

Developing a methodology for teaching Russian using blended learning

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Annotation. This article explores the development of a methodology for teaching the Russian language through blended learning approaches. It examines the integration of traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning tools to enhance language acquisition and engagement among students. The study highlights the benefits of blended learning, including flexibility, personalized learning experiences, and increased accessibility. Various pedagogical strategies, assessment methods, and technological resources are discussed to create an effective blended learning environment. The findings aim to provide educators with practical guidelines for implementing this methodology in their language teaching practices.

Key Words: blended learning, Russian language teaching, methodology, pedagogical strategies, online learning, language acquisition, assessment methods, educational technology.

In foreign and Russian literature there are various definitions of blended learning, but there is also no unified interpretation of this term. Let us consider some of them. In a broad sense, blended learning is understood as a combination of different technologies, theories, means and models of learning, etc. In 2001, American Centra (a company specialising in blended learning) was established in the Russian Federation. In 2001, American Centra (a company specialising in e-learning and networking) published an article in which the definition of blended learning is somewhat consistent with the current understanding of the term: blended learning can be described as a training programme that uses more than one mode of knowledge translation in order to optimise learning outcomes and delivery costs.

It is emphasised, however, that initially only learning tools (textbooks, handouts, etc.) were included among the components of blended learning. However, according to scholars, what is important is not the combination of different modes of learning itself, but 20 learning and business outcomes. H.Singh and Ch. Reed proposed a clarifying definition: blended learning focuses on optimising the achievement of learning objectives by applying the 'right' learning technologies according to the 'right' personal learning style to build the 'right' skills in the 'right' person at the 'right' time. It can be observed that such an understanding focuses on the learning objectives rather than on the ways of acquiring knowledge. In addition, the term 'blended learning' was originally interpreted as a combination of traditional classroom learning and electronic learning (E-learning).

In order to improve the effectiveness of blended learning, it is necessary not only to change the tools for transferring knowledge and building skills and competences, but also to constantly monitor and optimise other aspects, so that blended learning can fully prove its advantages over traditional classroom learning and pure online learning.

Translated from DeepL.com (free version) From the perspective of C.R.Graham, in a number of cases the term 'blended learning' is defined so broadly that then almost all forms of learning should be referred to blended learning. The author believes that such an understanding of blended learning does not allow us to understand

its essence in the conditions of modern information society and to determine why blended learning is becoming more and more popular in different countries.

In this study we will be based on a narrow understanding of the term ‘blended learning’, although even here there is no unanimity of approaches. For example, some scholars believe that ‘blending’ refers to the pairing of learning environments: classroom or face to face learning with online learning.

Others see this form of learning as a combination of offline learning and online learning. A number of scholars are of the opinion that blended learning is a combination of learning modalities or learning environments: traditional and e-learning. Some researchers associate blended learning with a set of learning theories such as cognitivism, behaviourism and constructivism, connectivism.

In this study, we are based on the viewpoint that ‘blended learning’ is a hybrid of e-learning and traditional educational resources. As can be seen from the above definitions, most researchers conclude that the main idea of blended learning is to combine the strengths of classroom and distance learning. For example, T. P. Popova and T.A.Nenasheva emphasise that blended learning meets the individual requirements of learners. C. Bonk and C. Graham point out that computer technologies play a central role in the blended learning system.

However, despite the fact that modern technologies occupy an important place in blended learning, it is not quite correct to consider them as a fundamental component. Let us cite, in particular, the position of A.Rossett and her colleagues: ‘blending’ is a combination of formal and informal, techno-oriented and person-oriented, independent and collaborative, directive-oriented and discovery-oriented.

Translated from DeepL.com (free version) It should be noted that some researchers (N.V. Lomonosova, A.A.Lyashenko, M.S. Medvedeva, H.Staker, A.S. Fomina, M. Horn, C.R.Graham; E. Allen et al.) define blended learning as a learning system that has a multi-level hierarchical structure. C.R. Graham, stating that ‘most definitions are simply variations of a few common themes’, defines blended learning as a combination of two systems: traditional face-to-face learning systems and distributed learning systems. The author highlights the main advantages of blended learning: optimisation of learning, increased access/flexibility, and economic benefits. M.S.Medvedeva speaks about the importance of self-learning in the blended learning system, which is considered by the author as ‘a teaching system that combines face-to-face, distance and self-learning, including interaction between the teacher, learner and interactive sources of information, reflecting all inherent components of the learning process (objectives, content, methods, organisational forms, means of learning) functioning in constant interaction with each other, forming a whole’. The researcher notes that in the system of blended learning methodological, administrative, pedagogical, technological support interact. The study of blended learning in Russia has a relatively short history compared to the study of this issue abroad.

Mostly articles and dissertations are devoted to blended learning. There are relatively few monographs on this problem. In the studies of Russian scientists there

are discrepancies in the definition of the concept of ‘blended learning’ and in the interpretation of its main characteristics. There is no term ‘blended learning’ in the Explanatory Dictionary of terms of the conceptual apparatus of informatisation of education. In accordance with GOST R 52653-2006 ‘Information and Communication Technologies in Education. Terms and definitions’, blended learning is understood as “a pedagogical technology that involves the combination of network (online) learning with face-to-face or autonomous learning”. Despite the many definitions of blended learning, there are no fundamental differences between them. The term is often used in Russian pedagogy in a narrow sense, emphasising the presence of an online component and the use of information communication technologies. V.I.Blinov and I.S.Sergeev consider blended learning as an alternation of online/electronic and face-to-face/contact learning formats (‘online + life’), contrasting it with distance learning. From the point of view of A.S.Fomina, blended learning is ‘the organisation of students’ independent work in an electronic environment: in an autonomous LMS and using modern ICT tools that go beyond the software shell used by the university, such as social networks, Google, Yandex, Skype’. A.V.Gvozdeva believes that blended learning is multichannel learning based on the integration of electronic (online) learning through a digital platform with traditional (face-to-face) learning. The definition of blended learning proposed by V.A.Fandey emphasises learner preferences. The author considers blended learning as ‘a combination of face-to-face and distance learning elements, with one of them being the basic one depending on the preferred model’.

Unlike other interpretations, our definition of blended learning emphasises two important points: systematisation, long-term application, flexibility, personalisation and differentiation in the teaching and learning process.

At present, many countries are experiencing a transformation in the model of economic development, with significant changes in the structure of employment and a growing demand in society for new professions and highly skilled interdisciplinary professionals. online learning platform. Students watch them before the lesson and teachers provide online counselling during the timetabled lesson. Live lesson + Video lessons Case study Independent work of learners, provided with a set of didactic means Partially synchronous learning Mixed learning Auditorium learning + Independent learning Auditorium learning + Live lesson Auditorium learning + Video lesson / MOOC 28 The current system of traditional face-to-face teaching of foreign languages is less and less conducive to the formation of professional competences, skills and abilities of learners in accordance with the needs of the information society. This leads to the fact that graduates gradually lose competitiveness in the labour market. Consequently, it is necessary to change the traditional way of teaching a foreign language, to transform the way of knowledge transfer and to focus on the activation of relevant competences. T.P. Popova and T.A. Nenasheva note that blended learning is ‘an effective way to solve the problem of discrepancy between the requirements of modern society and the ability of higher education to meet them’.

L.N. Ruliene also believes that the application of blended learning will allow to resolve the contradictions of the educational process, which are caused by the discrepancy between traditional pedagogical approaches and new educational technologies. We agree with the author that it is also necessary to develop the concept of blended learning based on the integration of effective technologies of e-learning and classroom learning. With the development of social division of labour and increasing specialisation of various industries, significant changes in the structure of employment are taking place. In the course of the study, we collected more than two hundred job adverts which are related to the demand for graduates of non-linguistic specialities. It was found that fluency in a foreign language is no longer enough to find a highly paid job in a speciality, because most employers require from a graduate not only foreign language skills, but also a high level of professional competence in a particular field. Professional competences occupy dominant positions, and foreign language communicative competence gives an additional advantage to specialists of any profile. As practice shows, most graduates of philological faculties spend a lot of time and effort only on learning foreign languages, while students of other specialities are equally capable of communicating in a foreign language, first of all, in the professional sphere. As a result, the design of a foreign language teaching system that includes both language learning and knowledge of a particular speciality, such as economics, medicine, trade relations, technology, etc., is becoming increasingly important. According to a number of researchers, in this context, blended learning is an effective way of solving the problem of mismatch of graduates' knowledge with the socio-economic state of society and ensuring the readiness and ability of graduates to self-realisation. Besides the influence of the problem of graduate employment on the choice of foreign language teaching method, the pandemic caused by 30 COVID-19 coronavirus infection also served as an incentive for the implementation of blended foreign language teaching. In recent years, there has been an active implementation of distance foreign language teaching in the system of higher education in Europe, Asia and the USA.

However, it is only in 2020 that the remote form of teaching started to be widely and long-term used worldwide for the first time. It can be said that the pandemic situation has led to a change in approaches and methods of teaching a foreign language in higher education. A solid experience has already been accumulated in the implementation of e-learning, which has proved to be an effective way to increase the productivity of students. At the same time, distance learning has some weaknesses: insufficient use of didactic possibilities of information technologies, lack of live communication between teacher and students, imperfection of portable devices and ICT, etc. Many researchers emphasise that e-learning is not an effective way to improve students' productivity. Many researchers emphasise that students behave more actively in offline learning than in the digital environment, because in this case there is direct interaction with the teacher and other students, 'such communication can generate amazing ideas and radically change the fate of people'.

However, based on the results of a survey of Chinese students at different levels of education that we conducted in March 2021, we found that students feel as comfortable in an online class as they do in a classroom because they can see the reactions of everyone in the class, which is difficult to imagine in a classroom setting where everyone sits at individual desks. However, the conventional wisdom is that classroom learning is not yet giving way to distance learning. In view of the existing problems, it is obvious that there is a need to change the current system of traditional face-to-face teaching and to combine e-learning and classroom teaching of foreign languages in a flexible way. It is important that blended learning transforms the functions of teacher and learners. It is the learners who become the key participants of the foreign language learning process, and the teachers fulfil the role of an expert or a consultant. It is worth emphasising that under these conditions the main tasks of the teacher do not change. In recent years, a great number of works devoted to blended learning of a foreign language in the system of higher education have appeared. Blended learning has become one of the main trends in reforming foreign language teaching in higher education. According to N.V. Lomonosova, ‘the wide spread of blended learning in the system of modern higher education is dictated by the need to combine traditional teaching with innovative electronic methods.

Many American universities have achieved significant results in blended foreign language teaching. It has been proved that in foreign language teaching the formula ‘online + life’ can be realised in various ways. However, at present, the implementation of blended foreign language teaching in Russian higher education institutions is still at the initial stage. There are no systematic methodological studies and practical recommendations have not been developed, although the effectiveness of blended foreign language teaching has already been confirmed on different scientific platforms. The analysis of the scientific literature on this subject has shown that most of the studies are devoted to the study of the following aspects of blended foreign language teaching:

1. Interpretation of the theoretical and practical foundations of blended learning;
2. Effectiveness of the implementation of blended learning technology;
3. Experimental verification of the effectiveness of blended learning;
4. Development of criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of blended learning;
5. Creation of innovative models of blended learning;
6. Pedagogical design of e-learning course as a component of blended learning;
7. Designing the process of blended learning;
8. Creation of a unified database of educational resources for the implementation of blended learning.

Special attention is paid to the problems of developing methods of improving the learning process with the use of innovative technologies for the system of higher education. With the development of these technologies, the world educational community advocates the promotion of blended learning of foreign language in order

to achieve comprehensive and in-depth integration of ICT and foreign language courses to build a new effective system of foreign language learning.

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