ reflections and specific statements related to their Blended PBL tasks were used as qualitative data to explore learning outcomes and insights gained through the program.

## 2.3. Analysis method

Based on the post program satisfaction survey, quantitative analysis was conducted using frequency analysis for nine survey items. For the qualitative data collected through open ended responses and student reflections, content analysis was performed in a systematic manner. To ensure reliability and validity in the analysis process,

the researchers first repeatedly reviewed the participants’ descriptive responses and extracted meaningful units. The meaning units related to “helpful aspects” were categorized into ease of learning, effectiveness of online and offline integration, interest and engagement, instructional method, and team activities.

In addition, reflections and project outputs were analyzed to identify learning effects across four categories: linguistic learning outcomes, sociocultural learning outcomes, collaborative problem solving outcomes, and self-directed learning outcomes. Based on the identified meaning units, similar statements were grouped to form initial categories. Independent categorization was conducted by the researchers, followed by cross review and discussion to refine or merge categories. This process enhanced the clarity between categories and secured the reliability of the analysis. Higher level themes were then derived from the finalized categories, and all responses were classified according to these themes and subcategories. This approach allowed for a multifaceted interpretation of the program’s effectiveness. Finally, throughout the analysis process, repeated reviews and researcher triangulation were conducted to enhance the validity of the results. Representative responses were quoted within each category to clearly illustrate the characteristics and support the findings.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Development of the blended PBL based Vietnamese language course

The course titled Introductory Vietnamese Reading was developed during the summer session of the 2024 academic year and offered in the second semester of 2024 and the first semester of 2025 as a major course in the Department of Vietnamese Studies. Due to the distinct characteristics of the Vietnamese alphabet, which is similar to but differs from the English alphabet, beginner-level students often face difficulties in pronunciation and mastering the six tonal markers. The course was designed to enhance students’ interest in major-related learning and support their early comprehension of the Vietnamese language. Based on materials aligned with CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) A1-level standards and supplementary materials prepared by the instructor, the course provided online video content to help students learn Vietnamese pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structures. The instructional design aimed to help learners become familiar with basic sentence patterns and to recognize Vietnamese monosyllabic sentence characteristics

more easily.

The course was delivered twice a week, with each session lasting 90 minutes. A blended learning approach was applied: the first session of the week utilized online pre-recorded videos, while the second session was conducted face-to-face. The online videos provided detailed explanations of Vietnamese word pronunciation and tone

marks, along with practice materials such as simple songs and video clips containing the target vocabulary. In the offline sessions, the instructor offered individual feedback on students' pronunciation as presented in the video content and guided them through reflective activities emphasizing the importance of self-directed learning in language acquisition.

**Table 3. Schedule of the blended PBL course: Introductory Vietnamese Reading**

Lesson	Topic	Main Learning Content	Teaching Methods
1	• Orientation	• Course introduction: Overview, objectives, content, methods, grading criteria, etc. • Teaching & learning method introduction	Offline
2	• Understand predicate sentences with double objects • Understand the use of <i>những</i> and <i>các</i>	[Main Textbook Lesson 7] • Structure of predicate sentences • Methods of expressing the quantity of things • Expressions of an infinite amount and a limited amount	Blended: Online (upload videos related to class content) + Offline
3	• Learn how to express time such as day, month, and year	[Main Textbook Lesson 8] • Expressions such as <i>tháng mấy</i> , <i>ngày bao nhiêu</i> , <i>thứ mấy</i> • How to read and write time	Blended: Online (upload videos related to class content) + Offline
4	• Learn how to use <i>vẫn</i> , <i>còn</i> .	[Main Textbook Lesson 8] • The meaning and location of <i>vẫn</i> , <i>còn</i>	Offline: Team Based Learning (Review of Lessons 7 and 8)
5	• Learn about countries, nationalities, language expressions, and introduce yourself, your family, and other people	[Main Textbook Lesson 9] • How to use <i>cũng</i> , <i>đều</i> • How to use <i>nước</i> , <i>người</i> , <i>tiếng</i> to indicate country, nationality, and language	Blended: Online (upload video related to class content) + Offline (1:1 pronunciation comments)
6	• Learn expressions for asking for names and ages	[Main Textbook Lesson 10] • Three forms of asking and answering names • Difference between <i>mấy</i> and <i>bao nhiêu</i> • How to write proper nouns (place names, country names, institution names, organization names)	Offline: PBL (Problem recognition and task presentation)
7	• Learn how to use <i>được</i> and <i>bị</i>	[Main Textbook Lesson 11] • How to change the sentence structure to passive voice, how to use <i>một cách</i>	Blended: Online (upload videos related to class content) + Offline and Team Based Learning (Review of Lessons 9-11)
8	• Midterm Exam	• Vocabulary, Grammar, Reading	-
9	• Learn sentence structures consisting of "adjective + quantifier" and how to use interrogative pronouns ( <i>gi, nào</i> )	[Main Textbook Lesson 12] • When the predicate is an adjective that indicates the characteristics or form of an external appearance	Offline: PBL (Problem Structuring and Cause Analysis)
10	• Understanding the sentence structure of auxiliary verbs in the meaning of the request type • Understanding the position of the adverb " <i>rất, quá, lắm</i> "	[Main Textbook Lesson 13] • Meaning and usage of verbs such as <i>sai, bảo, nhờ, gi, cho</i> • Types and meanings of adverbs of degree	Blended: Online (upload videos related to class content) + Offline and Team Based Learning (Review of Lessons 12-13)
11	• Learn how to use the auxiliary verbs " <i>có thể, được</i> " and " <i>vua, moi, vua moi</i> "	[Main Textbook Lesson 14] • Meaning that the subject in the sentence can perform an action • Verb to indicate an action that occurred in the very recent past	Offline: Team Based Learning (Review of Lesson 14)
12	• Understand how to use ordinal numbers	• How to use ordinal numerals <i>nhất, tư, nhì</i> , etc.	Blended: Online (upload videos related to class content) + Offline (1:1 tone comments)
13	• Learn how to conjugate the auxiliary verbs " <i>nhên, can, phải</i> ". • Learn how to conjugate " <i>tất cả</i> " and " <i>cả</i> ". • Learn how to conjugate " <i>vì, nên, vì... nên...</i> "	[Main Textbook Lesson 15] • Auxiliary verbs placed before the main verb in the predicate • A way to express the quantity of many of the same kind, uncountable nouns and countable nouns • A way to connect two clauses that have the meaning of cause and effect	Offline: PBL (Solution Derivation + Feedback)
14	• Comprehensive review	• Lessons 7-15 of the main textbook, Vietnamese language learning for beginners	PBL (Results summary and report submission), Team Based Learning (reflection)
15	• Final Exam	• Vocabulary, expressions, reading comprehension	-

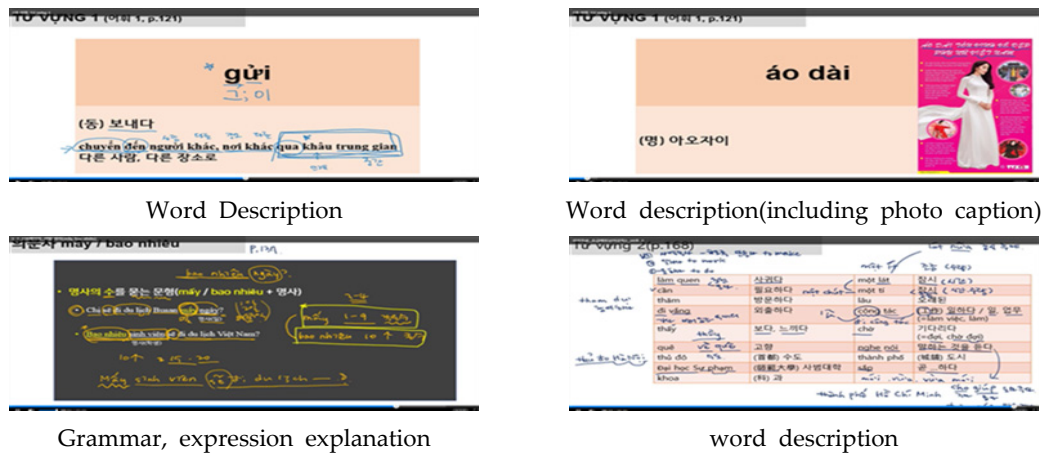


Fig. 1. Online video lectures for blended learning classes

The main outline and activities of the scenario-based assignments are as follows (see Table 4. and Table 5.). For the PBL component, students were given assignments that connected the content they studied through Blended Learning with real-life cases, stimulating new discoveries and curiosity while exploring surrounding examples. During the 15 week course, assignments were presented in weeks 6, 9, 13, and 14 based on the PBL scenario titled “Incorrect Vietnamese Orthography and Translation: Let Us, Vietnamese Studies Majors, Correct Them!” 1) Students were asked to observe frequent errors in Vietnamese orthography and mistranslations in recent multicultural related articles, signs, information boards, and translation

applications. From the perspective of language majors, they were encouraged to recognize that these errors could lead not only to simple mistranslations but also to cultural distortions and misunderstandings. Students assumed the role of trainee reporters at a multicultural newspaper and were tasked with writing an article based on real cases they investigated. 2) After individually identifying cases, team members collaboratively analyzed the issues and proposed solutions as a group. 3) The instructor provided feedback on the assignments. 4) Students synthesized the feedback and assignment contents to individually submit a comprehensive report.

Table 4. Major overview and examples of Scenario-Based problems for PBL

Main Overview	“Let’s (Vietnamese studies students) correct the incorrect Vietnamese spelling and translation!”
Problem statement	<p>OOO, a Vietnamese studies major, has recently become deeply concerned about the fact that interest in Vietnam has been increasing in Korea, but the Vietnamese language is being misused. OOO, a Vietnamese studies major who was unable to bear it any longer and got a job as a trainee reporter at the multicultural OOO newspaper, wants to write an article about cases of Vietnamese proper nouns that she discovered near her home and school, or cases of misinterpretation/translation, based on the pronunciation, grammar, and expressions she learned in class.</p> <p>How can you raise awareness and explain these issues? Choose a case, think about it, and explain it in 2-3 paragraphs.</p>

Table 5. Description of PBL Weekly Activities

Lesson	Step	Activity Description
6	Problem recognition and task presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate cases of incorrect Vietnamese notation/translation around you</li> <li>Select cases of interest and collect photos or data</li> <li>Structure the problem and analyze the cause</li> </ul>
9	Structure the problem and analyze the cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze why the case is incorrect</li> <li>Connect it to learning content such as pronunciation, grammar, and cultural context</li> <li>Explain points where misunderstandings may occur</li> </ul>
13	Derive solutions + feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suggest correct expressions (notation method, alternative translations, etc.)</li> <li>Write in article format and receive feedback from colleagues/teacher</li> </ul>
14	Organize results and submit report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize article (including main text + photos)</li> <li>Submit and present final report in article format</li> </ul>

### 3.2. Blended PBL Project

Recently, interest in Vietnamese culture and language has been growing in Korean society. However, a lack of awareness regarding the correct spelling and usage of the Vietnamese language has led to frequent inaccuracies in everyday settings. For instance, a café sign that read “CÀ PHÊ SỮA DÀ” represents an incorrect form of the proper expression “Cà phê sữa đá.” This is not merely a spelling error, but a case that may lead to cultural misunderstandings and inaccurate perceptions of the language. Such misrepresentations can undermine the credibility of establishments and prevent consumers from experiencing Vietnamese culture authentically. To address this issue, a student in the course utilized their knowledge of Vietnamese pronunciation and grammar to politely explain the error to the restaurant owner and proposed a plan to correct the signage. This initiative exemplifies a respectful engagement with cultural authenticity and offers a concrete action for improvement. In addition to such individual efforts, a systematic approach such as collaboration with language experts, governmental guidelines on foreign language signage, and continuous awareness campaigns through multi-

cultural media is necessary. These measures can enhance both linguistic accuracy and cultural understanding, contributing to a more inclusive multicultural society.

In tackling these real world, ill structured problems, students engaged in team based activities within a BL environment. They identified beginner-level Vietnamese vocabulary from the course materials in advance and explored more accessible and effective memorization or comprehension strategies. The PBL framework provided detailed feedback on their tasks, and discussions with instructors during the process further expanded the students’ critical thinking. Compared to traditional language instruction, students participated more actively and found the diverse activities to be both meaningful and enjoyable.

### 3.3. Analysis of Post-Survey Results

A post-survey was conducted with 34 students who participated in the course to examine their satisfaction, level of engagement, and perceived learning outcomes. The results showed very high levels of satisfaction across all items, with average scores exceeding 4.60 out of 5. In particular, the items “The class was more enjoyable

제목: 베트남어 표기의 중요성과 올바른 사용  
 최근 한국에서 베트남 문화에 대한 관심이 높아지면서, 베트남어의 올바른 사용에 대한 필요성이 더욱 강조되고 있다. 한국 내 베트남 식당의 수가 증가하고, 베트남 음식과 음료에 대한 수요가 높아짐에 따라, 많은 사람들이 베트남어를 접하게 된다. 그러나 이러한 관심이 높아짐에도 불구하고, 베트남어의 정확한 표기와 사용에 대한 이해는 여전히 부족한 상황이다. 이는 단순한 언어적 오류를 넘어, 문화적 오해와 잘못된 인식을 초래할 수 있다. 따라서, 베트남어의 올바른 사용을 촉진하고, 문화적 이해를 증진시키기 위한 노력이 필요하다.  
 최근 서울 중구에서 친구와 함께 갔다가 발견한 한 베트남 식당의 간판에서 “CÀ PHÊ SỮA DÀ”라는 표기를 보았다. 이것의 의미는 “아이스 연유 커피”이다. 그러나 내가 수업 시간에 배운 바에 따르면, 올바른 표기는 “Cà phê sữa đá”이다. 얼음이라는 뜻으로 “ĐÁ”를 “DÀ”로 잘못 표기된 것이다. 이처럼 잘못된 표기는 단순한 오타로 치부할 수 있지만, 실제로는 베트남 문화와 언어에 대한 이해 부족을 드러내는 사례로도 볼 수 있다.  
 “Cà phê sữa đá”는 베트남의 대표적인 커피 음료로, 얼음과 함께 제공되는 달콤한 연유 커피를 의미한다. 잘못된 표기는 발음과 의미를 왜곡할 수 있으며, 이는 소비자에게 혼란을 줄 뿐만 아니라, 베트남 문화에 대한 부정확한 인식을 초래할 수 있다. 또한, 이러한 오류는 베트남 음식을 제공하는 식당의 신뢰성을 저하시킬 수 있으며, 고객들이 진정한 베트남의 맛을 경험하는 데 방해가 될 수 있다. 따라서, 한국에서 베트남 음식을 제공하는 식당들은 올바른 표기를 통해 베트남 문화를 정확히 전달하고, 고객들에게 진정한 베트남의 맛을 경험할 수 있도록 해야 한다. 이러한 작은 변화가 베트남어와 문화에 대한 올바른 이해를 증진시키는 데 크게 기여할 것이다.  
 이와 같은 문제를 해결하기 위해, 나는 식당 주인에게 전화 “CÀ PHÊ SỮA DÀ”라는 표기가 많은 연유 커피를 뜻하는 “Cà phê sữa đá”로 표기되어야 한다는 점을 설명할 계획이다. 베트남학 전공 학생으로서 이 내용을 알게 되었음을 밝히고, 잘못된 표기 문화와 언어의 의미를 왜곡할 수 있다는 점을 경중히 전달하려 한다. 또한, 올바른 표기를 통해 더 많은 고객들에게 신뢰를 줄 수 있다는 긍정적인 측면을 강조할 것이다. 이를 통해 식당이 베트남 문화를 올바르게 전달하고, 고객들에게 더 나은 경험을 제공할 수 있도록 돕고자 한다. 이러한 노력이 한국 내 베트남 문화에 대한 이해를 높이는 데 기여할 수 있기를 바란다.

Report submitted by Student A



Photo of the student’s project

Fig. 2. Student project outcome from the blended PBL class

Table 6. Survey Results

Category	Items	M	SD
Satisfaction	Overall Satisfaction	4.68	0.43
	Interest in the Class	4.64	0.46
	Enjoyment Elements of the Class	4.68	0.43
Participation awareness	Proactiveness in Class Management	4.50	0.50
	Level of Class Participation	4.54	0.50
	Awareness of One's Lack of Competence	4.61	0.57
Learning effectiveness	Motivation for Learning	4.50	0.67
	Improvement in Understanding	4.57	0.58
	Perceived Effectiveness of the Teaching Method	4.64	0.48
Total		4.60	0.51

**Table 7. Advantages of blended PBL based course**

No.	Category	Number of responses
1	Ease of review and repetitive learning	7
2	Synergistic effect of online and offline learning	6
3	Increased interest and engagement in learning	5
4	Improvement of self-directed learning skills through PBL	5
5	Experience in team activities and collaboration	4
6	Effective for language learning	4

compared to non-PBL classes” and “I understood and was satisfied with the purpose of the Blended PBL class” received the highest average score of 4.68. These findings indicate that the Blended PBL approach provided a more enjoyable and overall satisfying learning experience compared to traditional classes. Additionally, the item “I believe Blended PBL is an effective instructional method even for language courses” scored 4.64, suggesting that students recognized Blended PBL as an effective teaching method in foreign language education, such as Vietnamese.

Based on the content analysis of the open-ended survey responses, the results are summarized in the table below. Students who participated in the Blended PBL course generally expressed positive perceptions, reporting high levels of satisfaction and effectiveness across various aspects of the class. The most frequently mentioned strength of the course was its facilitation of review and repeated learning (7 responses). Many students appreciated the ability to revisit online lectures due to the recorded format, which allowed for deeper understanding of the content and the flexibility to learn at their own pace.

Another major advantage noted was the synergistic effect of online and offline classes (6 responses). Students highlighted that acquiring foundational concepts online and applying them through in-depth offline activities enhanced both the depth and efficiency of learning. Increased interest and engagement in learning (5 responses) also emerged as a key theme. Respondents reported that the class format was stimulating and motivating, making the learning experience more enjoyable and less monotonous. The enhancement of self-directed learning competencies (5 responses) was recognized as a core strength of the PBL approach. Students noted that identifying and addressing their weaknesses during the PBL process encouraged them to take more ownership of their learning. From a language acquisition perspective, several students noted the effectiveness of the course design for learning specific features of Vietnamese, such as pronunciation, tones, and grammar (4 responses). Furthermore, team based activities and collaborative learning (4 responses) were positively perceived for offering opportunities for mutual support and constructive feedback, contributing to the overall

learning experience.

In addition to the major themes discussed, a number of responses also indicated enhanced comprehension, the ability to adjust learning pace according to individual needs, increased diversity and novelty in instructional methods, satisfaction with the instructor’s explanations, and a reduction in perceived learning burden. These findings demonstrate learners’ trust in and positive perception of the overall instructional approach. The open ended responses to the item “Additional suggestions for the Blended PBL class” were analyzed to gain further insights. Approximately 70% of the total responses (18 entries) expressed high levels of satisfaction with the current class format, using statements such as “I am satisfied” or “No further suggestions.” This suggests that the Blended PBL approach met or even exceeded learner expectations in terms of effectiveness. However, several suggestions for improvement were also noted. Two responses proposed adjustments to the assessment methods and difficulty level, specifically requesting alignment of test coverage with the Vietnamese conversation class and an increase in test difficulty to improve discriminatory power. Furthermore, two responses called for enhancements in the sustainability and reviewability of online content. These respondents expressed a desire for long term access to lecture materials and requested the integration of a quiz-based review system. These suggestions reflect the emergence of self-directed learning habits among students, who wish to engage in independent review and reinforcement.

### 3.4. Analysis of student reflection data

An analysis of students’ reflections on their Blended PBL assignments revealed three main learning effects. First, the PBL assignments contributed to linguistic learning outcomes. Among the reflections of 29 students, many expressed deepened language knowledge and acquisition of fundamental language structures. Learners reported improved understanding of vocabulary meaning, grammar, pronunciation, and tones. They also demonstrated comprehension of basic word order and consonant vowel structures (Students 26, 27, 28) and shared reflective learning

experiences in which they internalized language rules through the process of correcting incorrect expressions (Students 3, 4, 17, 28).

- *Learner 3: I found it enjoyable to identify hidden instances of incorrect Vietnamese usage in everyday life. Through this process, I was able to strengthen my foundational vocabulary.*
- *Learner 4: I realized that the process of identifying and correcting errors in Vietnamese vocabulary and sentence structure was highly beneficial for language learning. It helped deepen my understanding of Vietnamese grammar and word usage through the active correction of incorrect expressions.*
- *Learner 17: When I encountered incorrect words and sentences in daily life, I felt compelled to correct them. By actively making corrections, I naturally learned the proper forms and expressions. This process significantly enhanced my understanding of the language and helped me develop accurate usage habits. I came to understand that correcting mistakes is not just about fixing errors, but also about recognizing the underlying linguistic rules and grammatical principles.*
- *Learner 26: Rather than simply memorizing grammar rules, we made efforts to expand our ability to interpret and construct Vietnamese sentences based on the differences we discovered. This comparative learning approach increased our awareness of structural differences between languages and helped us take a more systematic approach to learning a new language.*
- *Learner 27: We provided each other with feedback, checking and correcting one another's pronunciation in real time. We also worked together to solve sentence interpretation exercises from the textbook, which allowed us to better understand the connection between grammar and pronunciation.*
- *Learner 28: We made sentences with the given vocabulary, checked grammar together, and practiced reading to better recognize tones and consonants.*

Second, regarding sociocultural learning effects, students developed an understanding of the impact of language notation on cultural awareness. Learners recognized that incorrect Vietnamese language notation can lead to cultural misunderstandings beyond mere errors (Students 1, 8, 14, 16, 21) and developed a critical awareness that language use is directly linked to cultural respect (Students 16, 20, 21). In particular, Students 7, 9, and 14 compared errors in Korean language notation in Vietnam and Vietnamese notation in Korea, diagnosing the potential for cultural miscommunication in both directions. Thus, the Blended PBL based project contributed not only to

language learning but also to fostering intercultural communication skills and critical thinking.

- *Learner 1: I realized that incorrect expressions could lead to public misperceptions and misunderstanding.*
- *Learner 8: Accurate spelling is important in Korea-Vietnam relations and daily life, and as a student in this field, I feel it is my responsibility to correct mistake.*
- *Learner 14: By analyzing linguistic differences and the resulting errors, I was able to develop a deeper understanding of pronunciation and word usage in both languages. The process of analyzing real-life cases and exploring possible improvements was particularly beneficial.*
- *Learner 16: Through learning Vietnamese, I saw that incorrect spelling undermines both communication and cultural respect.*
- *Learner 20: When I see store signs written in Vietnamese, I now tend to examine whether the tones and word meanings are used correctly. I believe that, just like incorrect Korean on signs in foreign countries can create a negative impression, misused Vietnamese can do the same.*
- *Learner 21: I found that incorrect spelling is not merely a pronunciation issue but also reflects cultural understanding. Moving forward, I intend to actively promote tone and pronunciation correction and continue striving to use language accurately.*

Third, in terms of learning attitudes and competency development, collaboration for problem-solving emerged as a key effect. Students described the importance of teamwork in analyzing and correcting errors (Students 3, 4, 14, 15, 27, 28) and active learning participation through feedback and role sharing (Students 14, 25, 29). Notably, Student 14 emphasized that critical thinking and problem solving abilities improved together through discussion-based problem solving and sharing explanations within the team. This analysis suggests that Blended PBL based language education goes beyond mere knowledge transmission to integratively promote practical language use, cultural understanding, and learner competency enhancement.

- *Learner 3: It was a valuable experience to discuss with my teammates and supplement areas where I was lacking.*
- *Learner 4: Reviewing the parts I had corrected by myself helped solidify my learning. Exchanging opinions with teammates based on identified errors made the revision process more effective.*
- *Learner 14: Through the process of identifying and correcting incorrect pronunciation and word usage, I recognized the importance of collaboration and communication.*

*The activity of solving the tasks in advance and reviewing and explaining them together during the group meeting was highly beneficial.*

- *Learner 15: By correcting incorrect expressions myself and discussing them with peers, I learned the appropriate usage. We discussed possible solutions together.*
- *Learner 25: Collaborating with peers to prepare role-plays and incorporating each other's ideas helped us construct more natural conversations.*
- *Learner 27: After individual reading sessions, we gave each other feedback within the group, checked each other's pronunciation, and corrected errors immediately.*
- *Learner 28: By revising vocabulary, grammar, and sentence construction together, we worked to improve our real-life communication skills.*
- *Learner 29: Through pair activities and role-plays, I was able to apply learned expressions to real-life situations and enhance my expressive ability and speaking confidence. Repeated practice and mutual feedback helped improve both my communication skills and pronunciation accuracy.*

Finally, the effect of self-directed learning was also observed. Particularly, students gained confidence in using correct expressions through the process of identifying and correcting errors encountered in daily life (Students 17, 18, 20). They demonstrated a critical attitude toward language errors based on real-life examples and a willingness to improve them. This process led to enhanced self-reflective learning abilities. These reflective outcomes indicate that Blended PBL classes have educational potential to effectively cultivate learners' self-directedness and reflective capacity centered on real problem solving experiences.

- *Learner 17: By directly correcting the errors, I was able to naturally acquire proper spelling and expressions. This process helped me realize the importance of language and how critical it is to approach it with careful attention.*
- *Learner 18: In Vietnam, I often encountered shop names that used completely unrelated or incorrect expressions. The most memorable example was a store named "Gukmul". I believe that the best way to correct such errors in spelling is to consult with fluent speakers or experts in the language.*
- *Learner 20: From now on, when I see store signs written in Vietnamese, I think I will pay attention to whether the tones and meanings of the words are used correctly. To prevent incorrect Vietnamese usage in shop names, I believe it would be helpful to develop a translation program specifically for Vietnamese store names.*

## 4. Conclusions, Limitations, and Future Research

With the acceleration of online education and changes in learning environments triggered by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for teaching and learning strategies to foster convergent talent equipped with self-directed learning and problem-solving abilities has become increasingly evident in higher education. In this context, Blended PBL, which integrates Blended Learning and PBL, has gained attention as an effective instructional method that combines the strengths of both online and offline learning to enhance student engagement and participation. In language education, Blended PBL has been proposed as a strategy to overcome the limitations of receptive and repetitive learning, while fostering analytical and critical thinking as well as practical language use. This study explores a Blended PBL based instructional model developed for beginner level Vietnamese language learners and examines the findings based on both quantitative and qualitative data collected after program implementation.

First, the application of Blended PBL in beginner level Vietnamese classes resulted in many learners reporting improvements in basic language competencies such as grammar, vocabulary, and conversational expressions. Survey results also indicated high satisfaction levels, with an average of 4.68 out of 5 points, and reflection journals frequently included statements such as "Through PBL, I was able to naturally repeat foundational sentence patterns." Learners' foundational linguistic skills were enhanced systematically through the organic linkage between online lectures and offline team-based activities. While basic knowledge was acquired individually online, offline sessions focused on problem-solving tasks that reinforced practical language use. This demonstrated that Blended PBL effectively supported not only foundational knowledge acquisition but also deeper learning.

Second, the nature of the PBL tasks focused on real-life problems, and scenario-based activities that incorporated Vietnamese cultural contexts were implemented. This allowed learners to practice language expressions for actual use rather than relying on simple memorization, increasing both immersion and the practical applicability of the content. The integration of online and offline activities further enhanced learner participation and problem-solving capacity. The study found that designing problems rooted in real contexts played a key role in promoting learner engagement.

Third, team based tasks performed during PBL activities contributed to the enhancement of both collaborative competence and self-directed learning. According to reflection

reports, learners recognized incorrect expressions in daily use and made efforts to revise them on their own. They also critically examined their language errors based on real-life examples and attempted to improve them. These findings indicate that Blended PBL holds strong educational potential for cultivating self-directed learning and reflective thinking through learner-led problem-solving experiences.

Fourth, in a blended learning environment, PBL showed a complementary relationship between online and offline components. Pre-recorded lectures supported preparatory learning and team projects, enabling a transition from self-directed study to collaborative problem solving. This highlights the potential of Blended PBL for integrated instructional design.

Finally, an analysis of learners' pre- and post-course reflection reports showed that most students experienced personal growth by reviewing their learning processes and problem-solving strategies. This confirmed that Blended PBL is not only effective for knowledge acquisition but also serves as a powerful instructional method for developing self-directed and reflective learning competencies.

This study presents one of the few empirical cases in which Blended PBL was applied in language education, specifically within a beginner-level Vietnamese course. It provides foundational insights for instructional design based on Blended PBL and offers practical guidelines for step-by-step implementation and classroom operation tailored to foreign language education. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that collaborative problem-solving activities and blended environments can be effectively integrated in language courses, suggesting the potential for broader adoption of Blended PBL in foreign language education. However, qualitative and quantitative data, the findings relied primarily on simple surveys administered to all participants, which restricts the depth of analysis regarding learners' developmental changes. Therefore, future research should employ pre- and post-comparisons (e.g., t-tests) to verify statistical significance and yield more objective results. In addition, the study was limited by its small sample size (34 students) and its focus on a single semester and a specific Vietnamese language course, which constrains the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should expand the scope of research by including learners at different proficiency levels (e.g., intermediate and advanced), examining long-term improvements in language ability, and applying Blended PBL to a broader range of language courses. The accumulation of such studies and data will provide a stronger foundation for establishing Blended PBL as an effective instructional strategy in foreign language education.

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## Conflicts Interest

No author has any other conflict of interest to declare.

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