

D.B. Tugayeva
Zh.D. Nurzhanova
G.N. Dukembay

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian University, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan
(E-mail: DianaT_98@mail.ru, znur73@mail.ru, gulzhannat0609@gmail.com)

Introducing Blended Learning in foreign language teaching

Abstract. *This article demonstrates the effectiveness of the technology of using blended learning in foreign language teaching, as well as determines the main directions of the methodology. In addition, this scientific article includes the necessary tools and ways of applying them to different learning practices, including the impact of the method on the four main skills of students, namely reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Presently, technological prosperity suggests unique opportunities for educators to assimilate online materials into long-established classrooms, transforming intellectual exchange process into more thought-provoking and purposeful one. The authors of the article suggest that students use their self-determination in language acquisition: they can indeed integrate into the expressive environment of different cultures and features of the target language.*

Keywords: *Blended learning technologies, foreign language teaching, web tools, methods.*

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Introduction

Blended learning is an educational technology, combining learning with face-to-face teacher's participation with online learning and elements of self-learning path, time, place, and pace of learning, including the integration of learning experience. The process of guidance with an instructor is a crucial part of blended learning. The instructor illustrates to learners a model of thinking, self-behavior and ways of building relationships.

As an outcome of the application of blended learning, the educator frees up time for creativity, energetic lessons and self-analysis. Moreover, the pupils develop long-term subject and personal competencies.

First, the implementation of digital educational resources is a basic and essential component of blended learning. They have

several characteristics from electronic media, which differentiate them from traditional printing publications and supplies them with some important advantages [1].

Due to the mentioned benefits of digital resources, completely new didactic characteristics are needed:

- A range of styles of presentation of educational knowledge;
- Diversity and changeability;
- Interactivity;
- Adaptability and flexibility [2].

Traditional features, such as scientific character, structure, and systematic presentation of scholar knowledge can be continued with digital academic resources and web services:

- Learning management systems (such as LMS, Moodle, Edmodo)
- Digital collections of learning objects (or instance, test designer 1C)

- Tools for communication and feedback (Skype, Google-chat, Vebinar.ru are great examples)

- Tools for collaboration (for instance, Word Online, Google Docs)

- Tools for creating communities (various social networks, such as Facebook, VKontakte

- Educational activity planning tools (electronic journals and organizers are major examples) [3].

Undoubtedly, a shift in teaching style is one of the major signs of shift while introducing blended learning. The work of educators comprises methodological techniques aimed at the beneficial use of technology and the extension of the data and educational surrounding. Currently, teaching technologies aimed at cultivating higher-level thinking abilities, life, career, and work-related skills and problem-solving experience are required and supported (some skills to mention are collective interaction, cooperation, self-learning, and mutual learning). Therefore, in blended learning, the experience of developing and sharing digital academic means is crucial [4].

The implementation of blended learning technology places high requirements on educators, such as:

- High competence of ICT (Information and Communication Technology), experienced command of different electronic tools; including social network, communication services, online collaboration, research management systems;

- The capacity to create one's pedagogical content, since existing data resources do not necessarily meet the requirement of modern highly competitive environment;

- The capacity to distinguish the academic process, considering the features of each pupil [5].

The establishment of blended learning requests an educator to spend more time and diligence than during traditional training work, which was used for centuries before. One of the major definite prevention of blended learning implementation is the lack of a teacher's psychological readiness to shift their role from a content-giver to a guide. Undoubtedly, the introduction of blended learning as a novelty

brings to several shifts in self-determination and the style of how pupils and educators cooperate. Foremost, the learner receives a space of liberty and commitment in which one learns how to make a competent choice and take accountability for its outcome. Simultaneously, the educator commences to operate in new roles a major shift from being a translator to becoming a tutor can be observed. Therefore, the educational surrounding becomes the main tool of the teacher, where the boundaries between the classroom space and the online space become indistinct [6].

From the technical perspective, the background for the implementation of blended learning is the use of computers, which can be digital classrooms, computers in the school libraries or students' personal devices. However, it should be outlined that blended learning does not require the availability of a device for each pupil simultaneously. Despite that, the "1:1" and "BYOD" models are broadly used in blended learning (which are one student per one device and bring your device models respectively) [7].

It should be considered that information resources (especially digital), which are used in the blended learning, should have a high level of diversity, which will allow to choose educational content according to features of each student. Additionally, the tasks exploited must ensure a variety of activity forms of operating with educational content (research of the given information, mini-studies, project works, games, dialogues, discussions and debates) [8].

As a consequence of the research of blended learning, it can be assured to highlight the following profits, bounded with the features of the use of digital learning resources:

- Boundless approach to educational and other types of data posted on electronic media and in the online setting (including in the format of web courses); in blended learning, the educator discontinues to be the only source of knowledge, moreover, the diversity of data received by the learner gives opportunity for him to form different skills in dealing with them;

- The capacity to adjust the content and technology of teaching, allowing fulfilling the educational requirements of almost every pupil.

- The clarity and comprehension of the evaluation system, particularly while the mark is given on the basis of electronic tasks with automatized check, and the educator's subjective view does not affect the evaluation;

- The capacity to trace the educational process with different functionalities [9].

Currently, the number of such integrated technologies, fully or partly covering the school curriculum was calculated. They vary from ready-packaged online spaces to flexible tools that an educator can supplement and reorganize.

Commonly, hybrid technologies do not depend on inventive discoveries. Instead, they attentively consider already existing developments that were upgraded due to the development of

technological tools, for instance to accelerate the procession of data. To receive the most effective result, the following important factors should

be considered. Firstly, according to research conducted by scientists from different countries, the biggest impact on the capacity of education ensures the capacity of feedback. Consequently, providing each pupil with a profound feedback allows improving their general academic results. For instance, by observing the lesson conducted

by an educator in the front, it can be easily noticed that ideally pupils receive one or two feedbacks during the whole class, and even the most active of them do not receive responses often enough. Therefore, diverse technologies of separation, dividing learners into smaller groups and operating in an online space with qualified feedback can significantly enhance the capacity

of learning outcomes. For example, adaptive web space provides pupils with new tasks, considering the errors they made, which is not widely possible for an educator in a class with 30-35 students [10].

Presently, there are various blended learning models; however, not all of them are evenly beneficial for learners. On the one hand, models which consider only online education with little interaction of the educator, give results only with highly motivated pupils. Apart from that, if the model does not involve the project work as an obligatory task, the student does not obtain adequate experience of applying

a new knowledge, and due to lack of group work, applicable skills are not established. Accordingly, when implementing the model of blended learning, all components of the selected technology should be considered in order to get accomplished outcomes [11].

It is necessary for blended learning to combine elements of online environment with students' control of their ways, time, space and places of learning process. This is the reason why not any use of the computer or a tablet in class is an appropriate blended learning.

In conclusion, the structure of blended learning varies, as there are multiple ways and forms of managing blended learning. The Clayton Christensen Institute has distributed more than 40 blended learning models, even though not all of them are evenly beneficial. Consequently, in the most advantageous models there is presence of personalization, the development of individual commitment for their growth, the transition of each pupil to receive new knowledge only after the mastering of the previous material was confirmed. On this account, collective practice-oriented project works have a major influence on mixed learning [12].

Methods

The essential objective of our research is to fully demonstrate the strengths of implementing Blended Learning in educating English and to confirm its benefits on four major abilities of speech by experimental outcome. The survey group composes of second year Bachelor's degree pupils from Eurasian Humanitarian Institute, Nur-Sultan. The participators were chosen by suitable testing evaluation method. The members of this research were separated into two groups. Each of the groups was taught different teaching techniques, that is, for the investigational group, blended method was implemented while for the monitoring group, an established teaching technique was utilized. The collective amount of pupils was 15 in each group. The content of the English language information was inspected, and the learning objectives were distinguished. The accomplishment assessment was demonstrated to

Outcomes

Table – 1

Pre-evaluation outcomes

	Reading segment outcomes %	Speaking segment outcomes %	Writing segment outcomes %	Listening segment outcomes %
1. Investigational group	41/100	55/100	44/100	50/100
2. Monitoring group	44/100	50/100	40/100	52/100

both groups in accordance with English language program and methodology of teaching. In the investigational group, pupils were enlightened about Blended Learning and they were instructed how to utilize web learning.

To evaluate both the level of the pupils and their advancement, they were handed assignments at the beginning and the end of the study. The assignments involved 4 components related to each capacity element from their program books. The primary assignment was handed as pre-evaluation to the members. With a purpose to realize the pupils’ abilities in 4 major components knowledge, a post-evaluation of skills advancement was produced. This assignment comprised identical content but contrasting elements

Considering the pre-evaluation outcomes, which can be observed from “table – 1”, the pupils in the investigational and monitoring groupings were not perceived remarkably contrasting between counts and are equivalent to the extent with no visible contrast in the pre-evaluation, with the lowest 2% of gap in listening segment, and the biggest 5% of gap in speaking segment.

As it can be noticed from the “table – 2” there is a considerable contrast between post-

evaluation accomplishment totals of pupils in the investigational grouping and the monitoring grouping of pupils. In accordance with the examination of the “table - 2”, it can be mentioned that two separate educational techniques resulted in distinction in outcomes of two groupings of pupils, and that Blended Learning contributes to higher mastery of 4 skills from learning action.

In accordance with the outcomes of the practical research work and considerations mentioned above, it can be easily noticed that the realization of Blended Learning is able to advance the language competence of the pupils. During the practical research work, pupils from the investigational group were guided using various educational platforms and software applications as additional material sources to the traditionally established face-to-face lecture instructions. After completing diverse interactive assignments, group activities and individual works, the pupils were supplied with the educator’s profound feedback through the online applications, which were in use during the experiment.

Predominantly, the results demonstrated that both the guide and the learners reacted affirmatively to Blended Learning and it was proposed that the blended technique is indeed

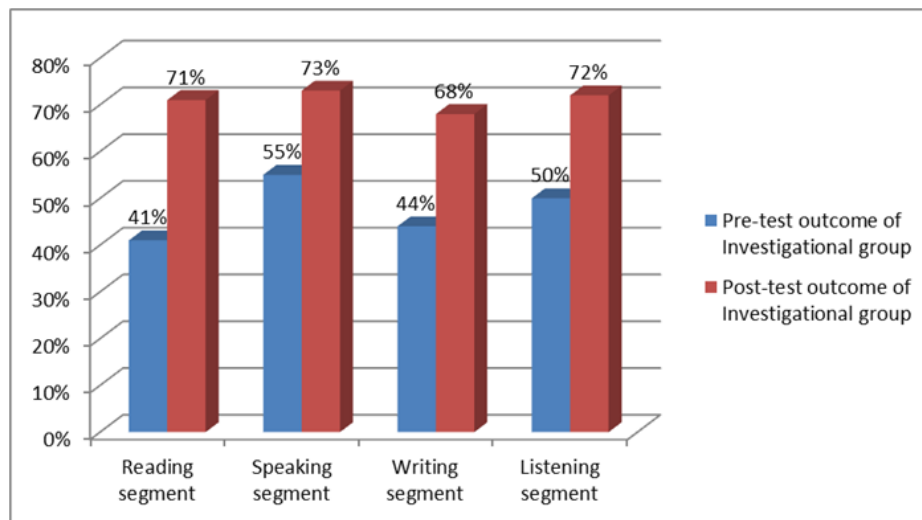
Table – 2

Post-evaluation outcomes

	Reading segment outcomes %	Speaking segment outcomes %	Writing segment outcomes %	Listening segment outcomes %
1. Investigational group	71/100	73/100	68/100	72/100
2. Monitoring group	52/100	59/100	48/100	62/100

Diagram-1

Pre-test/Post-test outcome of Investigational group



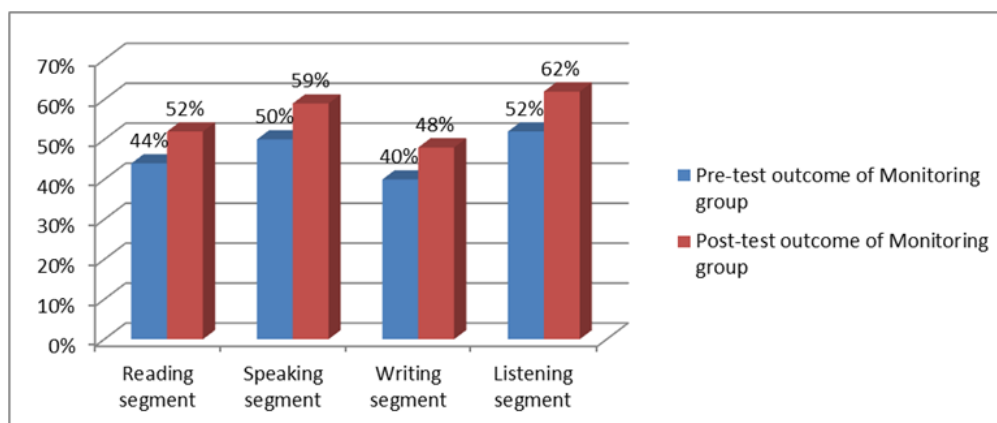
an educational technology with a great potential, in order to foster acquaintance of valuable knowledge in a foreign language. The majority of the advancement of the pupils' outcome was achieved with the help of highly engaged activities and assignment, which greatly supported the pupils' desire to learn and their curiosity in the subject. As a consequence, the learners were able to cooperate in a dynamic way during the whole experimental period.

After finishing the experimental practice work, the pupils shared with benefits and drawbacks of the Blended Learning from their points of view. Some of the features as encouragement for speaking, challenging modern techniques,

group debates, discussions, interactive games, and problem-solving tasks can be considered as one of the benefits. Furthermore, the real-life communication and practical language use were benefitting the other abilities as well, such as listening, reading, and writing. Speaking about the drawbacks of the blended technique, the pupils mentioned the less effective in times when it requires more time to finish every chapter, due to each pupil's individual speed of acquiring knowledge. This situation can be explained with the fact, that each pupil has his unique characteristics and abilities in the process of understanding new information. Some pupils required more time to perceive the language by

Diagram-2

Pre-test/Post-test outcome of Monitoring group



listening to the conversation while presenting useful skills during oral presentations.

As it is clearly illustrated in the diagram-1 and diagram-2 above, the percentage of the pupils' outcomes rise among the investigational group altered from 18% in speaking segment, to the rise of writing segment outcome in 24%. Simultaneously, there was a smaller increase in all segments from the Monitoring group, with 8% rise in the Writing and the Reading segments, and 10% in the Listening segment.

Consequently, the implementation of the Blended Learning and web-based tasks in particular, is highly required in order to advance learners' language capabilities. Taking into consideration everything mentioned above, it becomes clear that Blended Learning should be used as an alternative technique or activities in English classrooms instead of traditionally established system.

In the table-3 beyond, there are demonstrated major benefits, and process of implementing it with some difficulties which may occur during the shift. The process of education was constructed due to the lesson plan, pupils' studying speed, settled time, practices, technological equipment of classrooms and availability of gadgets among the pupils. Throughout the experimentation, there were selected a mix of station rotation and flipped classroom.

Conclusion

In accordance with the post-research results, there were principal differences between the two groups. This can be explained due to the fact that the pupils from the investigational group were taught grammatical and functional rules more profoundly and practically, in comparison with the established manner of providing the information. As a consequence, these pupils had a more thorough experience while doing practical and communicative assignments. In comparison with the fact that the investigational group rose in reading comprehension by 30%, from 41% to 71%; the reading outcomes of the monitoring group improved only by 8%, rising from 44% to 52% respectively. The outcomes of both groups demonstrated that there were considerable advancements in pupils' reading capabilities after being taught according to the blended learning technique.

To summarize, our research work illustrated that the implementation of Blended Learning in teaching foreign languages had a positive impact on the four main skills, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Moreover, the blended technology had a beneficial effect in pupils' motivation to acquire new knowledge, desire to cooperate with each other and willingness to be actively engaged during both groups works and individual assignments.

Table-3

Implementation progress of the research comprised of a 2-week period.

Strengths of using blended learning in FLT	Model of implementation	Obstacles which may appear
It raises the amount of time pupils are actively interested in learning as well the educator's capacity to guide each pupil on personal path.	Educator-led station	Difficulty with ensuring an interactive class
It enables educators to speedily and successfully get involved	Content based station	Lack of web platforms for implementing Blended Learning in the current educational resources of KZ
It ensures more time throughout the day for responsiveness which is adequate for each pupil.	Collaborative work station	No major obstacles appeared

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Д.Б. Тугаева, Ж.Д. Нуржанова, Г.Н. Дүкембай

Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразиялық ұлттық университеті, Нұр-Сұлтан, Қазақстан

Шетел тілін оқытуда аралас оқыту технологиясын енгізу

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақала негізінен аралас оқытуды шетел тілін оқытуда қолдану технологиясының тиімділігін көрсетумен бірге әдістеменің негізгі бағыттарын анықтайды. Сонымен қатар, бұл ғылыми мақала әртүрлі оқу тәжірибелерінде қажетті құралдарды және оларды қабылдау тәсілдерін, соның ішінде әдістеменің оқушылардың төрт негізгі дағдыларына, яғни: оқу, жазу, сөйлеу және тыңдау дағдыларына әсерін қамтиды. Қазіргі кезде технологиялық өркендеу тәрбиешілерге интернеттегі материалдарды ежелден қалыптасқан сыныптарға сіңірудің ерекше мүмкіндіктерін ұсынады, интеллектуалды алмасу процесін ой қозғаушы және мақсатқа сай етіп өзгертеді.

Нәтижесінде, мақала авторлары оқушылар тілді меңгеру барысында өзін-өзі анықтай алады: олар әр түрлі мәдениеттер мен мақсатты тілдің ерекшеліктерін әсерлі ортаға кіріктіре алады деп болжайды.

Түйін сөздер: аралас оқыту технологиялары, шет тілін оқыту, веб-құралдар, әдістер.

Д.Б. Тугаева, Ж.Д. Нуржанова, Г.Н. Дүкембай

Евразийский национальный университет им. Л.Н.Гумилева, Нур-Султан, Казахстан

Внедрение технологии смешанного обучения в преподавании иностранных языков

Аннотация. В данной статье демонстрируется эффективность технологии использования смешанного обучения в преподавании иностранных языков. Описываются особенности методики, инструменты

и способы применения в различных учебных практиках, включая влияние метода на четыре основных навыка учеников, а именно: чтение, письмо, говорение и аудирование. В настоящее время технологическое процветание дает преподавателям уникальные возможности для усвоения онлайн-материалов в учебных кабинетах, придавая процессу интеллектуального обмена содержательный и целенаправленный характер.

В заключении авторы предполагают, что данный подход поможет ученикам интегрироваться в другую культурную среду.

Ключевые слова: смешанные технологии обучения, обучение иностранным языкам, веб-инструменты, методы.

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Information about authors:

Тугаева Д.Б. – **корреспонденция үшін автор**, Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университетінің «Шетел тілі: екі шетел тілі» мамандығының I курс магистранті, Нұр-Сұлтан, Қазақстан.

Нуржанова Ж.Д. – педагогика ғылымдарының кандидаты, Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университетінің «Шетел тілдері теориясы және тәжірибесі» кафедрасының доценті, Нұр-Сұлтан, Қазақстан.

Дүкембай Г.Н. – филология ғылымдарының кандидаты, Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университетінің «Шетел тілдері теориясы және тәжірибесі» кафедрасының доценті, Нұр-Сұлтан, Қазақстан.

Tugayeva D.B. – **Corresponding author**, The 1st year Master's student in Foreign language: two foreign languages at L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

Nurzhanova Zh.D. – Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Department of Theory and Practice of Foreign Languages, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

Dukembay G.N. – Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, Department of Theory and Practice of Foreign Languages, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.