

## **Peculiarities of teaching foreign languages in blended learning during wartime**

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### **Abstract**

This paper focuses on identifying the major features of teaching English to full-time bachelor's students in blended learning during wartime. The main issues addressed in this paper are identifying the key differences between blended learning in comparison with online and offline formats and determining the potential difficulties of conducting the educational process arising from the current situation of the country being in martial law. In addition, the paper provides information regarding the concept of blended learning and the criteria for determining the effectiveness of applying this format.

*Keywords:* blended learning, ESL, online learning, offline learning, wartime.

## **Особливості викладання іноземних мов при змішаному навчанні в умовах воєнного часу**

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### **Анотація**

Дану роботу присвячено визначенню основних особливостей викладання англійської мови студентам-бакалаврам денної форми навчання під час проведення змішаного навчання протягом воєнного часу. Основними проблемами, висвітленими у даній роботі, є виокремлення ключових відмінностей змішаного навчання у порівнянні з онлайн і офлайн форматами та визначення потенційних складнощів ведення навчального процесу, що виникають внаслідок перебування країни у воєнному стані. Крім того, доповідь містить

інформацію щодо поняття терміну змішаного навчання та критеріїв визначення ефективності використання даного формату.

*Ключові слова:* змішане навчання, ESL, онлайн навчання, офлайн навчання, воєнний час.

Teaching English in higher education institutions during wartime represents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. Considering the existence of a range of critical issues with student access to learning and security concerns, teachers need to manage a complex environment in order to provide effective student learning. Blended learning, which combines online and offline teaching modes, represents a crucial element of education that requires a holistic approach from teachers in order to ensure the proper outcomes for students who are studying English as a second language (ESL). At the same time, the lack of a comprehensive understanding of the definition of this learning mode and the absence of a precise identification of its main features raises a number of issues that affect the quality of the learning process.

Among the primary challenges of blended learning research is the issue of identifying the precise definition and characteristics of this learning activity format. In this regard, a problematic issue is the oversimplified definition of blended learning as a format that combines online and offline modes while various perspectives also focus on aspects including the application of different pedagogical approaches and the utilization of particular sets of web technologies for the proper learning organization [1, p. 114]. In a wartime environment, this issue becomes more complex given the range of factors that complicate ESL learning processes. For instance, one of the factors that ensures quality blended English learning is the ability of the teacher to quickly upload and download learning materials, which in turn requires an appropriate technical framework [2, p. 66]. In this context, the necessity to conduct part of the classes in shelters or other facilities poses a specific challenge for the teacher, which involves considering in advance the most efficient ways to maintain contact with students who are studying online.

Another crucial aspect determining the peculiarities of the organization of blended learning is the definition of the role of the teacher in the organization of the learning process. In this case, it is significant to emphasize that the role of the educator in the learning process is not widely researched, which causes additional challenges in preparing the staff of the educational institution to teach in a blended format [3, p. 390]. In wartime conditions in Ukraine, educators face the need to provide a number of learning conditions that, in addition to teaching, involve safety and student engagement in learning. It indicates the decisive role of the teacher in the proper organization of learning. Furthermore, an essential component of ESL learning is the involvement of the educational institution in the promotion of blended learning mode, which mainly focuses on creating an understanding the importance of learning in a this format among students [2, p. 68]. Therefore, another feature of blended learning is the focus on the teacher and the educational institution as the key elements in ensuring quality ESL learning.

Moreover, given the impossibility of creating physically identical educational environments, the development of a unified learning setting is of critical importance, especially in the context of blended learning. A unified learning environment provides equal access to resources, opportunities and experiences for all students, regardless of their physical presence. Combining online and offline learning modes, educators can provide an inclusive atmosphere in which every student feels valued and engaged. This unity not only promotes collaboration and communication among students, but also facilitates a smooth transition between virtual and conventional learning spaces. In addition, a

cohesive environment encourages a sense of connectedness, enhancing the student-teacher relationship and improving overall academic performance. By synchronizing teaching strategies and technologies, educators can tailor their approach to different learning styles and preferences, thereby maximizing the potential for knowledge acquisition and memorization. Finally, the significance of a single learning environment lies in its ability to empower students, bridge educational gaps, and provide more cohesive and effective educational experience.

Overall, it is significant to note that ESL teaching in universities during martial law requires teachers to overcome the complex set of security issues and technological limitations. The primary challenge for educators is to determine the proper understanding of the essence of blended learning, which should not be limited to limited use of web technologies with conventional offline learning. In this regard, it is vital for the learning process management to focus on providing a unified learning environment in which all students will be equally involved in the classes. This task requires the teacher to prioritize providing the appropriate technical conditions and supporting students with pedagogical assistance to overcome possible learning barriers as rapidly as possible. Nevertheless, the complexity of organizing blended learning, combined with the challenges posed by wartime, make the problem addressed in this paper a critical topic in the contemporary Ukrainian teacher's practice that requires extensive research.

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