

Effectiveness of Blended Learning in Teaching a Foreign Language in Aspect of Modern Education

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Abstract

This article is investigating interpretation of “blended learning” effectiveness in foreign languages teaching. Authors are noting that this phenomenon has more than a dozen definitions, and presenting a classification of terms used in modern research and practice. Our classification based on possible approaches used in learning process. The importance of using blended learning for developing knowledge, skills and competences in English Language teaching in contemporary educational process is justified in the article. In this connection, the great attention given to radical changes in English Language teaching methodology. With the advent of online education, the relationships between lecturers or tutors and students alter and become more open and cooperating, because students get more involved, interested and motivated in learning foreign languages. At the same time, distance education main components are briefly considered.

Keywords: students; individual; remote; Internet; advantage; educational; information; technology; computer; training; synchronous and asynchronous learning; blended learning; e-learning; traditional learning; face-to-face; online approach

1. Introduction

In the 21st century era, technology has become an integral part in humankind everyday lives. Though some of us might try staying away from it, none of us can deny this fact that it has brought a change to this world, and to our education system. From writing on those to chalk-boards, then to whiteboards, and now the, even more, better ‘smart boards,’ technology has

become our main source of knowledge, information, and teaching.

A typical example of blended learning is a combination of classroom teaching with interactive possibilities of Learning Management Systems (LMS) for communication, knowledge monitoring, and publishing of materials. Integration of traditional classroom teaching with online activities called as blended learning (Graham, 2006). Many researchers noted that blended learning methods

are effective in online learning process with the existence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) providing opportunity to present blended learning in a more efficient way (Singh, 2010; Kabassi et al., 2016).

The palette of pedagogical methods within Blended Learning is multifarious and often depends on specific course subject area. For example, a lecturer can start course of Literature with a well-structured introductory lesson in the classroom and then continue it by posting new materials and assignments for students. A teacher can build the English language course so that all audio exercises including listening, speaking, dialogues are performed in class, but work with texts reading, writing essays, etc. will be organized via LMS as homework. In the chemistry course students can explore theoretical material in virtual format, but laboratory work will be organized as face-to-face exercises in classroom (Chen, 2022).

Mastering the material can be realized via students' individual approaches. Information technologies of distance learning allow conducting classes in a foreign language in a videoconference mode and provide controlled students independent work. Foreign language learner remotely has the opportunity to communicate with various communicants, and this process is not limited to any time or spatial framework, is not set specifically curricula. The reality of communication entails the desire of the learner to communicate more in a foreign language. The mechanism of such communication is an information learning environment based on hypermedia technology, with access to the global Internet.

Blended learning has been described in order to distinguish between this teaching and learning style and conventional or online learning. To explain this, blended learning was described as a

mixture of conventional face-to-face instruction and computer assisted instruction (Bonk & Graham, 2012). In another concept, it was suggested that blended learning has been built from strengths of face-to-face and distance learning. It incorporates all forms of learning as conventional classroom lectures and online learning used in the teaching and learning process (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

Blended learning is an attempt to use the strengths of face to face and e-learning. The term Blended Learning reflects different approaches to learning, namely the use of advantages of eLearning in combination with face-to-face learning, the combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning within online courses as well as the use of different technological solutions (computer, mobile phone, satellite TV, video conferencing, etc.) to implement training activities. Pedagogical approaches to using information technology in the learning process are very diverse: from the modernization of traditional methods to create new methods (González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022).

Importance of blended learning educational discourse and changes resulting by new technologies shows critical trend in accelerated implementation of online and blended learning in high school system, as an efficient management with design of such learning systems is crucial in modern education aspect (Penkov, 2015).

Blended learning model help students with their studies, according to which the proposed model in Fig. 1 is representing major concerns from students and teachers' perspectives as well as social media central points in teaching where all factors are linked together (Adel & Dayan, 2021).

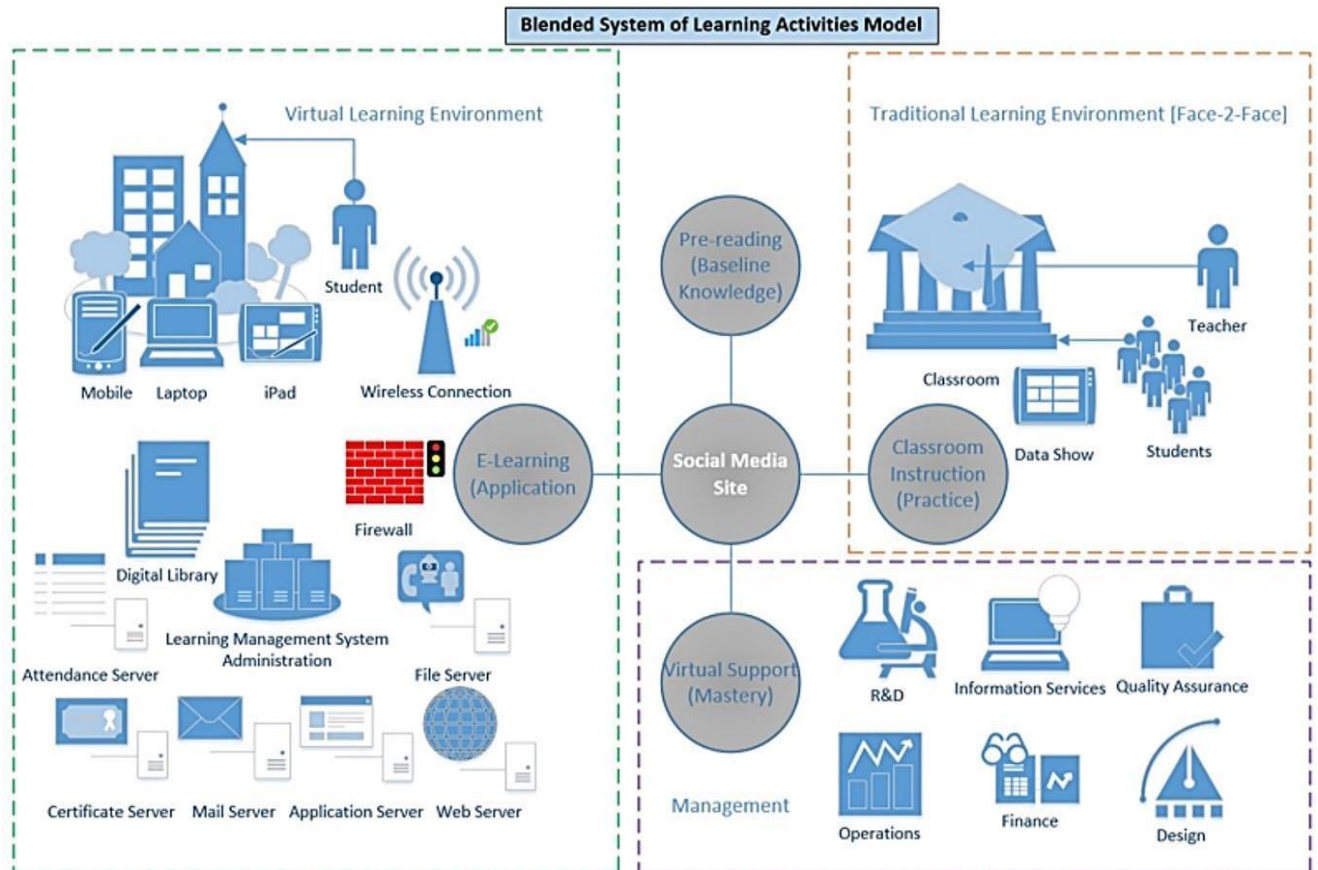


Figure 1. Blended learning system activities model (reproduced from Adel & Dayan, 2021).

It was mentioned that blended learning is learning that is facilitated by effective combination of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles in learning, and based on transparent communication amongst all parties involved with a course (Heinze & Procter, 2004). Graham (2006) confirmed that theory and practice of blended learning make for development of future education model. This way of learning corresponds with trends of modern education such as the Global Network intellectualization in increasing role of social networks in learning etc.

In addition, it was described about multiple stages of blended learning: activity-level blending, course-level blending, and program-level blending with institutional-level blending. Both of these levels uses a mixture of conventional teaching methods and online components, based on the learning form, whether it is an exercise, a course, a curriculum or an organization (Graham, 2006).

Virtual component in blended learning methods reflects methods of classroom teaching and offers the following classification of these

methods: aided instruction, online conference, webinar, and permanent seminar for a group of experts interested in the special topic (Adel & Dayan, 2021). The author believes that in the future the interaction between artificial and human intelligence in the educational and scientific activities will be explored in the frame of blended learning concept.

In addition, with blended learning a foreign language, it is possible to work remotely with course by managing students study time, which is playing crucial role for undergraduates who combine education with work (Savelyeva, 2018). Blended learning can increase students' motivation with non-linguistic specialties in learning a foreign language, as students can choose course modules in their interest, meeting their needs in the professional field (Grishaeva, 2015).

Advantage of blended learning of a foreign language for students showed their ability to form strategies for independent work with other students, leading to autonomy and further increases in ability of independent decision-

making in their professional field (Zhavner & Takhaveeva, 2015).

However, the following Blended Learning application disadvantages have been found in classroom: the Internet technical issues and speed, distraction by non-relevant online content, interruptions in Internet connection, problems with hardware-online tools and insufficient knowledge about the use of computer-tools (Rivera, 2019).

2. Method

UNESCO Institute for Education conducted research in 2003 to 2005, and results show that more than 70% of universities in countries where the Internet is actively developed (Europe, North America, Russia, Asia and the Pacific Region) use blended learning methods. The researchers assert that blended learning provides teachers and students with opportunities to improve the quality of teaching and learning as well as make learning independent, useful, and sustainable.

Probably one of the most advantages of blended learning in the sense of ESL/EF is the inspiration, pleasure and students dedication. Language learners typically expressed their pleasure as all techniques (traditional face-to-face and online) were mixed. The power of blended learning based on the successful use of all instructional methods, which allows students to engage with the language learning process.

In this article, we analyzed blended learning definitions based on the previously published works. Various researchers' opinions discussed on the blended learning effectiveness in the context of modern education, teaching foreign language to students including their attitudes towards blended learning in the context of the English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

3. Results

Report presented by Liu (2013) looked at the efficacy of blended learning in undergraduate English writing at a major university in Beijing, China. The purpose of the research was to examine many facets of blended learning, such as course design, curriculum presentation, student engagement and classroom evaluation. The class in which the study was conducted included 90 minutes of classroom meetings each

week and one more online hour after the class. Based on teacher reflection and student assessment of the course, it was observed that students greatly respected the use of a blended learning approach because it has many benefits, such as motivating self-learning, increasing classroom experiences, reducing communication anxieties, and enhancing students' academic writing skills.

4. Discussion

Students' experience and blended learning efficacy explored as an instructional technique in English as a Second Language (ESL) writing classes (Dallimore et al., 2008). Students agreed that this learning approach is beneficial, inspiring and engaging. In comparison, the use of blended learning has resulted in a higher output of students writing skills. Blended learning use has improved students' enthusiasm and facilitated many essential facets of language learning, such as engagement, autonomy and teamwork.

One of mechanisms for the "blended learning" transition, as a model is an integration of traditional full-time education form and distance learning technologies involving the traditional classroom replacement with various types of educational interaction in electronic environment (Yakovleva, 2017).

The emergency in encouraging English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to use High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in language teaching classrooms was achieved by Bloom's revised taxonomy to assess thinking skills in education (Singh & Shaari, 2019; Rachmawati et al., 2021).

Another research performed by Akbarov (2018) looked at students' attitudes towards blended learning in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The research sample included 162 English language learners. Researchers used a questionnaire containing questions explored the learners experiences and attitudes toward blended learning in comparison with the traditional classroom in EFL classes. The findings of the study showed that majority of EFL students favor blended learning over conventional method in teaching English because it increases their desire to learn and leads to learning process improvement. In other words, they claimed that mixed learning had a direct effect on their learning. Nevertheless, the

participants reported that they prefer to be tested using traditional ways rather than digital ways. The results from Akbarov (2018) have suggested that participants assumed that blended learning use culminated in the improvement of their level of English proficiency. As such, researchers believe that blended learning is an efficient learning mode that can be used in the sense of the EFL to enhance the teaching and learning process.

Some researches proved that providing several online options in addition to traditional classroom training actually will increase what students learn, also the student interaction and satisfaction improved, along with students learning more, in courses that incorporated blended learning.

Looking towards the blended learning benefits and to overcome current limitations and challenges, educational institutions should initiate blended learning strategy incorporation. Also, wherever possible universities and autonomous institutions should also try to adopt blended learning environment and should create require framework and policy for implementation. In current situation of gadget world, Institutions leading with blended learning environment will remain sustainable for long duration with successful academic achievement.

5. Conclusion

The use of blended learning has been related to an increase in student motivation and participation. Combining conventional and online education modes encourages language learners to communicate within and beyond the classroom environments. Various studies have found that this method of teaching promotes language acquisition and increases student interest and interact

In summary, research shows that blended learning can be used to enhance the learning process and outcomes of language learners. English language learners usually show positive perceptions and attitudes toward the use of blended learning as an English teaching approach. These positive perspectives derived from several directions, including, but not limited to, developing students' language skills in interacting and engaging settings, fostering the learning process, and providing opportunities to be independent learners.

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