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**SUPPLEMENTAL BLENDED LEARNING FOR
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

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Abstract

Blended learning is a popular trend in contemporary education. It is one of the most effective technologies for English language teachers, because e-learning is not yet perfect, and traditional learning is no longer efficient enough. This time-saving technology becomes effective for both linguistic and non-linguistic specialties. The present-day study was conducted to develop the structure of a university professional English language course, which combines face-to-face classroom activities, and computer-mediated and Internet activities. The idea of blended course developed in this paper is based on the use of traditional professionally oriented textbook for classroom learning supplemented with interactive electronic grammar textbook for out-of-class activities. To assess the effectiveness of the course a students' questionnaire about the specifics of the use of an electronic textbook was developed. The participants were 30 undergraduate students who participated for course credit. It was revealed that the use of an electronic grammar textbook as a part of a blended learning course is feasible and approved because out-of-class grammar learning helps to save time for speaking skills practicing. The automatic checking of tasks provided by e-textbook promotes the individualisation of education. The possibility to work with e-textbook any time anywhere promotes the democratisation of education which is connected with the possibility of self-organisation of education. The results of the research indicated that the use of blended learning technology helps to improve progress in studies, and is useful for both teachers and students.

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1. Introduction

The term “blended learning” appeared in the late 1990s. Initially, several terms were used in the research literature: blended learning, hybrid learning, technology-mediated instruction, mixed-mode instruction, etc. However, most well-established and widely spread blended learning has become extensive.

Blended learning becomes a popular trend in contemporary education. The specifics of blended learning was considered by several researchers see e.g. (Aleksandrova & Pushina, 2018; Andreyeva, Rozhdestvenskaya, & Yarmakhov, 2016; Banyen, Viriyavejakul, & Ratanaolam, 2016; Bryan & Volchenkova, 2016; Ceylan & Elitok Kesici, 2017; Dziuban, Graham, Moskal, Norberg, & Sicilia, 2018; Ilina, 2017; Kintu, Zhu, & Kagambe, 2017; Krykova & Mogunova, 2017; Obiedat et al., 2014; Orlova, 2008; Skakunova, 2017; Smirnova, 2017; Yastrebova, Kravtsova, & Sosedova, 2017, etc.).

Blended learning can be connected with the combination of different learning formats: synchronous and asynchronous; full-time and distance; traditional and digital etc. Different types of blended learning can be distinguished see e.g. (station rotation; lab rotation; remote; flex; the “Flipped Classroom”; individual rotation; project-based; self-directed; inside-out; outside-in; supplemental; and mastery-based blended learning) (TeachThought Staff, 2018).

In this paper, the specifics of Supplemental Blended Learning is described. In this model, students complete either entirely online work to supplement their day-to-day face-to-face learning, or entirely face-to-face learning experiences to supplement the learning gained in online courses and activities (TeachThought Staff, 2018).

Blended learning is one of the most popular and effective technologies because e-learning is not yet perfect, and traditional learning is no longer efficient enough. This technology becomes effective for both English language teachers of linguistic and non-linguistic specialties

2. Problem Statement

The difficulty of foreign language learning is underestimated. This fact causes the limitation of time for face-to-face classroom activities. The problem is compounded by the growing number of students in groups of non-linguistic specialties which causes the reduction of time for developing students’ speaking skills and communication skills. One of the ways to solve this problem is to develop a blended learning course. When designing a blended learning course, it is important to choose an appropriate structure of the course and relevant teaching materials.

3. Research Questions

The first question of the research is “What traditional and electronic learning tools to combine to design a successful course?”. The second question is “What teaching materials to use to organise an effective blended lesson?”. After the course approval, it is necessary to estimate the effectiveness of the course in order to reveal its advantages and disadvantages both for students and for teachers.

4. Purpose of the Study

The present study was conducted to develop and assess the effectiveness of a supplemental blended learning course, based on the combination of traditional Business English textbook and electronic grammar textbook, which was introduced to the first year undergraduate students.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Designing a supplemental blended learning course

A supplemental blended learning course described in this paper is based on the use of a traditional professionally oriented textbook for classroom learning supplemented with electronic grammar textbook for out-of-class activities.

The interactive online e-textbook was chosen because it can be easily combined with different editions of professional English language textbooks provided by different publishing houses (Oxford, Cambridge, Longman, etc.). The interactivity of e-textbook is based on the fact that both the teacher and the student can comment on the tasks, exchange information and enter into correspondence (Chepyzhov, Aleksandrova, & Timokhov, 2018).

An interactive online electronic textbook “*Basic English grammar with exercises*” (Aleksandrova & Yegorova, 2018) was developed for supplemental blended learning described in this paper.

In contrast to the preparation of a printed textbook, when creating an e-textbook, the author needs to create a database of answers for the exercises which have keys for self-control. Automatic calculation of the percentage of correct and incorrect answers also allows the teacher to save time significantly when assessing assignments that students completed both in class and out of class. Having a percentage based grading system for each type of assignment, the teacher can reduce time on evaluating the individual work of students and pay more attention to the organisation of the classroom activities. Thus, e-textbook provides the transparency of knowledge assessment by using the developed assessment criteria and auto-checking of tasks.

The e-textbook described in this paper includes the most popular grammar topics: the word order, the verbal tenses, modal verbs, the noun (plurals, articles), the adjective/adverb (degrees of comparisons, adjective order), prepositions, the conditional mood, the subjunctive mood, the imperative mood, the passive voice, the direct and reported speech, the non-finite forms of verb, complex object/subject. The topics can be chosen in accordance with the needs of the students. The electronic textbook contains the tables with grammar rules provided with explanations in Russian, exercises, and tests.

The author of the e-textbook is given a possibility to update and correct the materials when it is necessary.

5.2. Assessing the effectiveness of the course

To assess the effectiveness of the course a students' questionnaire about the specifics of the use of electronic textbook was developed. The participants were 30 undergraduate students of jurisprudence faculty who participated for course credit. The students were offered to answer the following questions: 1. How effective was the course (evaluate from 1 to 7)? 2. How informative was the course (evaluate from 1

to 7)? 3. How difficult was to combine traditional and electronic textbooks when learning (choose “easy”, “Ok”, “very difficult”)? 4. What advantages of using electronic textbook can you note? 5. What disadvantages of using electronic textbook can you note? 6. What format of textbook do you prefer (“traditional”, “electronic”)?

6. Findings

6.1. Students point of view of the blended course

It was revealed that in most cases only positive aspects of supplemental blended learning course were noted by the students. All the students estimated the effectiveness and informativeness by choosing grades from 5 to 7. About 90% of students noted that the level of information in the textbook was “Ok” (10% “easy”).

Most students pointed the following advantages of using e-textbook: 1) interface usability; 2) possibility of use e-textbook anytime anywhere; 3) individual checking of tasks; 4) quick checking of tasks; 5) the possibility to work in an individual mode.

Interface usability was noted by 83,3% of the participants. The convenience of the interface and the easiness of navigation are considered as the main criteria when selecting digital tools. To work with e-textbook students can use computers, laptops, tablets, iPad, iPhone, Android, and Windows devices.

The *possibility of use e-textbook any time anywhere* was noted by 93,3% of the participants. Nowadays, the smartphone has become an integral part of life. The fact that the textbook is “always with you” allows the students to better perform a greater number of tasks.

Individual checking of tasks was noted by 60% of the participants. The students noted the convenience of performing tasks that have keys for self-control. Individual checking makes the learning process less stressful and more comfortable.

A *quick check of tasks* was noted by 73% of the participants. Students receive information about correct and incorrect answers immediately. This option gives the opportunity to analyse the results of the work and helps to learn the material better.

Possibility to work in an individual mode was noted by all the participants. When using an electronic textbook, the students are able to perform tasks at an individual pace. They can choose time to work with the textbook, and do not need to wait for other students and the teacher to check the answers.

When informing about disadvantages, students pointed out that they would prefer to have both versions of the grammar textbook (the electronic one and the printed one).

6.2. Teachers point of view of the blended course

The teachers, who approved the course, were asked to point out the advantages and disadvantages of the blended course. Three main advantages were distinguished.

The *first advantage* is that the students can be given more knowledge and information over the same period of time.

The *second advantage* is that the blended learning course is time-consuming. It is caused by the use of the electronic textbook. The teacher can save time on checking the tasks, and monitoring the statistics. Verification of tasks in e-textbook is performed by the system automatically (the teacher sees

the percentage of correct and incorrect answers) which simplifies the process of evaluating the task see Figure 1.

I. Write these nouns in the plural form

Выполнено 10 заданий:

Правильно - 8 ответов

Неправильно - 2 ответа

ИТОГО - 80% правильно

1. state	states	6. embargo	embargoes
2. university	universities	7. MD	MDs
3. veto	vetoes	8. thief	thieves
4. monarchy	monarchies	9. standby	standbys
5. life	lives	10. branch	branches

Figure 01. Automatic verification

If the percentage based criteria of assessment are established, it possible to use an automatic check of the student's individual work (see Figure 2).

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Поставлено 51 оценка: 5, 4, 5, 2, 5, 5, 5, 5, 4, 5, 5, 4, 5, 4, 5, 5, 5, 4, 5, 3, 4, 5, 4, 5, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 5, 5, 5, 5, 2, 5, 5, 5, 4, 5, 4, 5, 3

Профиль

Книжная полка

Активировать книгу

Мои заказы

Мои ВУЗы

Мои PDF-книги

Мои группы

Сообщения

Уведомления

Мои закладки

Курс

Занятие

Задание

Тип

Статус

Оценка

Курс	Занятие	Задание	Тип	Статус	Оценка
Basic English Grammar with Exercises	UNIT I. Word order / Порядок слов	I. For each selected word choose from 1 to 5 correspondingly	Вставить пропущенные слова	Завершено	5
Basic English Grammar with Exercises	UNIT I. Word order / Порядок слов	II. Put the words in the correct order and write the sentences (no dot)	Вставить пропущенные слова	Завершено	5
Basic English Grammar with Exercises	UNIT I. Word order / Порядок слов	III. Make up questions or exclamatory sentences of the following words. Put ? / ! in the end	Вставить пропущенные слова	Завершено	5

Figure 02. Automatic assessment

The teacher has access to the general statistics of each student and the whole group. This creates additional benefits when setting the final grade. Knowing about the features of control over the implementation of tasks, students become more organised and disciplined.

The *third advantage* is that the combination of traditional and digital tools helps to motivate the representatives of the digital generation and improve their school results.

7. Conclusion

The supplemental blended learning model is an effective educational tool. This form is convenient for both students and teachers. A modern electronic textbook allows using supplemental blended learning model with maximum efficiency. Blended learning contributes to the intensification of the educational process, increases its effectiveness by creating motivation among students. The use of blended learning model helps to develop the creativity of the students and the teachers who try new forms, contents, methods, and ideas. The combination of traditional learning and e-learning allows creating blended learning university programs which can be successfully applied for both linguistic and non-linguistic students. The combined model is seen as an effective way to modernise the English classes and preserve the continuity of traditional and innovative approaches.

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