



INTE 2014

Why is blended learning for vocationally oriented language teaching?

Deniz Yalçinkaya

Master of ELT (Eng. Lang. Teaching), Anadolu University, 1991 Selçuk Üniversitesi Yab. Diller Yük. Ok., Kampüs Konya, Turkey.
E-mail: denizyalcinkaya@yahoo.com/dyalcinkaya@selcuk.edu.tr

Abstract

In language education, one of the innovations named blended learning has a great impact on language education today. Blended learning combines traditional education practices with a modern technology based education. We cannot ignore personal differences, the importance of self motivation, and the benefits of computer as a material particularly for the young generations who have been grown-up in a computer and internet world today. Particularly VOCLL can be achieved by blended learning as because the learners may need it after graduation at any age at work. Distance learning is these groups' solution and specialized language teaching is very available by blended learning. There is a pressing need to create vocational training possibilities and methods for students in order to adjust them to the labour market. The blended learning aims at working out an effective model for VOCLT, along with the tools and techniques to facilitate the process.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of the Sakarya University

Keywords: Blended learning, vocationally oriented language teaching, professional development, ICT using.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: 00-000-000-0000
E-mail address: denizyalcinkaya@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

This paper presents the need of blended learning for vocationally oriented language teaching as a guide for the design of effective learning environments to foster learners' growth related to specialized language learning especially after graduation. In the process of foreign language education, the innovative method of e-learning has been designed for modern curricula and implemented in education sector nowadays. Accessible online learning is a great opportunity almost in every field of study. We are living in a world of technology today and it is inevitable to use the advantages of high technology in the field of information and communication. As far as we consider about the new generations who has a high capacity on using the high technology as an inseparable part of their education and work, it is considerable to use the benefits of ICT. This is the one side of the medal, the other side is the need of specialized language teaching for professions which is called vocationally oriented language teaching is more pressing then the method.

Obviously, it is seen that foreign language teaching is generally based on improving basic language skills such as reading, writing, and speaking and listening in the target language accurately and fluently. The current curriculums designed according to the traditional methods have ignored the need of learning language for work. After university, graduated students cannot use a foreign language (which are European languages in many countries of the world) sufficiently when they attend to a real work for their profession. They are trained to use a language for daily conversation or discuss on a topic or comprehend a text for example a newspaper article or so on, at school according to the school curriculum.

However, the basic language teaching is halfnesS for the graduated students who are engaged to a job after university. This brings a great need for specialized language teaching for work. We call it as vocationally oriented language learning as well.

The need for vocationally oriented language learning is a great need for language learners. It is known that a language has different terminology and patterns for each field of profession. So Business English and Tourism English or English for Mechanic engineering are all different from each other. In every field of profession the target language must be practiced apart from basic daily use of it. For instance, the learners need to use technical English terminology if they are educated on Electrical Engineering to follow the literature and the innovations in their field for their future career. The importance of vocationally oriented language teaching is noticed by a lot of actors in education sector.

Another aspect of evaluation that remains on our agenda is the development of instruments measuring the language competencies required for occupational use. Here, once again we have much to learn from the Europeans.(Richard D. Lambert, Autumn,2001)

2-Why is blended learning?

Vocationally oriented language learning can be taken place in school education curriculum however school time will not supply the demand so besides school education we need to plan another plan for foreign language education after graduation. Learners should be able to keep studying language after they are attended to a job. This suits with the concept of lifelong learning as well. Additionally adult learning will be possible with this new way of learning. Today a lot of FLT authorities and organs stress on need of innovative methods on FLL especially for adults.

Briefly Vocationally oriented language learning is required a new innovative model of learning called **Blended Learning** which combines the advantages of e-learning and traditional learning (classroom teaching). The flexibility of e-learning is linked with the social component of face to face teaching.

In this method old and new instructional methods are blended more technically .According to Clark's *Four Learning Architectures* provide a learning theory rationale for composing a "blended learning" strategy.

- **Receptive** (information acquisition),
- **Directive** (response strengthening),
- **Guided Discovery** (knowledge construction), and
- **Exploratory** (linking to real world tasks and resources).

Blended learning is advised by the actors of language teaching all round the world.

Blended learning brings benefits and challenges on many levels. A frequently mentioned benefit of online learning is flexibility in time and learning environments (Vaughan, 2007)

NFLC (The national Foreign Language Centre) which was founded in 1986 states that: *some fundamentals problems in our foreign language (FL) instructional system were identified. To quotation the case statement for the establishment of the centre (Lambert, 1987):*

(1) the skills it imparts are too low and too scholastic;

(2) the languages taught were appropriate for the nineteenth century but not for the twenty-first;

(3) the ways of measuring skill acquisition are outmoded;

(4) the levels of instruction are totally unarticulated and accidental; and

(5) no one knows or seems concerned about how much of early foreign training survives to be available for adult use.

Rapid evolution of communication technologies has changed language pedagogy and language use, enabling new forms of discourse, new forms of authorship, and new ways to create and participate in communities. (Berkeley, 2006)

There is one area where the field's structure of disaggregation serves it well. The widespread availability of personal computers (PCs) for both teacher and learner has brought healthy experimentation in the use of computers in language teaching. These dispersed are provided a national showcase in the meetings of the Computer Assisted language Instructional Consortium. (Richard D. Lambert, Autumn, 2001)

Before evaluating the advantages of Blended Learning it is necessary to analyze two methods of language teaching: **e-learning** and **traditional learning**.

2.1 E-learning is a form of learning which is centred on the use of computer. It is required technical equipment and internet platform. The main characteristics can be defined as:

- teaching materials have to be digitalised;
- tutors, teachers and learners are connected online and have to be connect to each other among themselves
- the materials have to be available in the internet platform
- the learner can decide on the learning procedures including the content, speed of learning, and the time of learning
- The most significant features of e-learning is that it is independent of time and place.

2.1.1 The advantages of e-learning...

E-learning model of studying has a great impact and rapid expansion at the end of the last century as it offers a series of advantages:

- learners and teachers work independently from places and times,
- learners can decide the phase of studying by themselves,
- the use of media tools can increase motivation
- the courseware can be updated continuously
- it is possible to access a great amount of information
- all the actors of this study; learners, teachers, tutors and material and testing commissions (if available) can be in contact to each other
- international interaction is possible

In general it can be said that e-learning serves to all kinds of learners promoting equity and inclusion by facilitating the access to learners with disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities compared to their peers.

These persons have a disadvantage because of personal difficulties or obstacles that limit or prevent them from taking part in traditional classes.

2.1.2 Its disadvantages

It is seen that e-learning has some weak sides such as:

- setting an internet platform requires some budget
- the production of courseware and e-tools are required some professionals experienced on this field, and it is generally more expensive than expected
- sitting in front of monitor causes some health problems such as eyes are tired
- learners expect to be tolerated in their individual materials
- self-motivated students/learners are required, so some learners' profile are not suitable for this kind of learning
- the teachers /tutors are lacked of the necessary competence regarding the work with e-tools and i-tools as teaching instruments
- social component which is defined as interaction between teacher and the learner which is important in language teaching as it is communicative competence will be missing on the internet study by themselves of the learners 'self discipline of the students is essential in e-learning, but unfortunately the concentration is low as computer cannot answer the learners' questions

2.2 As to **traditional method**, it has also some advantages besides its disadvantages. The traditional method which is also called face to face classroom education foster the motivation as the tutor guides the learners and the learners has a good chance to ask every question while he/she is studying . The learner is encouraged by the tutor. However Traditional method is boring and the only equipment it needs is the teacher and the teaching materials; books. It has no digital help. When we think about our young generations it is clear that he/she is addicted to modern technology and work out every job by computer digitally.

Generally this method of teaching is characterized by the following details:

- there is a good social contact with the learners and the teachers
- the teacher can immediately can interference to any process which takes place during the lesson
- the learners are more confident as they have a chance to ask the teacher when they meet a problem relating with their course , they can ask every detail to be answered to the teacher
- immediate reactions are possible according to the attitudes of the learners
- older learners like old methods and feel more ease with traditional forms

3-What is Blended learning?

Blended learning combines traditional education practices with a modern technology based approach. In other words, it combines e- learning and class education which is called as face to face education.

3.1 What is the aim of blended learning?

We can explain it with the words of Richard Otto.

Blended Learning aims orchestrating an effective composition of learning experiences. Instructional design has a long history of 'blending 'classroom work with homework, field trips, labs, reading assignments, and audio-visual media. However, what is new in this era of blended learning are the powerful modes of online synchronous and asynchronous activities, and technology-based instructional methods which can now be added to the mix. (Richard Otto, Cognitive Design Solutions, 1993)

3.2 The Benefits of Blended Learning for Language Learning

Learning technologies play an increasingly important part in higher education worldwide. Although Blended Learning is gaining importance it is needed to be promoted by universities. Because it has the advantages as follows:

- It supplies Independence from time and place,
- It is flexible and autonomous studying
- As a great communicative aspect it is possible to be in contact with other course members
- Diverse levels of knowledge at the beginning of a course can be balanced individually without obstructing the other students
- The activities can be worked as more balanced such as intensive exercises like writing or grammar can be done separately at home
- It gives chance to learners to follow their own speed of learning apart from the other learners
- Teachers can control the monitor and assess the students' progress during the face –to face seminars

Nowadays, in Turkey unemployment is a big issue and it is certain that proficiency in other languages is a key element in the ability of an individual to take up employment and vocational education and training (VET) opportunities beyond their national borders in any country within the European Union.

Vocationally oriented language learning' (VOLL) is necessary to be capable of using a foreign language for work. For example in tourism sector a specialized language training must be in the school curricula because a worker in tourism sector must have some intercultural qualifications and intended international qualifications of a person is connected to a series of competences which are based on intercultural knowledge and abilities. Intercultural communication will be successful among employees as the tourism sector, if they acquire adequate oral and written language skills (skills, idioms, specialist terminology, pronunciation, intonation). The other examples can be given for other professions. Business English gives a lot of opportunities to a Turkish university graduated in his/her career. When you use English in your work it means you can operate internationally in business sector and it brings you success.

Absolutely, it is clear that foreign languages must be designed as vocationally oriented. The point that must be caught here is that how we can serve this vocationally oriented language to our learners. In Turkey, majority of the curricula of foreign language teaching has been designed according to the traditional method. It comprises face to face education in classes using books as teaching tools.

Distance learning practices are developing but they are not specialized for professions. Basic language skills – speaking, listening, writing and reading- are gained at the end of the teaching process.

The matter is that learning a foreign language for a professional is not the obstacle of university students, there are a great number of people who are engaged to a job are in need of using a foreign language for work. They are adults and they do not have a chance to attend to a school to learn a language. There are some people who try hard to attend to private courses to learn it after the job, but it is tiring and boring and not very successful.

Considerably there are few opportunities to have a specialized language in these courses.

Blended learning is a solution to all these matter. Employed people can be involved in e-learning as it is available. Internet connection and a laptop or a smart phone is enough. The learner decides his/her time and phase himself/herself. Self motivation, self discipline is essential and learner's autonomy is in the centre of e-learning. Learner's autonomy puts the stress out that is a constraint in front of language learning. Stress is an undesirable effective factor in language learning. Working people can be involved in classes which are in blended learning to solve the problems in e-learning or learning process face to face in fixed class times.

So it will be considerably important to take into consideration the aspect of learners' self motivation.

How the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) considerably enhances language learning processes and outline some of the theoretical factors will be considered when designing multimedia applications in the context of blended learning. Media elements can be used to foster both online and offline learning situations. As it is well-known videos and audio and animation are fruitful elements used in blended learning environments.

The paper concludes with a short overview of the main principles of quality and evaluative criteria to be applied to teaching approaches within language learning environments. Blended learning is very appropriate for Vocationally oriented Language Learning.

Consequently, it can be said that because of some major factors especially for Vocationally oriented Language Learning, blended learning is essential. Blended learning meets the needs of language learning for work.

- Learners can have time and opportunities after their university education to promote their language training by means of e-learning as it is free from time and place,
- Learners need to be guided by tutor in a class environment to ask their questions and constraints about learning and blended learning give this chance to the learners not taking their much time. It is important as majority of the learners will have a job,
- Individual differences and theory of multiple intelligences can be considered important in blended learning. Different learners have preferences about learning styles,
- *Different learners have preferences about learning styles (i.e., auditory, visual, kinaesthetic, tactile; introvert / extravert; independent / social collaborative). Inventory (1971) that includes the following learning styles as combinations of the characteristics of observation, experience, thinking and action: Assimilating Style (planner), Converging Style (decision-maker), Diverging Style (creator), and Accommodating Style (doer). These preferences are based on how a learner processes information. Providing learning events that engage the learner's strengths is always desired. The blended approach allows a wide variety of learning styles to be engaged. (2003 Cognitive Design Solutions, Inc.)*
- In internet platform it is more possible to practice target language with the other learners and it is a good practice for a learner who learns specialized language for work,
- Blended learning with the help of e-learning can serve training for adults; hence adult learners who are in need of using their foreign languages for work can be benefited,
- Vocationally oriented language learning is easier and faster with e-tools (computer-mediated activities) and more practice is possible,
- It brings people together from all over the world it support a high vision of adult learners who learn it for work,
- E-learning offers interesting business opportunities,
- As blended learning is run with motivated students the aim is achieved in shorter time than traditional method,
- Blended learning can serve to a great number of learners in many professions and it is a great advantage for education sector,
- *According to a 2009 meta study from the Department of Education: "Students who took all or part of their class online performed better, on average, than those taking the same course through traditional face-to-face instruction." Students who mix online learning with traditional coursework (i.e. blended learning) do even better. (Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies, United States Department of Education)*
- Sectors in work can be involved in blended learning as a in-service training for their workers' capacity development for foreign language

Language learning experiences all round the world today has brought up that language learning dynamics away from traditional exercises such as grammatical accuracy exercises dominated in class teaching whereas meaningful communications in chat rooms gives more than long-standing class courses .Chat rooms are discussion spaces for the learners and they can construct their own language learning environment. Learners feel more comfortable and ask their friends for a definition or other help like vocabularies. Chat rooms are can only be possible in online learning environment that is essential in blended learning and blended learning do not leave class teaching for some reasons. The most important one of these reasons is to solve the problems in learning and ask some questions to the

teacher. Actually you can do a variety of fruitful exercises in your computer and e-tools supply learners a very enjoyable learning source but cannot answer the learners' questions.

4. Conclusions

Conclusively, It can be said that use of blended learning for vocationally-oriented language teaching offers a model for integrating technology into language learning and we must remember that an ideal language learning always respond to the need in terms of pedagogical goals and methodological appropriateness. In Foreign Language learning vocationally specialized language should be targeted in higher education curricula it can be expanded as language for work besides current foreign language teaching depending on teaching some language skills. General language teaching is necessary but it is not sufficient so language for specific purposes must be developed.

A good general course should contain an introduction to needs analysis, independent learning, education technology, discourse analysis and genre analysis, and should develop awareness of individual learner characteristics and the frameworks of inter-cultural differences- all highly relevant to LSP teaching. (Ron Howard Gillian Brown 1997).

In this content, the schools of language teacher training should be planned and developed to respond this need urgently. Language for specific purposes must be promoted urgently in all levels of education from secondary education to tertiary level.

Additionally foreign language training for work is not the job of education sector it is a matter of the business world. So, in adult education after university, learning English or German etc is a matter of the companies which aims to promote the qualifications of their employees. That's why this is a major subject of the in-service training facilities or projects today.

Blended learning meets the needs not pedagogically but as a method which serves the best learning environment where self-autonomy is essential. The profile of the learners of specialized English or German etc need a way to learn a foreign language for work as it is described here, it is blended learning. It is the future of foreign language learning in today's digital, electronic, computer based and internet world.

This article also points to areas that merit further analysis from an LSP perspective, such as the use of different technologies, using of ICT and modes for effective learning, innovative approaches to language learning and specific analysis of specialized texts, and the integration into LSP (Language for specific purposes (Vocationally oriented language learning) and social cohesion of it.

References

- Berkeley, California, *TESOL Quarterly* © 2006 Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL)
Richard Kern University of California, US *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), pp. 183-210
- Costa & Liebmann, New Technologies and Language Learning: theoretical considerations and practical solutions. *European Centre for Modern Languages*, 1995:23/ *The Modern Language Journal*, 85, iii, (2001) 0026-7902/01/347-362
- Creanor, L., Trinder, K., Gowan, D. and Howells, C. (2006). *LEX The Learner Experience of e-Learning Final Report*. JISC. Retrieved 4 January 2008 from http://www.jisc.ac.uk/elp_learneroutcomes.html
- Dominique Borel, July 2011 Opportunities and Challenges of Technology Enhanced Programmes Online and Blended Learning at King's College London, *French Studies in and for the 21st Century*, pp. 247-261 Liverpool University Press
- ELISABET ARNÓ-MACIÀ, Update on Grosse and Voght (1991) (2012), *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 96, Focus Issue: Languages for Specific Purposes in the United States in a Global Context., pp. 89-104
Published by: [Wiley](#) on behalf of the [National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations](#)
DOI: 10.2307/41478793
- Joyce Yukawa, Master of Library and Information Science Program, St. Catherine University, 2004 Communities of Practice for Blended Learning: Toward an Integrated Model for LIS Education, *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* Vol. 51, No. 2 (Spring 2010), pp. 54-75
Published by: Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE)
- [Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies](#), United States Department of Education
Michael H. Long and Jack C. Richards, *Second Language Needs Analysis*, *Cambridge Applied Linguistics University of Maryland, Cambridge University Press 2005*

- Richard D. Lambert, *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 85, No. 3 Autumn, 2001, p.p. 359
- Richard D. Lambert *The modern Language Journal*, Vol. 85, No.3(Autumn,2001) pp. 347-362
- Richard Otto, *Cognitive Design Solutions*, 1993
- Richard Otto, *Cognitive Design Solutions, Inc.* 2003
- Robert J. Blake, Update on Garrett (1991) Trends and Issues (2009), The Use of Technology for Second Language Distance Learning, *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 93, Focus Issue: Technology in the Service of Language Learning: pp. 822-835
- Ron Howard Gillian Brown, *Teacher Education for LSP*, 1997 :p.p. 9
- Ruslan Ramanau, Rhona Sharpe and Greg Benfield*, Exploring Patterns of Student Learning Technology Use in their Relationship to Self-Regulation and Perceptions of Learning Community
Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, Oxford Brookes University, p.p.336
- Silke von der Emde, JEFFREY Schneider and Markus Kötter*, (Summer, 2001) *Technically Speaking: Transforming Language Learning Through Virtual Learning Environments (MOOs)*, *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 85, No 2, pp. 210-225 Published by Wiley
- Tony Fitzpatrick, Andreas Lund, Bernard Moro and Bernd Rüschoff, (2003) *ICT in Vocationally oriented Language Learning*, European Centre for Modern Languages,