

## **E-LEARNING RESOURCES IMPLEMENTATION IN TEACHING BUSINESS ENGLISH AND TESTING ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL**

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**Abstract:** The article is dedicated to teaching Business English using e-learning resources at the tertiary level. Slovakia's experience of providing training for groups of students during the 2022/2023 academic year by applying a blended learning approach is considered in the study. Initially, the research was focused on the benefits and weaknesses of using e-learning resources in education. Further, the study was devoted to the analysis of the attitude of university students toward incorporating e-learning resources in teaching and learning Business English in a blended format. Applying the quantitative method made it possible to perform data analysis of the questioning of students. Using the qualitative research method allowed the authors to analyze the opinions of scholars on the studied problem and students' attitudes toward e-learning. The questionnaire was conducted in Slovakia in 2022 from July to November. The participants (n=102) involved students from higher education institutions (HEIs). The questionnaire results help sort through the participant's previous experience of learning Business English with the use of digital learning management systems (DLMSs), MOOCs, language learning videos (LLVs), and communication tools (CTs), considering the applicability of CTs for testing spoken English language skills. The questionnaire also included a question about independent activities on the Internet, as today, the Internet offers resources for self-education that promote the improvement of the students' English, deepen knowledge, and develop speaking skills. As the online realm, the Internet is the embodiment of space and time flexibility that allows the use of e-learning resources anywhere and anytime. The accessibility of educational materials for distance and blended learning contributes to effectively organizing students' training. Within the study, the questionnaire results indicate that most participants believe that the use of the Microsoft Teams platform (under blended learning conditions = 87.3%; during the pandemic = 89.2%; for testing spoken English language skills = 91.2%) in teaching and learning process is the best option to use at universities. In addition, the findings confirm that online video content (watching movies = 49%; videos for independent work = 69.6%) gets and holds students' attention. The study's results support integrating e-learning

resources into teaching Business English at non-language universities, emphasizing the feasibility of using video content as a valuable resource to prepare English classes.

**Keywords:** e-learning resources; Business English; tertiary education; digital learning management systems; communication tools; online video content; blended learning.

## 1. Introduction

E-learning resources, which are digital learning management systems (DLMSs), communication tools (CTs), massive open online courses (MOOCs), and language learning videos, are becoming more and more commonly used in education. E-learning resources provide extended opportunities for learning (i.e. self-paced learning, blended learning and distance learning). It is worth noting that there is a debate that mainly concerns the distance education system which is related to the benefits (i.e., accessibility, personalization, flexibility, and cost-effectiveness) and drawbacks (i.e., technical issues, a lack of social interactions or motivational challenges) of using e-learning resources in education. In terms of teaching a Business English course, this debate typically focuses on a perceived lack of face-to-face communication. However, it is noteworthy that the educational process, which is based on a blended learning model, involves using interactive e-learning materials during English classes and includes face-to-face communication. The realization of the concept of blended learning suggests that the education system can optimally combine the benefits of technology-enhanced learning with face-to-face instruction. Today, *“e-learning in particular has been adopted by educational institutions all over the world and it is being used as a part of “blended learning” where it is incorporated into systems along with traditional classroom learning”* (Vasanth and Sumathi 2020). Using e-learning materials and exchanging views and information between an English teacher and students or groups improves language acquisition and communication skills. The theme of the implementation of e-learning resources in the learning and teaching process has been widely investigated. Let us consider some scientific suggestions and ideas that are in line with our research agenda.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Using digital technologies in teaching Business English

Technology provides many opportunities for language learning (Chinaza Solomon Ironsi 2023, Kashinath and Raju 2023, Oluwafemi Ayotunde et al. 2023, Khomyshak 2022, Dimeski 2022, Oliynyk et al.

2022, Sankar et al. 2022). From the standpoint of educators, digital technologies provide instruments that can help improve education in various ways. It is worth noting that *"digital technologies have made a paradigm shift in the entire education system. It is not only a knowledge provider but also a co-creator of information, a mentor, and an assessor"* (Haleem et al. 2022). Students perceive the Internet as a learning tool and an integral part of their everyday life and learning, exploring the online realm for obtaining and testing knowledge. This is understandable because *"technological improvements in education have made life easier for students"* (Haleem et al. 2022). Testing students' knowledge is essential in education (Shumeiko and Krajčovičova 2023; Stradiotová et al. 2021, 2022). However, using e-learning platforms to test knowledge can cause problematic situations, one of which is cheating (Ivić and Šoštarić, 2022). Nevertheless, it remains clear that the Internet and its technology is the most significant achievement in the current century. It provides many possibilities for improving learners' language skills while studying Business English.

Authentic Internet video resources like YouTube and TED Talks are practice notes that help develop communication skills. Viewing video materials is not just a passive activity, but an active process that fosters the development of communication and listening comprehension skills. Using captions while watching videos is a tool that allows learners to see the text from a video on the screen. In that context, it is worth mentioning that *"using captions when watching videos can be beneficial as they help build new vocabulary, facilitating creation of associations between the spoken and written forms of the words"* (Boltižiar, 2021).

Implementing e-learning resources to teach Business English has become common in modern education systems. Moreover, universities offer blended courses, considering the needs and requirements of young people. One of the needs is to write correctly in English. However, *"strong writing skills can be developed in English through persistence, practice, hard work, and dedication to the writing process"* (Nguyen Ngoc Vu et al., 152). In this difficult path, teachers support their students. They create courses that are available on LMS, such as Moodle. Courses on Blackboard (a web-based online LMS) can enhance online learning (Nihal Gökgöz Gördeslioğlu, Tüzün Ergün Yüzer 2019; Alokuk & Al-Amri 2019) as *"Blackboard Learn increases student motivation compared to traditional learning methods"* (Kaid Mohammed Ali, 2017, quoted in Nihal Gökgöz Gördeslioğlu, Tüzün Ergün Yüzer 2019). In addition, teachers guide their students and explain why students should study grammar (Al Bataineh et al., 2019) and how important it is to expand vocabulary constantly. It contributes to developing the language skills

necessary to communicate in different business situations.

Moodle and Google Classroom, both e-learning platforms, are tools and an adaptable digital environment suitable for studying and testing. It is worth mentioning that *"the implementation of Google Classroom or Moodle e-learning platform would create a virtual classroom which creates effective teacher and students' communicative environment"* (Vasanth and Sumathi 2020: 36). Note that an open source system, like Moodle, *"often offers more opportunities for tailoring to specific needs and freedom for experimentation"* (Holmes and Gardner, 2006: 28). Moreover, these two LMSs, Moodle and Google Classroom, are online spaces that help organize the educational process. Furthermore, DLMSs are not just online platforms but irreplaceable elements in blended learning.

E-learning resources are now easily accessible. The scholars in the above scientific works discuss this idea, highlighting the role of e-learning platforms (i.e., Moodle, Google Classroom, and Blackboard) in organizing the educational process. Below, we will present an overview of the existing scientific works on using DLMSs and CTs in teaching Business English in a blended format.

## **2.2. Using DLMSs and CTs in teaching Business English in a blended format**

The blended-learning approach and the peculiarities of its application in teaching have been studied by many researchers (Al Bataineh 2019, Nihal Gökgöz Gördeslioğlu and Tüzün Ergün Yüzer 2019, Nguyen Ngoc Vu et al. 2021, Sankar et al. 2022). Scholars note that DLMSs provide the most flexible toolset to support blended learning. Let us consider the advantages of DLMSs for teaching Business English in the blended learning format. In our opinion, the most important benefits are accessibility (i.e., breaking down geographical barriers, making materials of the course accessible 24/7); the opportunity to communicate online (i.e., via chats, video conferencing); the possibility of carrying out testing and processing results (i.e., creating quizzes, preparing exam tasks, assessing knowledge automatically); and self-paced learning. We noted certain shortcomings: erratic Internet connectivity or network congestion and the risk of cheating in online exams.

It should also be noted that DLMSs (Haleem et al. 2022, Oliynyk et al. 2022, Sempavalan Vasanth and Sumathi 2020, Alokluk and Al-Amri 2019) have the practical relevance for teaching Business English in the blended learning format. In this regard, let us point out that DLMSs are suitable for creating tasks for online or blended learning; communication in English on business-related themes (i.e., Moodle and Google

Classroom are well suited for online discussions, chats, or video conferencing); giving feedback to students; and conducting oral examinations online to assess students' speaking skills.

Nowadays, various CTs (including Zoom and Microsoft Teams) enable teacher-student interaction in a blended learning format. It is worth mentioning that today, technologies enable asynchronous communication (i.e., via e-mail or discussion boards). Asynchronous e-mailing, for instance, is one-way communication, which implies that a sender can send a message to the receiver, but the receiver will not read and respond instantly. Synchronous tools (i.e., video meetings, chat rooms, shared digital whiteboards) "*offer the immediacy of two-way communication*" (Holmes and Gardner, 2006: 15). Note that using CTs, such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Hangouts, in teaching and learning English and the testing of previously acquired knowledge has become increasingly common at universities. For example, Zoom is a video conferencing tool many teachers use to conduct e-lessons. Screen-sharing allows educators to share study materials virtually in real time. Microsoft Teams is an e-platform that enables chatting, file sharing, and video conference meetings. Google Hangouts is another e-platform that enables video calls and offers collaborative features (i.e., sharing teaching materials).

This paper, based on extensive scientific research, aims to delve into the concepts of using e-learning resources in teaching and learning Business English. The study considers the benefits and drawbacks of these resources and examines the students' perceptions through a questionnaire conducted in Slovakia in the 2022/2023 academic year.

The authors' intention to achieve a clearly defined goal in this study has led to the formulation of the research questions (RQ):

RQ1) What are the benefits and weaknesses of using e-learning resources, particularly DLMSs, in teaching Business English in a blended learning environment?

RQ2) How do university students perceive using e-learning resources in learning Business English and testing English speaking skills?

### 3. Methodology

*Research design.* In this study, we used the qualitative data collection method, which allowed us to analyze existing scientific works on the research topic. We also used the quantitative method to analyze questionnaire responses (Appendix A). We respected the autonomy of our students by making the survey voluntary, allowing them to fill it in online at their own free will. The research comprised a nine-question survey.

*Participants.* The study participants were 102 students who majored in Economics, International Relations and Diplomacy, International Management, and Marketing; they were working towards a Bachelor's or Master's degree at the University of Economics in Bratislava or University College Prague (the institute in Bratislava). The responses were collected from July 12 to November 28 in the 2022/2023 academic year. The survey involved 87 Bachelors students and 15 Masters students. The main unifying factor in gathering participants was that they had been learning Business English for a year. During this period, the students have been studying full-time. We offered and applied a blended learning format to teaching a Business English course.

*Procedure.* The research tools used during the period were PCs with the required software and Google Forms, an Internet-based tool. These tools allowed the authors to create the survey online, so as to streamline and automate the data collection process. The study's scope included analyzing learners' views on using DLMSs, virtual CTs, online training videos, and MOOCs to learn Business English.

#### 4. Research results

The questions of the survey were focused on matters related to DLMSs (i.e., Moodle, Google Classroom, Skooler, and Blackboard), CTs (i.e., Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts and Ding Talk), and MOOCs (i.e., Coursera, Alison, EdX and Future Learn).

LMSs are often “*built to emulate the traditional learning and teaching structures*” (Holmes and Gardner, 2006: 28). Among the proposed DLMSs, respondents answering Question 1 favored Moodle (18.6% of the respondents; further, the shortened versions are used in the article, such as 18.6%). The number (n) of students who chose Google Classroom, Blackboard, and Skooler is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The use of DLMSs in the process of teaching and learning Business English

<i>DLMS</i>	<i>Learners' views on DLMSs</i>
	<i>n</i>
None of the suggested DLMSs	60
5. Moodle	19
6. Google Classroom	17

7. Blackboard	5
8. Skooler	1

The vast majority of the respondents think that DLMSs can enhance their language skills (Question 2). This view is shared by 48%. The teachers' support is important for 22.5%; 10.8% agree with the importance of DLMS, but only due to particular circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic; only for 13.7% are DLMSs primarily a way to improve one of the four English language skills: reading, writing, speaking, or listening; and for 4.9% of respondents, DLMSs are not a meaningful way to improve language skills.

Most respondents (87.3%) chose the Microsoft Teams platform as the preferred CT. Students also highlighted the relevance of using Zoom (11.8%). The questionnaire results confirm that Skype is not really in demand today (1%). Google Hangouts and Ding Talk were not chosen CTs (Question 3).

Many learners (Question 4) suggested that Microsoft Teams was the best CT to learn English (89.2%) under blended learning conditions. Students (10.8%) also chose Zoom as a good CT. Microsoft Teams (Question 5) was considered by students as the best CT for testing spoken English language skills when the learners planned to take the English exam online, for example, during quarantine or under blended learning conditions (91.2%). Zoom was chosen by 6.9% of the students, while Google Hangouts (1%) and Skype (1%) appear to be unpopular (Table 2).

Table 2. The use of CTs in the process of teaching and learning Business English and testing English speaking skills

<i>CT</i>	<i>Learners' views on CTs</i>
	<i>n</i>
<i>CTs for teaching and learning Business English under conditions of blended learning (preferences)</i>	
9. Microsoft Teams	89
3. Zoom	12
10. Skype	1

<i>CTs for teaching and learning Business English (considering online course experiences during the pandemic)</i>	
11. Microsoft Teams	91
• Zoom	11
<i>CTs for testing English speaking skills under conditions of blended learning</i>	
12. Microsoft Teams	93
• Zoom	7
13. Skype	1
14. Google Hangouts	1

MOOCs, accessible online options for anyone, are not of significant interest to the learners who answered the questions in the survey. Most respondents (95.1%) did not take a MOOC (Question 6) to learn Business English or improve (96.1%) their skills in the English language. Only one student took a MOOC (a complete open online course). One more student only took a free online learning course due to the coronavirus pandemic. One student took a MOOC, but only some videos or information materials, for the pleasure of learning. Only 2% of respondents used online learning MOOC resources (Question 6). Future Learn (2.9%) and EdX (1%) were the MOOCs that respondents followed on a regular basis to improve their English language skills (Question 7).

Online video content (OVC) in language education is a source of learning (Question 8). Notably, 49% of the respondents chose movies as a good way to improve their knowledge, while 28.4% preferred watching TV shows. Social media videos (13.7%) and TED Talks (6.9%) were also interesting for the students to watch. Only an insignificant percentage of respondents (2%) preferred watching other OVCs (Table 3).

Table 3. The use of OVC in the process of teaching and learning Business English

<i>OVC</i>	<i>Learners' views on OVC</i>
	<i>n</i>
15. Movies	50

16.TV shows	29
• Social media videos	14
17.TED Talks	7
18.Other OVCs	2

When preparing materials and tasks for students who study Business English in a blended learning format, pedagogues often include OVC in the educational process. Students watch videos (e.g., a movie, a TV show, or a TED Talk) outside of class to learn content online and then do tasks in class with the guidance of a teacher.

Independent work plays an essential role in the acquisition of knowledge. Our analysis (Table 4) revealed the independent activities on the Internet that learners prefer for self-education to enhance their English language knowledge and develop their skills (Question 9). Notably, 69.6% of respondents chose to watch videos. University students (11.8%) preferred reading on the Internet. They also use Internet resources to enhance their writing (1%), speaking (8.8%), or listening (6.9%) skills. Some respondents also complete e-exercises (2%) online (Table 4).

Table 4. Independent work using e-learning resources

<i>Types of independent work</i>	<i>Learners' views</i>
	<i>n</i>
19.Watching videos	71
20.Reading	12
• Speaking	9
21.Listening	7
22.Completing tasks	2
23.Writing	1

Thus, according to the results of the questionnaire, students prefer Moodle and Google Classroom when it comes to using DLMSs for

education. Among the CTs proposed in the survey, most students chose Microsoft Teams. They also admit that Microsoft Teams is suitable for taking speaking tests in a blended learning format. Learners like watching movies in English. It helps students in their self-education and promotes the study of both the culture and the language.

### 5. Discussion

In its relentless pursuit of progress and innovation, technology is permanently evolving and advancing (Khomyshak 2022, Chinaza Solomon Ironsi 2023), reshaping how we live and changing the world around us at an unprecedented pace and with the boundless potential for transformation. E-learning approaches and new resources support increasingly rich means of facilitating language learning and Business English acquisition. E-learning resources immerse non-native English speakers in an environment that helps them practice and interact in English. This environment provides a variety of tasks to work through and activities requiring engagement with the target language.

E-learning resources are widely used in education. Video-conferencing systems (i.e., Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts, Skype) make it simple for a subject matter expert to virtually join the class discussion, no matter where they are. E-learning resources allow students to learn at their own pace (Holmes and Gardner, 2006), pause and rewatch videos (i.e., movies, TV shows, or social media videos) in English, and explore the content of the Business English course independently. Students can work on a project together in class or collaborate and communicate with each other via the Microsoft Teams platform.

We started this research to explore the possibilities and prospects of using e-learning resources (i.e., DLMS, CT, MOOC and LLV) to learn Business English. We focused on using e-learning resources in education that facilitate the rapid acquisition of English, particularly in teaching Business English in a blended learning format. Moreover, our study delved into the trend of harnessing technology that has ensured the full use of the potential of online space in education. We verified by surveying (see Appendix A) whether the e-learning resources increase student engagement in the learning process in a blended learning format.

Part of our task was to determine whether e-learning resources enhance student engagement in the learning process in a blended learning format. To achieve this, we thoroughly reviewed existing scientific works (exploring topics such as using digital technologies in teaching Business English and using DLMSs and CTs in teaching Business English in a blended format). We also analyzed the opinions of 102

students on online resources.

The study revealed that e-learning resources that immerse non-native speakers in an English-speaking environment facilitate learning English in a blended format (Tables 1-4). We also pointed out that students particularly appreciate video-conferencing systems such as Microsoft Teams and Google Hangouts (Table 2), which enable communication between students and teachers, regardless of their physical location, giving a sense of community and enhancing collaborative learning.

### **6. Limitations**

The research results reported herein should be considered in light of one limitation: the survey data would fully capture the views of the university students if more respondents had participated.

### **7. Concluding thoughts**

Ideally, various types of e-learning, such as blended learning, asynchronous online learning, or synchronous online learning, are used in teaching. The case of Slovakia, considered in this work, demonstrates how e-learning trajectories engage learners in cognitive activity during Business English lessons at EUBA and UCP (the institute in Bratislava). The findings of the study, which consider feedback from student respondents, confirm the feasibility of using digital learning management systems (with a preference for Moodle), communication tools (with a preference for Microsoft Teams), and online video content (with a preference for movies and TV shows) in higher education institutions for the study of Business English.

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### **ЕЛЕКТРОННІ ОСВІТНІ РЕСУРСИ: ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ У ВИКЛАДАННІ ДІЛОВОЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ТА ТЕСТУВАННІ НАВИЧОК ГОВОРІННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЮ МОВОЮ НА УНІВЕРСИТЕТСЬКОМУ РІВНІ**

Стаття присвячена аналізу практики викладання ділової англійської мови в форматі змішаного навчання з використанням електронних освітніх ресурсів у вищих навчальних закладах Словаччини впродовж 2022/2023 навчального року. Спочатку дослідження було зосереджено на перевагах та недоліках використання електронних навчальних ресурсів у викладанні ділової англійської мови. Далі досліджувалася ефективність використання електронних освітніх ресурсів (ЕОР) для викладання ділової англійської мови, в тому числі з акцентом на тестуванні навичок говоріння англійською мовою. У статті використано змішані методи дослідження, що передбачали інтеграцію якісних (здійснено аналіз наукових праць, опублікованих за темою дослідження) і кількісних (проаналізовано результати онлайн-опитування щодо ставлення студентів до використання електронних освітніх ресурсів) методів збору та аналізу даних в рамках одного дослідження. Онлайн-опитування проводилося у 2022 році, з липня по

листопад. Учасниками (n=102) були представники немовних закладів вищої освіти (ЗВО) зі Словаччини. Для онлайн-опитування було запропоновано 9 запитань (Appendix A). Запитання стосувалися попереднього досвіду вивчення ділової англійської мови з використанням цифрових систем управління навчанням, онлайн платформ для комунікації, масових відкритих онлайн-курсів, навчальних відеоматеріалів. Також запитання стосувались освітніх ресурсів Інтернету для самонавчання. Аналіз результатів онлайн-опитування показав, що більшість студентів віддають перевагу Microsoft Teams (в умовах змішаного навчання = 87.3%; під час пандемії = 89.2%; для перевірки розмовних навичок англійської мови = 9.2%) – онлайн платформі для комунікації. Відео контент (перегляд фільмів = 49%; відео для самостійної роботи = 69.6%) привертає увагу студентів та підвищує їхню зацікавленість. Результати дослідження підтримують ідею інтеграції електронних освітніх ресурсів у процес навчання ділової англійської мови в немовних університетах та підкреслюють доцільність використання відео контенту як цінного ресурсу для підготовки уроків англійської.

**Ключові слова:** електронні освітні ресурси; ділова англійська мова; вища освіта; цифрові системи управління навчанням; онлайн платформи для комунікації; відео контент; змішане навчання.

### **Appendix A**

*Q1: What digital learning management systems do you prefer to use online when you learn Business English at university?*

*Response options for Q1:*

#### **4. Moodle**

- Google Classroom
- Skooler
- Blackboard
- another

*Q2: Do you agree that digital learning management systems can enhance your language skills?*

*Response options for Q2:*

#### **5. Yes, I agree**

- Yes, but only due to exceptional circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic
- Yes, but only for improving one of the 4 English language skills (reading, writing, speaking, or listening)
- No, I disagree
- Yes, but only if the teacher guided students through practice activities

*Q3: What kind of communication tools in the online space would you prefer to use to learn Business English under blended learning conditions (your preferences)?*

*Response options for Q3:*

- Zoom
- Skype
- Microsoft Teams
- Google Hangouts
- Ding Talk

*Q4: As a student, which do you think is the best communication tool in the online space to learn English (considering online course experience during the pandemic)?*

*Response options for Q4:*

- Zoom
- Skype
- Microsoft Teams
- Google Hangouts
- Ding Talk

*Q5: As a student, which do you think is the best communication tool for testing English speaking skills when you take the English exam online, for example, during quarantine or under conditions of blended learning?*

*Response options for Q5:*

- Zoom
- Skype
- Microsoft Teams
- Google Hangouts
- Ding Talk

*Q6: Did you take a MOOC to learn Business English?*

*Response options for Q6:*

- Yes, I took the full MOOC
- Yes, I took free online learning due to the coronavirus
- Yes, I took just a part of MOOC for the pleasure of learning
- No, I did not
- Yes, I used online learning MOOC resources

*Q7: Which of the following MOOCs (for improving English language knowledge and skills) did/do you take on a regular basis?*

*Response options for Q7:*

- Coursera
- Alison
- EdX
- Future Learn
- None of the above

*Q8: Which of the following do you watch in English?*

*Response options for Q8:*

- TED Talks
- Social media videos
- Movies
- TV Shows
- Other online training videos

*Q9: Which of the following independent activities on the Internet do you prefer for self-education to improve your English language knowledge and skills?*

*Response options for Q9:*

- Watching videos
- Doing/completing the exercises
- Reading
- Speaking
- Listening.