

Blended Learning in English Education: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

Blended learning has become an important instructional approach in English education and has attracted increasing scholarly attention. However, comprehensive bibliometric evidence on this field remains limited. Based on 721 documents retrieved from the Scopus database, this study employed performance analysis and science mapping using Excel and VOSviewer to examine publication trends, leading contributors, influential sources, and major research themes. The results show a clear growth in annual publications from 2005 to early 2026 and identify the most productive countries, journals, and scholars in the field. In addition, keyword co-occurrence analysis indicates that online learning, flipped classroom, and higher education are major research themes, while more recent studies have increasingly focused on digital competence, self-efficacy, and other technology-related concerns. This study provides a systematic overview of the development and intellectual structure of blended learning research in English education.

Keywords: Bibliometric Analysis, Blended Learning, English Education, Science Mapping

Introduction

The rapid advancement of information and communication technologies (ICT) has accelerated the integration of digital tools into educational settings and reshaped contemporary teaching and learning practices (Huynh, 2024; Basilotta-Gómez-Pablos et al., 2022). Within this context, blended learning (BL), also referred to as hybrid learning, has emerged as a prominent instructional approach that combines face-to-face teaching with technology-mediated learning (Srivatanakul, 2022). Because it integrates the strengths of conventional classroom interaction and online learning environments, BL has attracted increasing attention from researchers and educators across diverse educational contexts (Srivatanakul, 2022; Dousti & Amirian, 2023; Li, 2022).

BL is widely regarded as a flexible and scalable approach to teaching and learning (Islam et al., 2022; de Moura et al., 2021). It can promote interaction, enhance learner engagement, and provide students with greater opportunities to participate in learning activities both

inside and outside the classroom (Batista-Toledo & Gavilan, 2023; Wu & Luo, 2022). Although BL was initially developed in corporate training settings to address issues of time, place, and accessibility (Liu et al., 2024; Bersin, 2004), it gained substantial momentum in education during the early 2000s with the expansion of digital technologies and online learning platforms. Since then, BL has been increasingly adopted in formal education and has become an important instructional mode in language education (Graham & Halverson, 2023; Rasheed et al., 2020).

In the field of English education, the integration of BL has generated growing scholarly interest. Existing empirical studies have shown that BL can support English language teaching and learning in a variety of ways, including the development of language skills, learner autonomy, motivation, and engagement. The broad applicability of BL in English education, together with the continuing digital transformation of educational environments, has contributed to a rapidly expanding body of literature (Kumar & Banu, 2024; Teng & Zeng, 2022; Menggo & Darong, 2022; Simbolon, 2021; Warman, 2021). As a result, it has become necessary to systematically examine the knowledge structure and developmental trajectory of this research field.

A number of review studies have explored BL from different perspectives (Su et al., 2024; Gayatri et al., 2022; Eggers et al., 2021; Omar et al., 2021; Feng et al., 2021; Anthonysamy et al., 2020; Albiladi & Alshareef, 2019), such as its application in higher education, learning environments, and general research trends. In addition, several bibliometric studies have investigated BL in more specific contexts or within limited time spans. For example, prior studies have examined general research trends in BL (Chen et al., 2023), bibliometric patterns related to blended English teaching (Ortega et al., 2023), and developments in blended language learning over particular periods (Li, 2022). While previous reviews and bibliometric studies have provided useful insights into blended learning, most have either focused on broader educational contexts, specific subdomains, or limited time spans. A comprehensive bibliometric analysis devoted specifically to BL in English education across a broader publication period remains scarce.

Bibliometric analysis offers an effective means of mapping the intellectual structure, research performance, and thematic evolution of a field (Donthu et al., 2021; Lim & Kumar, 2024; Mukherjee et al., 2022). By applying quantitative techniques to bibliographic data, it enables researchers to identify major contributors, influential sources, collaborative patterns, and emerging research themes. Therefore, a bibliometric review of BL in English education can provide a more systematic understanding of how this field has evolved and where it may develop in the future.

In this study, BL refers to an instructional approach that integrates face-to-face learning with technology-enabled learning. English education refers broadly to English language teaching and learning, including EFL, ESL, TESOL, and teacher education contexts. Against this background, the present study aims to map the bibliometric landscape of BL in English education, examining publication trends, major contributors, and key research themes. Given the lack of comprehensive and up-to-date bibliometric evidence in this field, this study provides a systematic overview and identifies emerging research directions. To achieve these aims, the study addresses the following research questions:

- RQ1.** What is the publication trajectory of research on BL in English education?
RQ2. What are the country contributions in this field?
RQ3. What are the most productive and influential journals in this field?
RQ4. Who are the most productive and influential scholars in this field?
RQ5. What are the major author keywords, topical foci, and research trends in this field?

Methodology

The present study adopts a bibliometric approach to examine the literature on BL in English education. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative review method that enables researchers to analyse large volumes of scientific literature in a systematic and transparent way (Donthu et al., 2021). It has been widely used in educational research to identify publication patterns, major contributors, intellectual structures, and thematic developments within a field (Hallinger, 2019).

This study combines two analytical approaches: performance analysis and science mapping. Performance analysis focuses on the productivity and impact of different scholarly actors, such as countries, journals, and authors, whereas science mapping explores relationships among research constituents and visualises the structure of a field (Cobo et al., 2011; Ramos-Rodríguez & Ruíz-Navarro, 2004; Baker et al., 2021). Together, these approaches provide both descriptive and relational insights into the development of BL research in English education.

Scopus was selected as the data source because it is one of the largest and most widely used abstract and citation databases and is considered suitable for bibliometric research in education (Hallinger & Kovačević, 2019). In this study, performance analysis was used to examine publication output as well as the productivity and citation impact of countries, journals, and scholars. Country contributions were identified based on author affiliation data using full counting, meaning that a publication was counted once for each country represented in the affiliation information. Science mapping was used to explore keyword co-occurrence patterns and the evolution of research themes over time.

Data Extraction

To address the research questions, bibliographic data on BL in English education were retrieved from the Scopus database. The search strategy was developed by defining the topic, scope, and eligibility criteria of the study. In line with the research focus, the search was limited by search field, publication year, subject area, document type, and language. The final search string was as follows:

((TITLE-ABS-KEY("blended learning" OR "hybrid learning") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY("English" OR "English education" OR "esl" OR "efl" OR "tesol" OR "tesl")) AND PUBYEAR > 2004 AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA,"SOCI")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE,"ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE,"re")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE,"English"))). The search was conducted on March 7, 2026. A total of 818 publications met the initial screening criteria. The retrieved records were exported from Scopus in CSV format and included bibliographic information such as authors, author IDs, titles, publication years, source titles, citation counts, abstracts, author keywords, affiliations, and related metadata.

The retrieved dataset was then screened and cleaned manually to improve its suitability for bibliometric analysis. The cleaning process consisted of three steps. First, duplicate records were identified and removed. Second, titles were examined to exclude obviously irrelevant publications. Third, abstracts and keywords were reviewed to assess the relevance of borderline records to the topic of BL in English education. Records were excluded when BL or English education was not a substantive focus of the study. After this screening process, 97 documents were removed, resulting in a final dataset of 721 publications for bibliometric analysis.

The data extraction and screening procedures were organised with reference to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow logic, as illustrated in Figure 1. This procedure helped ensure a transparent and systematic process for identifying, screening, and including relevant records in the final dataset.

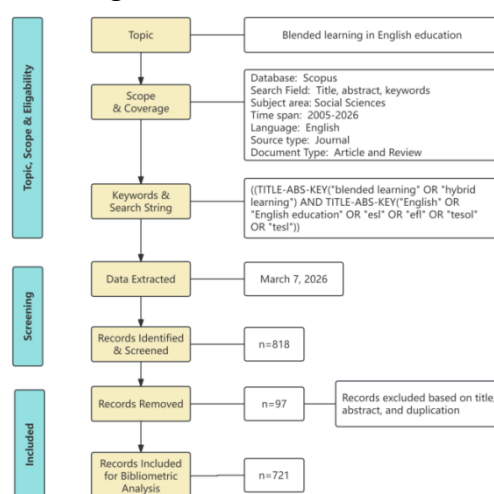


Figure 1 Flow Diagram of the Search Strategy

Data Analysis

To analyse the retrieved data and visualise the findings, this study employed two tools: Excel and VOSviewer. Each tool served a distinct analytical purpose in line with the research questions. Excel was used for descriptive statistical analysis, including the calculation and organisation of publication output, productivity, citation counts, and related bibliometric indicators. VOSviewer was used for science mapping and visualisation.

VOSviewer is a widely used software tool for constructing and exploring bibliometric networks. It enables the visualisation of relationships among research constituents through network-based maps and supports multiple forms of bibliometric analysis, including co-authorship, co-occurrence, citation, bibliographic coupling, and co-citation analysis (Arruda et al., 2022). In the present study, VOSviewer was applied primarily to examine the conceptual structure and thematic development of BL research in English education. Specifically, the network visualisation was used to map keyword co-occurrence patterns, while the overlay visualisation was used to identify the temporal evolution of research themes.

The analysis was conducted from both performance-analysis and science-mapping perspectives. In terms of performance analysis, the study examined annual publication output as well as the productivity and citation impact of countries, journals, and scholars. In terms of

science mapping, it explored conceptual relationships among author keywords and their development over time. Through this combination of descriptive and relational analyses, the study provides a systematic account of the publication trajectory, major contributors, and thematic evolution of BL research in English education.

Results and Discussion

Publication Trajectory

The first research question examines the publication trajectory of BL in English education. Figure 2 illustrates the annual publication output in this field from 2005 to 2026. The annual publication output shows a clear and sustained upward trend, although the rate of growth varies across different stages.

In the initial stage (2005–2011), publication activity remained limited, with annual output staying below 10 publications. This pattern suggests that BL in English education was still an emerging research topic with relatively low scholarly visibility during this period. From 2012 to 2018, the number of publications increased gradually from 13 to 31, despite minor fluctuations in some years. This steady growth suggests increasing scholarly attention to the topic during this period.

A much sharper increase can be observed after 2019. Annual output rose from 50 publications in 2019 to 54 in 2020 and 57 in 2021, followed by a substantial jump to 85 in 2022. Although there was a slight decline to 84 publications in 2023, the upward trend resumed in 2024, with 94 publications, and reached a peak in 2025, with 113 publications. This rapid expansion points to a substantial increase in scholarly output in recent years.

The count for 2026 is notably lower, at 25 publications. However, this figure should be interpreted with caution, as it most likely reflects an incomplete publication year rather than an actual decline in research interest. Because the search was conducted on March 7, 2026, the 2026 count represents a partial publication year and is therefore not directly comparable to the preceding full years.

Taken together, the publication trajectory demonstrates that BL in English education has evolved from a relatively niche topic into a rapidly expanding and increasingly prominent field of research. The sustained rise in annual publication output further highlights its continuing academic relevance in contemporary educational studies.

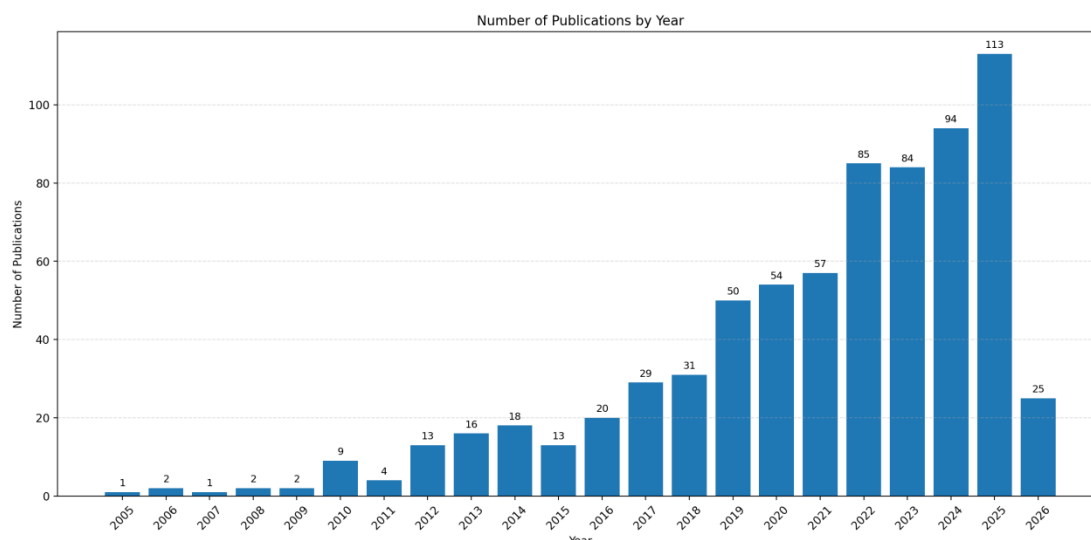


Figure 2 Annual Publication Output in the Field of BL in English Education (2005–2026)

Country Contributions

The second research question examines country contributions in the field of BL in English education. Based on the affiliation information of the retrieved publications, a total of 78 countries or regions contributed to this research domain. These results indicate that research on BL in English education has attracted global scholarly participation, although the distribution of output is uneven across regions. The top 20 countries by publication count is presented in Figure 3.

In terms of publication output, China and Indonesia were the leading contributors to the field. They were followed by Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and the United States, all of which produced a relatively high volume of publications. Overall, the distribution indicates that BL research in English education has been especially active in Asia, with several Asian countries occupying the top positions in publication output. In contrast, although North America and Europe also contributed to the field, Africa and South America were comparatively underrepresented in the dataset.

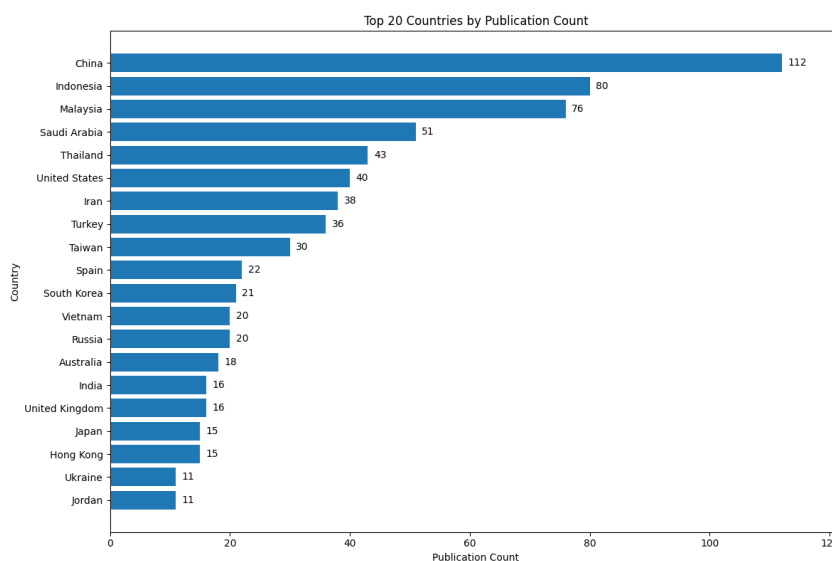


Figure 3 Top 20 Countries by Publication Count

Productive and Influential Journals

The third research question examines the most productive and influential journals in the field of BL in English education. In this study, journal productivity was assessed by total publications (TP), whereas journal influence was primarily assessed by total citations (TC), with average citations per publication (ACPP) used as a complementary indicator. Table 1 presents the top 10 journals in terms of publication output, together with their country, TP, TC, ACPP, SCImago Journal Rank (SJR), journal quartile, and *h*-index. Among these journals, *Asian EFL Journal* was the most productive source, with 22 publications, followed by *Computer Assisted Language Learning* with 16 publications. The remaining journals in the top 10 each contributed at least 10 publications to the field, indicating that research on BL in English education is distributed across a relatively diverse range of publication outlets.

However, publication productivity does not necessarily correspond to citation impact. Several highly productive journals show comparatively low average citation performance. This pattern is especially evident in *Asian EFL Journal*, *World Journal of English Language*, and *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, whose ACPP values are 3.00, 1.67, and 5.80, respectively. These findings suggest that while such journals have provided important publication venues for the field, their influence in terms of citation impact is more limited than that of some other journals.

In terms of citation impact, Table 2 shows that *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* was the most influential journal, with a total citation count of 438. It was followed by *Computer Assisted Language Learning* with 340 citations and *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education* with 297 citations. Other influential journals included *System*, *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, and *Sustainability*, all of which demonstrated substantial citation performance. The results indicate that the most influential journals in this field are not limited to language-focused journals, but also include broader educational technology and interdisciplinary outlets.

A closer comparison of the two tables further highlights the distinction between productivity and influence. While *Asian EFL Journal* ranked first in publication output, it did not appear among the most influential journals in terms of total citations. By contrast, *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* achieved the highest citation impact with only eight publications in the dataset. In addition, *System* recorded the highest ACPP value at 55.00, while *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* followed closely with an ACPP of 54.75. These findings indicate that a smaller number of publications may still generate considerable scholarly influence when published in high-visibility journals.

The journal analysis suggests that the literature on BL in English education is supported by both specialised language education journals and broader educational technology journals. Among them, *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, *Education and Information Technologies*, and *Sustainability* stand out for combining relatively strong publication output with notable citation impact. These journals therefore represent important publication outlets for research on BL in English education.

Table 1

Top 10 Most Productive Journals in the Field of BL in English Education

Journal	Country	TP	TC	ACPP	SJR	JQ	<i>h</i> -index
Asian EFL Journal	United Kingdom	22	66	3.00	0.270	Q2	21
Computer Assisted Language Learning	United Kingdom	16	340	21.25	2.370	Q1	75
International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning	Australia	13	211	16.23	0.536	Q2	46
Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education	Turkey	12	297	24.75	0.518	Q2	32
CALL-EJ	Japan	12	88	7.33	0.512	Q1	15
World Journal of English Language Education and Information Technologies	United States	12	20	1.67	0.157	Q3	7
Sustainability	Switzerland	11	119	10.82	1.654	Q1	97
Journal of Language Teaching and Research	United Kingdom	10	171	17.10	0.672	Q2	169
Theory and Practice in Language Studies	United Kingdom	10	119	11.90	0.240	Q2	20
		10	58	5.80	0.257	Q2	23

Note. TP = total publications; TC = total citations; ACPP = average citations per publication; SJR = SCImago Journal Rank;

JQ = journal quartile; *h*-index provided by SCImago Journal & Country Rank

Table 2

Top 10 Most Influential Journals in the Field of BL in English Education

Journal	Country	TC	TP	ACPP	SJR	JQ	<i>h</i> -index
Australasian Journal of Educational Technology	Australia	438	8	54.75	1.000	Q1	68
Computer Assisted Language Learning	United Kingdom	340	16	21.25	2.370	Q1	75
Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education	Turkey	297	12	24.75	0.518	Q2	32
System	United Kingdom	275	5	55.00	2.075	Q1	104
International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning	Australia	211	13	16.23	0.536	Q2	46
Sustainability	Switzerland	171	10	17.10	0.672	Q2	169
Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology	Turkey	154	8	19.25	0.126	Q4	47
ReCALL	United Kingdom	123	5	24.60	1.493	Q1	67
Interactive Learning Environments	United Kingdom	119	6	19.83	1.312	Q1	68
Education and Information Technologies	United States	119	11	10.82	1.654	Q1	97

Note. TC = total citations; TP = total publications; ACPP = average citations per publication; SJR = SCImago Journal Rank;

JQ = journal quartile; *h*-index provided by SCImago Journal & Country Rank

Productive and Influential Scholars

The fourth research question concerns the most productive and influential scholars in the field of BL in English education. In bibliometric research, the number of publications is commonly used as an indicator of scholarly productivity, whereas citation counts are often used as a proxy for academic influence within a given bibliometric dataset. Accordingly, this study examines scholars from both perspectives.

Table 3 presents the most productive scholars in the field, including their affiliations, countries or regions, TP, TC, and ACPP. Among the 1,230 authors contributing to the retrieved publications, Fong Dennis was the most productive scholar, with six publications, and was affiliated with The University of British Columbia in Canada. Lee Chung Hyun and Melor Md Yunus followed with five publications each. Several other scholars, including Chen Julia, Kazakoff Elizabeth R., Paul A. Macaruso, Ru-Chu Shih, and Saovapa Wichadee, each contributed four publications, indicating a relatively distributed authorship pattern in the field rather than a highly concentrated one.

In terms of academic influence, Table 4 shows that Ru-Chu Shih was the most cited scholar, with 396 total citations across four publications. Miyazoe Terumi and Terry Anderson each received 217 citations, despite having only one publication in the dataset. Other highly cited scholars included Ahmet Basal, Luke K. Fryer, Nicholas Bovee, Ya-Ting Carolyn Yang, Saovapa Wichadee, Kazakoff Elizabeth R., and Paul A. Macaruso. These results indicate that high citation impact in this field is not determined solely by publication volume, but also by the visibility and influence of specific individual studies.

A comparison of Table 3 and Table 4 further highlights the distinction between productivity and influence. The most productive scholar, Fong Dennis, does not appear among the most cited scholars, which suggests that a higher number of publications does not necessarily translate into stronger citation impact. By contrast, several scholars appear in both rankings, most notably Ru-Chu Shih, Kazakoff Elizabeth R., Paul A. Macaruso, and Saovapa Wichadee. Among them, Ru-Chu Shih stands out for combining relatively high productivity with exceptionally strong citation performance. This pattern suggests that the field of BL in English education is shaped both by sustained publication activity and by a smaller number of highly influential contributions.

The scholar analysis reveals that research on BL in English education has been supported by a diverse group of contributors across different countries and institutions. While no single scholar dominates the field overwhelmingly in terms of publication output, several authors have made particularly visible contributions either through sustained productivity or through highly cited work. These findings provide a clearer picture of the authorship structure and intellectual influence within this research domain.

Table 3

Top 8 Most Productive Scholars in the Field of BL in English Education

Scholar	Affiliation	Country region	or	TP	TC	ACPP
Foung Dennis	The University of British Columbia	Canada		6	26	4.33
Lee Chung Hyun	Hankuk University of Foreign Studies	South Korea		5	27	5.40
Melor Md Yunus	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	Malaysia		5	43	8.60
Chen Julia	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Hong Kong		4	15	3.75
Kazakoff Elizabeth R.	Tufts University	United States		4	114	28.50
Paul A. Macaruso	Community College of Rhode Island	United States		4	114	28.50
Ru-Chu Shih	National Pingtung University of Science and Technology	Taiwan		4	396	99.00
Saovapa Wichadee	Bangkok University	Thailand		4	115	28.75

Note. TP = total publications; TC = total citations; ACPP = average citations per publication

Table 4

Top 10 Most Cited Scholars in the Field of BL in English Education

Scholar	Affiliation	Country region	or	TC	TP	ACPP
Ru-Chu Shih	National Pingtung University of Science and Technology	Taiwan		396	4	99.00
Miyazoe Terumi	Tokyo University of Science	Japan		217	1	217.00
Terry Anderson	Athabasca University	Canada		217	1	217.00
Ahmet Basal	Yildiz Technical University	Turkey		121	1	121.00
Luke K. Fryer	The University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong		120	1	120.00
Nicholas Bovee	Kyushu Sangyo University	Japan		120	1	120.00
Ya-Ting Carolyn Yang	National Cheng Kung University	Taiwan		116	2	58.00
Saovapa Wichadee	Bangkok University	Thailand		115	4	28.75
Kazakoff Elizabeth R.	Tufts University	United States		114	4	28.50
Paul A. Macaruso	Community College of Rhode Island	United States		114	4	28.50

Note. TC = total citations; TP = total publications; ACPP = average citations per publication

Author keywords, topical foci, and research trends

The fifth research question examines the most frequent author keywords, the major topical foci, and the research trends in the field of BL in English education. Author keywords provide a concise indication of the core concepts addressed in a research field and are therefore useful for identifying thematic emphases and tracing research development over time. In the present dataset, a total of 1,848 author keywords were identified. Among them, 75 met the threshold of at least four occurrences. After manually excluding 10 retrieval terms and synonyms, the remaining 65 keywords were retained for co-occurrence analysis. The top 10 most frequent author keywords and their total link strength are presented in Table 5.

As shown in Table 5, online learning was the most frequently occurring keyword, with 57 occurrences and the highest total link strength (207). It was followed by flipped classroom (38

occurrences) and higher education (34 occurrences). Other highly recurrent keywords included English for Specific Purposes (ESP), COVID-19, e-learning, learner autonomy, motivation, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), and educational technology. These findings suggest that research on BL in English education has focused not only on instructional modes and learning environments, but also on pedagogical contexts, learner-related variables, and technology-enhanced language education.

To explore the conceptual structure of the field, a keyword co-occurrence network was generated using VOSviewer, as shown in Figure 4. The network indicates that the field has developed around multiple interconnected research strands rather than a single dominant topic. Several thematic foci are particularly visible. One prominent strand centres on online learning, which occupies the most central position in the network and maintains strong connections with higher education, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), academic achievement, and assessment. This suggests that online learning has become a major organising theme in BL research in English education. Another visible strand is associated with flipped classroom, hybrid learning, student engagement, and active learning, reflecting sustained interest in instructional design and classroom innovation. A further strand focuses on digital competence, digital literacy, TPACK, mobile learning, and teacher training, indicating growing attention to teachers' technological readiness and the pedagogical integration of digital tools. In addition, keywords such as CALL, computer-mediated communication, social presence, and EFL learners highlight the continuing importance of mediated interaction and technology-supported language learning in this field.

Figure 5 further illustrates the temporal evolution of author keywords through overlay visualisation. The results suggest that research themes have shifted over time. In the earlier period (approximately 2017-2019), the dominant topics included computer-mediated communication, reading, speaking, writing, Moodle, and collaborative learning, indicating an emphasis on language skills, online platforms, and interaction. In the subsequent period (around 2020-2022), research attention moved more strongly towards motivation, higher education, online learning, and flipped classroom, reflecting increasing interest in learner engagement and instructional models in formal educational settings. In more recent years, greater attention appears to have shifted towards COVID-19, digital competence, self-efficacy, deep learning, and hybrid learning. This pattern indicates that the field has gradually evolved from an emphasis on specific tools and language-skill development to broader concerns related to digital capacity, learner psychology, and post-pandemic instructional transformation.

Taken together, the keyword analysis shows that BL in English education has developed through a combination of pedagogical, technological, and learner-centred perspectives. While earlier studies were more concerned with language skills, online platforms, and interaction, more recent work reflects a stronger interest in digital competence, learner agency, and the changing educational landscape shaped by the pandemic and subsequent technology-enhanced teaching practices. These findings provide a clearer understanding of the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of the field.

Table 5

Top 10 Most Frequent Author Keywords in BL Research in English Education

Author keywords	Occurrences	Total link strength
online learning	57	207
flipped classroom	38	106
higher education	34	129
English for Specific Purposes (ESP)	29	98
COVID-19	27	101
e-learning	26	90
learner autonomy	20	67
motivation	20	73
Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)	17	67
educational technology	12	42

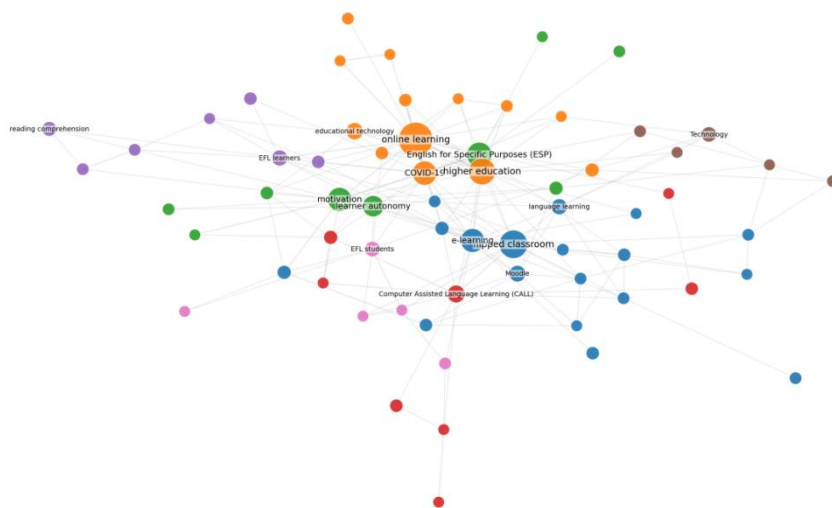


Figure 4 Network Visualization of Author Keywords Co-occurrence

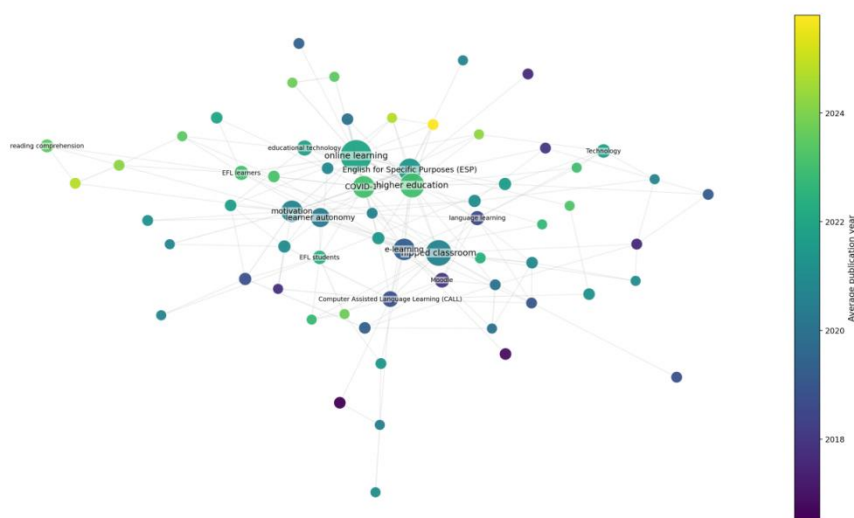


Figure 5 Overlay Visualization of Author Keywords Co-occurrence

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive bibliometric overview of blended learning research in English education based on 721 documents retrieved from the Scopus database. By integrating performance analysis and science mapping, it examined the publication trajectory of the field, the contributions of countries, journals, and scholars, as well as the major author keywords, thematic foci, and evolving research trends.

The findings reveal that BL research in English education has expanded steadily since 2005 and has experienced particularly rapid growth in recent years, indicating that this topic has developed into an increasingly prominent area of scholarly inquiry. The results also show that the field is characterised by broad international participation, although publication output remains unevenly distributed across regions. In particular, Asian countries—most notably China and Indonesia—have played a leading role in terms of publication output.

At the level of scholarly sources and contributors, the study highlights a clear distinction between productivity and influence. Some journals and authors contributed a relatively large number of publications, whereas others demonstrated stronger citation impact despite a smaller publication volume. This pattern suggests that the development of the field has been shaped not only by sustained research productivity, but also by a smaller number of highly influential studies and contributors.

In addition, the keyword analysis shows that BL research in English education has evolved around interconnected pedagogical, technological, and learner-related themes. Online learning, flipped classroom, and higher education emerged as central themes in the knowledge structure of the field. At the same time, the temporal evolution of author keywords indicates a shift from earlier concerns with language-skill development, interaction, and online platforms to more recent attention to digital competence, self-efficacy, hybrid learning, and post-pandemic instructional transformation.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by offering a systematic account of the intellectual structure and developmental trajectory of BL research in English education. It provides a useful reference for researchers seeking to identify major contributors, influential publication outlets, and emerging thematic directions, and may also inform educators and policymakers interested in understanding the changing landscape of BL in English education.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study provides a quantitative overview of the literature on BL in English education by analysing data retrieved from the Scopus database with the support of Excel and VOSviewer. While the study offers a systematic bibliometric account of the field, several limitations should be acknowledged.

First, the dataset was drawn exclusively from Scopus. Although Scopus is widely recognised as a reliable and comprehensive source for bibliometric analysis, the use of a single database may have resulted in the exclusion of relevant publications indexed elsewhere. Future studies may therefore consider integrating additional databases, such as Web of Science, to broaden coverage and reduce potential source bias.

Second, this study employed a limited set of analytical tools. Excel and VOSviewer were selected because they are effective for descriptive analysis and visualisation; however, other bibliometric tools, such as CiteSpace or Publish or Perish, may generate different analytical perspectives or complementary visualisation patterns. Future research may benefit from combining multiple tools to provide a more nuanced interpretation of the field.

Third, some degree of subjectivity is unavoidable in bibliometric research. The formulation of search terms, inclusion criteria, and threshold settings for citation and keyword analyses may influence the final dataset and the interpretation of results. Although efforts were made to apply these criteria consistently, the evolving terminology of BL and English education means that some relevant studies may not have been captured. Future research may refine the search strategy further by incorporating broader or updated terms and by testing alternative threshold settings to examine the robustness of the findings.

Despite these limitations, the present study still provides directions for further bibliometric inquiry. Future research may expand the data sources, employ additional analytical tools, and refine retrieval and screening strategies in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of BL research in English education.

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