APPLICATION OF BLENDED LEARNING IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

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A B S T R A C T	K E Y W O R D S
The present research paper is focused to examine the value of the application of Blended Learning in education as a method for teaching and learning Foreign Languages at university level. The framework took place during the fall semester using 15 students who study at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In the study, it is used the quantitative techniques for the collection of data and its analysis. It was decided that applying the integration of blended and face to face learning can be effective to setup foreign languages classes.	Blended learning, teaching, learning, learning style, autonomous learning, intrinsic motivation, interaction, scaffolding, Moodle platform, collaborative teaching.

Introduction

Teaching and learning a foreign language is not an easy task to accomplish as it takes into account the challenges of all kinds that both teachers and students have to face from the beginning of the teaching and learning process of this honorable discipline. Applying blended learning is the key to teach English as a foreign language that integrates virtual learning with a wide range of online interactive tasks for improving students' not only technical skills but also effects on their achievement which guarantees a bright future. Online education with the use of technology becomes an important tool for traditional teaching methods. Ideally, it is commonly seen in the classroom where teachers have changed the way of implementing new technologies leading to new ways of working by integrating face to face and online learning. In education setting thanks to the technological resources traditional materials are replaced by online materials to offer greater knowledge as well as opportunities for learners. It is significant that employing technological resources in blended learning gives an advantage of improving language skills. At the moment most of teachers chose teacher-led lessons rather than autonomous learning. They consider that it would be much effective using face to face approach rather

than combining a blended learning approach. In fact, the learning process will be successful if learners are autonomous. Students take their responsibility on their own learning being involved in the learning process. Integration of blended learning can help to evaluate learners quickly by giving washback to their work. That is to say, the teacher collects information without effort because of influence self – learning integration. It is practical for teachers to assess the learner with the help of technology as it does not take much time to provide feedback. That is to say, with the help of technology students can achieve better results not waiting for their paper-based results.

Literature Review

Blended learning plays a significant role to enhance foreign language skills. The implication of blended learning has been proved effective in enhancing foreign language proficiency, but there is lack of willingness of teachers to adopt this technology encouraging the students with a new way of learning. According to Asiri et al. (2012), there are a few obstacles that university administrations frequently encounter while implementing blended learning systems or e-learning programs. By applying blended learning, they take advantage of improving their technical skills. Technical skills encourage learners to be active in the learning process. Students can be engaged with their teachers and other learners in order to collaborate and interact as they are involving in the same activities. Students can be involved in their learning for enhancing academic perspective and satisfaction. They are allowed to ask questions, comments, discuss, and respond to questions out of class time. Every student has its own learning style and preferences in acquiring the language. According to Kaur (2013) "Blended learning offers students to access different materials according to their learning styles" (p.7). For example, weak students have an opportunity to choose between practicing simple tasks online rather than complex ones. It is important to take into consideration the students' level by giving them a choice to choose the right task. Researchers Lopez-Perez et al. (2011) explored the effectiveness of blended learning methodology. The authors also reviewed students' perspectives while analyzing, examining the effectiveness of blended learning. They include that if the more students satisfied with the blended learning their grades will be higher by being satisfied with their learning activities. In addition, motivation plays an important role in achieving better results in the learning process. It is significant to mention that satisfaction and intrinsic motivation in blended learning are correlated with each other. From the researchers' point students who have intrinsic motivation can fulfill the task and assignment consistently. Kaiser (2017) discussed that the project called Ceibal en provides English lessons via videoconferences using a pedagogical model which includes remote teaching, collaborative teaching and blended learning which is useful to strengthen the quality of instruction. Integration of blended learning enhances learner autonomy which enables students to control their learning in three categories including planning, monitoring and evaluating their skills (Sucaromana, 2017). Students take their responsibility on their learning documenting their success and achievement. Savignon (1983) pointed that "communicative competence is based on the cooperation of all the participants" (p.9). Technology can be an important tool for teachers to pursue communicative goals in second language acquisition. Learning the second language is represented not only as a process but also as interpersonal negotiation among language learners. Learners are facilitated by working together on the same task and even results in understanding the task better for not only get enjoyment through collaboration but also improve their creativity and critical thinking. Anderson & Simpson (2004) mentioned that students' satisfaction and engagement can be increased when they build community among other peers. By this

way students can be involved in their learning to enhance academic perspective and satisfaction. According to the researchers in Russia blended learning is an effective model of achieving language proficiency from A1 to B2 level. Model of Blended learning was based on three stages: preparatory, communication and control. In preparatory stage, it is involved independent work through interactive Internet resources. In communication stage, it is suggested to do communicative tasks under the guidance of the teacher while in controlling stage learners do creative and oral tasks. The results of the survey showed the effectiveness of the blended learning model despite the learners' proficiency level.

Methods and Results

The study has applied research method that includes quantitative techniques. It was aimed to take a questionnaire from students who are learning English as a foreign language at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan about their preferences applying online tasks with Moodle platform system to create personalized learning tasks. In the analyses, they were 15 students who asked to respond to one question. The online tasks are used for self -study support and additional tasks for students.
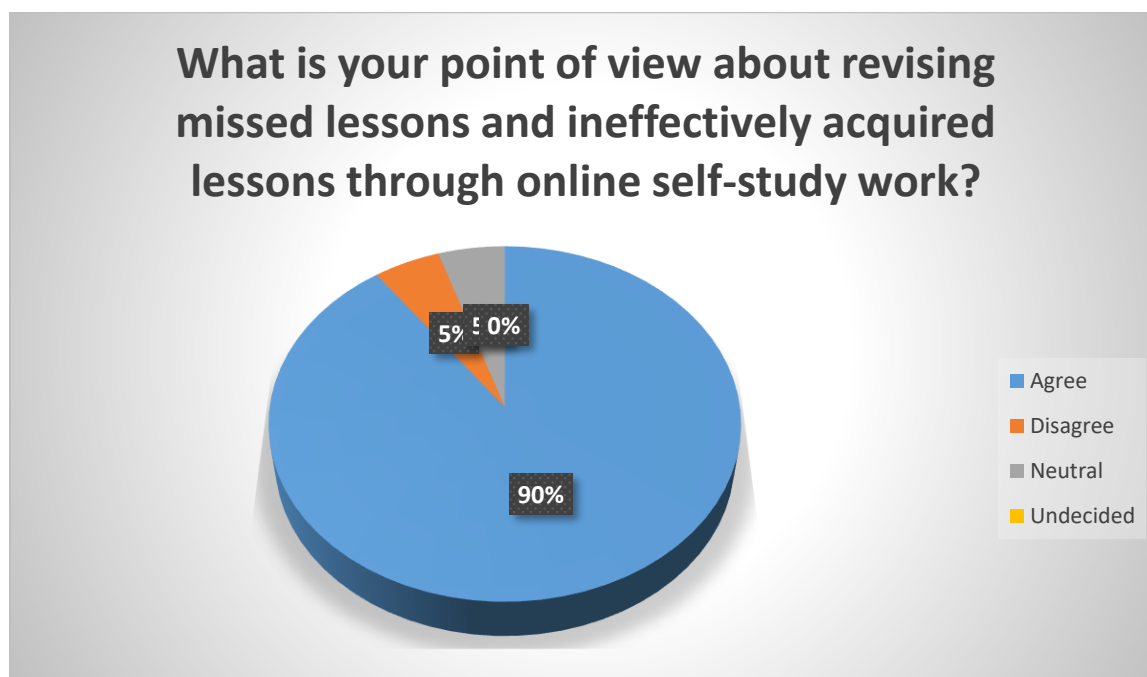
The result of the survey shows that the majority of students 90% agree about blended learning while only 5% of students still disagree about blended learning. They want traditional learning rather than learning languages online. Students who agree noted that self -learning enables them to do self-study support and additional tasks for not lagging behind their peers. Besides, they consider that an online platform is useful for communication with their instructors and other students. While students who disagree about blended learning pointed out that it is challenging for them because of a lack of internet connection and restricted time for online tasks. It is illustrated that only 5% of students are in neutral positions. They are still hesitating over blended or face to face forms of learning. It is significant to mention that the majority of students prefer to integrate blended learning in the learning of foreign languages.

Discussions and Conclusion

Summarizing all finding, this small scale revealed that application of blended learning plays significantly important role in teaching and learning process. Learners can solve their problems without effort. Also, learners can improve communication, critical thinking skills and confidence by collaborating with their teachers and peers inside and outside the classroom. They can confidently ask questions expressing their not understanding by working in teamwork. Learners will be literate in terms of acquiring technical skills. Blended learning will teach independent skills since learners document their own progress.   The aim of blended learning is to increase motivation through online interactive tasks. A teacher can design interactive tasks such as handouts, discussions, texts, writing, reading tasks and quizzes. Learners will be provided with accessing free online resources including e-books, topics that they have a desire to discuss and electronic dictionaries. Each student is not only can share his/her knowledge but also leave comments on each other's work. They can do tasks and assignments at their own pace with the guidance of the teachers. Teachers facilitate learners by providing scaffold in their learning process.   According to Shabani et al. (2010) "After finishing the task by working cooperatively with teachers or peers, they can do the same task individually since their ZPD for completing the task have been increased" (p.2). Teachers play an important role in enhancing learners' knowledge into a high level by avoiding monotonous teaching and trying new learning to make useful for students.

In conclusion, lack of technological resources is growing a problem in terms of leading a teacher-centered approach, demotivation, decreasing knowledge for further success. However, it is important that applying the integration of blended and face to face learning can be effective in education settings although they have a necessity in technological resources and internet connection. Students can recognize that using different virtual tool makes their learning process easier by self -learning integration, online education, increasing intrinsic motivation, developing nature of communication, revising acquired materials which guarantee future prosperity.

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