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Learner Responsibility and Homework Quality in Secondary EFL Blending

The purpose of this research is to scrutinise advantages and disadvantages of blended learning both from the perspective of the learners and the teacher in a secondary EFL class. Throughout the four-week blending process, online and offline content being the same, informants did their homework through Macmillan Online Campus. Based on weekly learner feedback, an interview with the mentor teacher and post-lesson reflections of the teacher-researcher the study concluded by saying that blending results in learner awareness of higher quality homework, however does not necessarily raise learner awareness and learner responsibility. Disadvantages and advantages of MEC were also elaborated on both from the teacher's and the learners' perspective.

1. Introduction

It is unquestionable that we live in the age of technology. Being a teacher trainee, no sooner had I entered the classroom than I realised that banning gadgets in the classroom would not be possible. What is more, not only would it be impossible, but a very foolish thing to do, seeing how much students are attached to them.

I immediately became interested in what we can achieve together with my students involving technology and the Internet in our classroom. Having had some previous experience with blended learning systems, thinking about my fields of interest, out of a sudden I realised that I am truly curious if using the Internet and reflecting on students' needs in the classroom can accelerate or contribute to making their learning more focused.

I wished to mix online and face-to-face education, and I ended up mixing the possibilities of the language school I was teaching at and the students I taught during my teacher training practice. Owing to the generosity of my colleagues at the language school, I was granted a monthly access to Macmillan Online Campus to implement this research entirely built on my interest.

Furthermore, in recent years, little research has been done in Hungary on 'blended learning,' and research articles throughout the world also imply that secondary education level

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'blending' is still just at its beginnings, although a few practical steps away from the starting point.

Consequently, the present research aimed to scrutinize if 'blending' from the learners' perspective

1) raises learner awareness and learner responsibility,

2) results in learner awareness of higher quality homework.

Additionally, this research wished to examine from the viewpoints of learners, the mentor teacher and the teacher-researcher

1) what the advantages and disadvantages of blending and the online campus are.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 How did E-learning Result in Blended Learning?

Blended learning (BL) is a type of learning that belongs to the umbrella term, e-learning. By definition, e-learning stands for "*training delivered on a digital device such as a smart phone or a laptop that is designed to support individual learning or organizational performance goals*" (Clark & E. Mayer, 2011).

With the appearance of smartphones and constantly online gadgets, new horizons have been opened for language learners. Among many notable innovations in connection with e-learning, 'blended learning' emerged as a possible solution to those who would like to exploit the opportunities 21st century technology provides for online learning.

2.2 Defining Blending

As Graham & Bonk (2005) suggest, although 'blending' has recently become a "buzzword" in corporate and higher education surroundings, there are almost as many definitions as the number of publications addressing blending. Yet, some universal notions and terms can be identified.

A generally accepted definition of 'blended learning' is lacking. Definitions all agree that blending suggests a certain type of combination, but they vary according to what it is they combine. They suggest that 'blended learning' (BL) combines

1) instructional modalities (Singh & Reed, 2001); or

2) instructional methods (Driscoll, 2002; Rossett, 2002); or

3) face-to-face and online instruction (Rooney, 2003; Sands, 2002; Ward & LaBranche, 2003; Young, 2002).

However, these definitions are too permissive as they lack elaborating on vital questions, such as whether the content that is divided between e.g. online and traditional class surroundings needs to be the same or not, and if not, whether these 'two contents' are allowed to be in absolutely no connection with each other.

Further misunderstandings may emerge from the first two definitions. In their research article conducted on learning effectiveness using different teaching modalities, Norman and Burke (2010) identified three modalities of instruction:

− online,

− face-to-face and

− hybrid.

As *Figure 1* illustrates, by definition, BL happens if any type of traditional face-to-face instruction is combined with any type of online instruction.
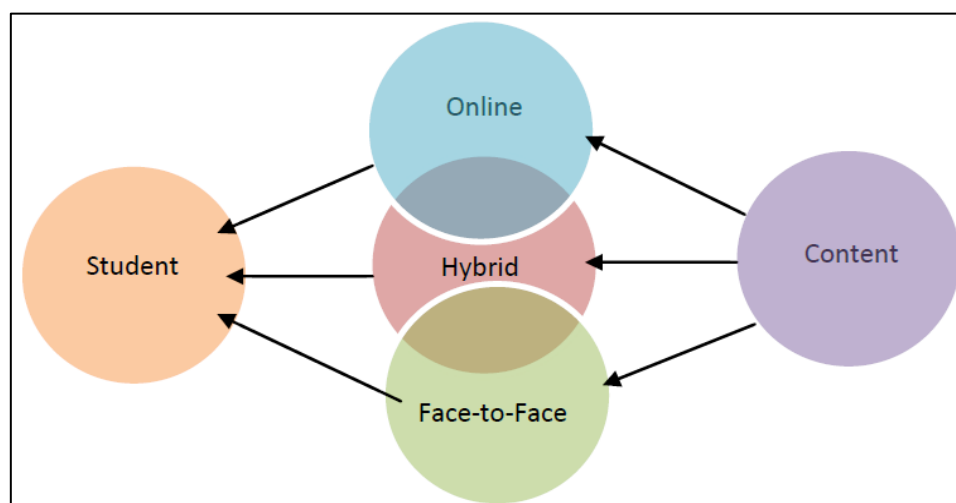

Figure 1. Different Modalities of Instruction
Source: Norman & Burke 2010 p. 2.

The illustration is quite revealing, as it depicts the connection between the students and the content. While the content is divided between the modalities, the student needs to sense its uniformity. The modalities must be divided, but the content must not.

Though modalities and methods might sound the same to the ears of laymen, the latter term represents a substantial number of practical teaching specifics (e.g. class discussion, recitation, choral speaking, class-oriented discussion, timelines etc.). Obviously, combining any of them would hardly result in blending.

Consequently, a more precise definition of BL could be formulated. I would argue that BL is a combination of online and face-to-face instruction where the same content is divided between the instructional modalities and where the single modalities are mutually dependent.

2.3 Attributes to Blended Learning

2.3.1 Levels of Blending

Professional research closely explored BL and further to accounting its advantages, identified its levels. Blending may take place on the following levels (Graham & Bonk, 2005):

1) activity level,
2) course level,
3) program level or
4) institutional level.

Activity level blending happens when a learning activity features both face-to-face and computer mediated elements. Graham & Bonk (2005) identify course level blending as the most common way to blend. Most often, course level blending necessitates distinctive face-to-face and computer mediated activities. That is, taking the same content as a starting point, learners are supported by traditional and online activities, but a traditional activity does not involve online, whilst an online activity never involves traditional elements.

Graham & Bonk (2005) conclude that activity or course level blending often depends on the willingness of the learner, while instructors play a vital role in designing program or institutional levels of blending.

2.3.2 Learner Authority

The repeatedly mentioned instant access and flexibility are scrutinized by many researchers arguing that BL develops student authority. Learner authority means the combination of freedom, power and legitimacy (Goodman, 2010). Critics of traditional e-learning systems emphasise that they completely lack student authority (Waddoups & Howell, 2002). In terms of BL, learners might choose when, how and why completing tasks.

2.4 Blending in EFL

2.4.1 Precautions before Blending

Claiming that BL has been widely used in corporate training and higher education, Sharma & Barrett (2007) were among the first to develop four guiding principles of BL for ELT practitioners. Their four principles are

1) separate the role of the teacher and the role of technology,

2) teach in a principled way,

3) use technology to complement and enhance face-to-face teaching,

4) make use of the technology, as technology itself is not enough.

Roles of the teacher and the technology should be separated because they are not interchangeable but complementary. What is taught by the teacher should not be taught again by the computer and vice versa. Principled teaching is also vital since teachers must be pedagogically driven, always suiting their learners' needs. The third principle arguably refers to one of the core principles of blending: content unity. Every material should be selected and used to support educational purposes (Sharma & Barrett, 2007).

Although the principles are arguably drawn from vast teaching experience, some professionals later claimed that they are too vague to be clearly adopted (Collis, 2003; Lea et. al., 2003; Whittaker, 2014).

Hockly and Clandfield (2010) suggest asking ourselves some initial questions before opting to blend, these being:

1) How much of your course will be online?

2) What parts of your course could be best offered online?

3) How are you going to offer the online part of your course?

According to the authors, if a teacher successfully and clearly answers these basic, in advance questions, only then should the chance be taken to blend.

In agreement with the previously introduced principles, Lyon-Jones (2011) suggest only teaching with technology in the EFL classroom if

− the technology enhances and supports learning,

− the teacher will do something that could not otherwise be achieved,

− the students will oversee using the technology,

− the teacher is sure that using technology is the best option and

− the computers in class can run the software you want to use.

Apparently, there is a better and faster way to bypass some of the initial questions by utilising a course-book (Hockly, Dudeney & Pegrum, 2013; Walker & White, 2013) as the footstone of blending. Course-books are written, reviewed and tested by language professionals and usually equal to the syllabus itself in terms of ELT (Whittaker, 2014). Even if a theory, a pedagogical model, course or syllabus, task, exercise, language skills, technology or the fusion of these are also legitimate starting points of a blended course (Levy & Stockwell, 2006), a course-book might be the most ideal solution in an EFL classroom to be the foundation-stone for blending so that the activities are never just a chain of enjoyable and humorous tasks (Walker & White, 2013).

Similar practical advice and checklists are provided by several professionals. Just to provide a few more examples, Stanley (2003) lists five questions to consider before blending, Lyon-Jones (2011) designed a basic checklist to go through before starting to teach with technology, Hockly (2011) introduced eight questions and provided some general guidelines and Tomlinson & Whittaker (2013) provide no less than twenty-four design-related questions plus additional advice on practice.

2.4.2 Previous Studies of Blending in the EFL Classroom

There are very few empirical studies which found BL having no impact in the EFL classroom. Having examined the vocabulary enhancement of a control and a BL group of EFL students, Tosun (2015) concluded that compared to the control group, informants did not achieve great outcomes after six weeks of blended instruction. In agreement with the conclusions of Tosun (2015), some other studies produced similar outcomes (Alshwiah, 2009; Cheng, Shu, Liang, Tseng & Hsu, 2014).

Zhang, Song and Burston (2011) scrutinized the effect of mobile phones in the EFL classroom on vocabulary enhancement and concluded that apparently short-term vocabulary learning is more effective through mobile phones.

Khazaei & Dastjerdi (2011) also found it beneficial to use BL in the EFL classroom. Their comparative study on the vocabulary acquisition of a traditional and a blending group revealed that members of the latter group produced significantly higher vocabulary test results (Khazaei & Dastjerdi, 2011).

Additional large-scale research emphasised the importance of merging the advantages of offline and online instruction as a success for BL. While blending groups reached higher scores compared to non-blending control groups, a high number of feedback surveys of informants highlighted the importance of the offline interaction (Kim D., Rueckert, Kim D-J. & Seo, 2013). On the extreme, without any meaningful offline (i.e. face-to-face) interaction between the learners a language cannot be learnt effectively (Norton, 2000).

Consequently, previous research indicates that BL has a positive impact on learners' performance in some areas of foreign language learning, however, few studies have been carried out focusing on methodological issues and implications regarding blending as studies mainly focus on factors to consider before blending and on quantifying learner performance.

3. The Research

3.1 Research Design

This blended learning research aimed to discover if blending affects learner autonomy and homework quality in a secondary EFL classroom. Blending occurred by dividing the same content in the classroom and in the Macmillan Online Campus. The research with learners lasted four weeks (i.e. nine classes) with some additional data collection.

3.2 Research Setting

The research was conducted in a secondary grammar school with 10th grader learners. The learners have been studying English as a foreign language for minimum two years. According to the mentor, some students are better at English than others, but the diversity of the group members in view of their level is not extreme. They have been studying together for two years; the research was carried out in the first months of their second school year in the secondary grammar school in question.

Learners are used to involving information and communication technologies (ICT) in the classroom, even though the school only has two full-class rooms and two group-class rooms with interactive whiteboards.

The Macmillan Online Campus works on a subscription-basis, yet for this research students and the researcher got access to it free of charge.

3.3 Participants

The present research involved seventeen informants (sixteen students and the mentor teacher). The group of learners consisted of four female and twelve male thirteen and fourteen-year-old students most of whom have been studying English as their first foreign language for minimum two years. The students are at B1 level according to the Common European Framework.

3.4 Tools of Data Collection

3.4.1 The Macmillan Online Campus (MEC)

MEC is an online campus with thousands of pre-designed activities to be assigned to learners. MEC differentiates between student and teacher accesses. Students may search for activities covering grammar, vocabulary etc. areas of their choice to practice whatever skills they need, or they can complete courses. Courses are collections of activities pre-selected to fit a specific course-book or language course. MEC further assists teachers to assign activities best fitting to learners' stages with level classifications.

Participants accessed MEC through http://www.mec-3.com/Katedra. They logged in to the online campus with pre-registered usernames (User ID), and a pre-set password. MEC is monolingual, therefore logging in and using the campus was authentic educational material to them.

After logging in, the home screen of MEC was visible for the students (*Figure 2*). Participants could always access their assigned tasks through My Bookmarks, the link at the bottom of the home screen, as teachers are able to bookmark activities and send them to students.
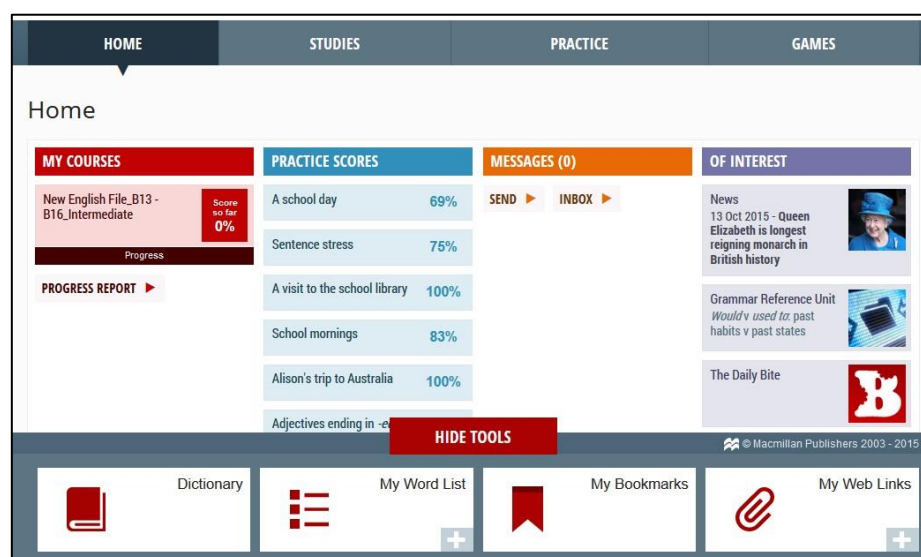

Figure 2. Home screen of MEC

My Bookmarks page (*Figure 3*) was an instant access link for students to their homework activities. Their activities were always labelled with the date the assignments were sent to them. Students then clicked on the 'View' link next to each assignment, completed the activities and received their scores. Students were required to retry all assignments in which they scored less than 60%.

Figure 3. My Bookmarks page

Beside five task types automatically checked and corrected by the campus (language exercise, listening activity, news item, practice test and pronunciation activity), there are two additional types of exercises learners were asked to do that are corrected differently. Integrated skills exercises are specific activities partly corrected by MEC, partly by the teacher in a fashion that informants do pre-writing or pre-speaking activities online that are automatically corrected, whereas the final stage (the recording of the speaking or the actual text keyed in) is sent to and marked by the teacher.

Grammar reference units are the eighth and last types of activities that were assigned to learners in this research. These units are designed to introduce new grammar areas.

Figure 4 provides an insight into the downloadable class report from MEC featuring a specific student's completed activities, the type of the activities completed, the ultimate results

(or the note 'Viewed,' if the activity is a grammar reference unit), the date of the last completion and the number of attempts the student submitted the activity.

Practice Scores				
Activity	Content Type	Final Result or viewed	Date	Attempts
A new home	Vocabulary Activity	85%	21-Oct-2015	1
A postcard home	Listening Activity	75%	09-Oct-2015	1
A school day	Language Exercise	92%	02-Oct-2015	2
A visit to the school library	Listening Activity	100%	02-Oct-2015	2
Adjectives ending in -ed and -ing: list	Grammar Reference Unit	Viewed	01-Oct-2015	
Albert Einstein's education	Vocabulary Activity	78%	09-Oct-2015	1
Alison's trip to Australia	Listening Activity	100%	01-Oct-2015	1
Ambitious Dubai	Vocabulary Activity	88%	16-Oct-2015	1
Castle Rising	Listening Activity	100%	16-Oct-2015	1
First conditional: affirmative	Grammar Reference Unit	Viewed	07-Oct-2015	
First conditional: interrogative	Grammar Reference Unit	Viewed	08-Oct-2015	
First conditional: negative	Grammar Reference Unit	Viewed	08-Oct-2015	
First conditional: use	Grammar Reference Unit	Viewed	07-Oct-2015	
Get, do and make	Vocabulary Activity	70%	07-Oct-2015	1
If you walk under a ladder …	Language Exercise	100%	08-Oct-2015	1
Lessons at school	Vocabulary Activity	100%	08-Oct-2015	2

Figure 4: Progress report extract of a student

3.4.2 The Blending Research

Throughout the research, students were required to complete homework exercises solely in MEC. All activities were selected to accompany and/or practice in-class material as well as revise previously covered grammar and vocabulary areas. Progress reports were downloaded daily, after every day of the twenty-five days of the research.

3.4.3 Feedback of Learners

Respondents were asked to provide feedback on their experiences weekly. Questions were asked in their mother tongue to maximise response willingness. Since students were in the focus of this research, student feedback forms focused on MEC (the blending tool), motivation, learner awareness towards learning and regarding homework quality. On the feedback forms, most of the questions could be answered with a few words and learners could decide against providing more detailed answers.

3.4.4 Interview with Mentor

With her long years of teaching experience and her qualification as educational professional, the mentor also provided excellent advice and feedback throughout the research. The mentor was interviewed to provide some essential background information to this research as well as her opinion on the process.

3.4.5 Reflections of the Teacher-Researcher

In addition to MEC, the learners and the mentor, a final source of data collection was the reflections written after the lessons by the teacher-researcher. The reflections contained accounts of apparent learner motivation and some visible links between students' mood in the classroom and the timely lack or success of completing homework assignments online.

3.5 Objectivity, Reliability and Validity

The researcher endeavoured to deprive findings from every trace of subjectivity. Reliability and validity of data was ensured by triangulation. Several tools of data collection were applied to aid the researcher in presenting analysis of reliable and valid data.

3.6 Methods of Analysis

Table 1 summarises the sources of data collection as well as lists analytical methods. The data collection aimed to ensure triangulation by collecting data from many different perspectives.

Source of Data	Research technique	Research type
MEC	Progress reports	Quantitative
MEC	Length of attempts reports	Quantitative
Learners	Feedback questionnaires	Quantitative and Qualitative
Mentor Teacher	Interview	Qualitative
Teacher-Researcher	Lesson reflections	Qualitative

Table 1. Data Collection and Methods of Analysis

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Does Blending Raise Learner Awareness and Learner Responsibility? (Q1)

When informants were asked if they had to prepare more, the same or less to the classes relying on online activities and why (W[eek]2/Q[uestion]3) to discover if BL raises learner awareness and learner responsibility, the following information was collected:

− 2 informants observed improvement in their preparation for English classes, one of them owed it to "doing homework with higher caution," one of them to "more homework and more content covered in class."

− 8 respondents claimed they prepare the same as before.

- 1 informant noted that (s)he "prepares less for the classes relying on online activities because of practising more at home."

Moreover, some relevant information on learner responsibility was provided by informants for feedback questions W3/Q4 (*What do you think is/are the main advantage/s of the online campus? What do you like in it the most?*) and W3/Q5 (*What do you think is/are the main disadvantage/s of the online campus? What do you dislike in it the most?*)

- 1 informant reported that (s)he needed extra grammar practice and that (s)he could "easily find more links to grammar practice activities."
- 1 informant reported that "since the teacher is provided insights into the homework writing process," (s)he has "developed in completing tasks more carefully."
- 1 informant reported that (s)he often used the activity search and became aware of the fact that "an immense activity databank is available" for him/her online.

Enhancement in learner responsibility might be tracked in students' answers related to preparation for classes and utilising the features of MEC. Respondents generally took notice of themselves doing homework with better care because of "more homework and more content covered in class" or even since "the teacher is provided insights into the homework writing process." The informant claiming to prepare less for classes saw it as a positive factor of the online campus, because online assignments made him/her "practise more at home." Some of them even completed many (2 and 13) extra activities that were not assigned.

However, not all informants noted a development in their learning awareness. An informant commented that his/her preparation process for classes "did not undergo any change." Moreover, such reasons as "the teacher is provided insights into the homework writing process" might have a positive effect on outcome, but this type of motivation is far from being intrinsic. The mentor teacher reported "no visible changes in learners' behaviour and attitude towards English" that could be directly linked to the experiment.

Although some students arguably noted a positive enhancement in their learner responsibility, this notion (according to the mentor) does not necessarily mean their learner responsibility developed. Yet, some previously scrutinised learner responses imply that at least some of the informants' learner responsibility was positively affected.

4.2 Does Blending Result in Learner Awareness of Higher Quality Homework? (Q2)

Traditionally, such tracking of the quality of homework assignments as seen in the MEC progress report is impossible. Therefore, this research did not aim to compare previous and blending homework results, but it wished to map learner awareness of the quality of producing online homework.

Successive of the first week of blending, informants were asked to provide information on the reasons of optional re-submitting of online assignments (W1/Q3):

- 3 informants did not retry the tasks because two of them were "contented with the initial results" and one of them thought "the tasks were easy in the first place."
- 8 informants re-submitted their homework assignments, four due to "mistakes in the first attempt," one due to "see the feedback message again," one to "try his/her best," one because (s)he was not sure if the campus stored his/her solutions at first, and one "accidentally."
- 1 informant "did not complete any homework" by the time the question was asked.

This first-week question attempted to map the first traces of learner awareness of producing higher quality homework, although by that time students only completed three online exercises, therefore conclusions should not be drawn from these responses.

W2/Q2 attempted to discover when students retry the tasks assigned and why they choose to re-submit them at that time.

- 1 respondent claimed, "not retrying any assignments at all" by the second week.
- 11 respondents reported that they "immediately retry the assignments if [they are] not satisfied" with their results or "if [their] initial result is below 60%." Four informants claimed to retry the activities immediately "to finish doing homework as soon as possible." Additional four informants said they "best remember [their] mistakes immediately after feedback." Reasons for resubmitting for the three additional students were "to ensure that the correct solution sticks to their memory, to reach an even higher result percentage and to prevent themselves becoming angry over the initial results."

As seen, the general trend of resubmitting exercises remained for the second week. Respondents not only reflected on homework assignments as tasks to be done, but as ones that develop their general subject knowledge.

On the last feedback sheets informants were asked to approximate the time they used to spend doing homework traditionally (W4/Q4) and the time they spend on the online activities (W5/Q5) weekly. *Table 2* discusses the averages calculated from respondents' answers and the online campus.

Traditional homework (students' average)	Online homework (students' average)	Traditional homework (factual data)	Online homework (MEC progress report average)
29min 45sec	40min 54sec	N/A	29min 45sec

Table 2. Average time spent on doing homework according to students and according to MEC

Based on informants' responses (summarised in *Table 2*) the estimated average time spent doing homework online grew, yet informants overestimated their efforts. Although there is no factual data regarding time spent with traditional homework writing, the overestimation implies that students generally overestimate their efforts. For the teacher-researcher it was shocking to discover that students previously spent only approximately 20 minutes studying English at home weekly.

As seen, most informants expressed that they spent more time doing homework online. Yet, when asked to elaborate on why they think they spent more, less or the same amount of time writing homework online or offline or vice versa,

- 5 respondents claimed to spend "less time doing homework online due to usual lack of doing homework in the first place," due to "completing online tasks faster" and two of them due to "time saved thanks to the assigned exercises that needed not to be found to begin with."

- 5 respondents claimed to spend more time doing homework online, three of them owed it to "more homework assigned than previously," one of them because "(s)he could correct his/her mistakes immediately and the recompletion of activities took more time," one was "motivated by the percentages" and spent more time online for better results and one claimed "previously frequent lack of doing homework."

Respondents claiming to have spent less time doing online homework only listed positive attributes of MEC, whereas ones spending more time writing online homework regarded it either positive or negative.

The mentor teacher also approximated that students spend more time doing homework online than traditionally, although factual data concerning traditional homework is not available. The mentor attributes the extra time students spend with online homework to instant feedback and to the fact that "all assignments are sent to students regardless of classroom presence, therefore they cannot forget about any exercises."

Consequently, even if arguably most respondents sensed a quality enhancement in their homework assignments, the immediate correction of exercises MEC offers was not considered to be a positive feature of the software by all respondents. Even if most informants discovered a positive change in the quality of their homework, not all of them considered it to be beneficial.

4.3 What are the Advantages and Disadvantages of the Online Campus? (Q3)
When asked what the main advantages of the online campus are, students highlighted the following factors (W3/Q4):
- − immediate feedback and error correction (4 mentions)
- − more interesting tasks (3 mentions)
- − doing homework is faster (3 mentions)
- − easier accessibility (2 mentions)
- − homework is not ambiguous (2 mentions)
- − good grammar practice (1 mention)
- − an immense databank of activities is accessible (1 mention)
- − teacher can monitor progress easily (1 mention)
- − "possibly more of us are doing quality homework" (1 mention)

As partly discussed before, students mostly felt aided by the immediate feedback available in MEC. Yet, children growing up in the age of technology, doing homework faster online and easier accessibility also emerged as vital factors for some of them. While answers claiming that online tasks are more interesting are rather enigmatic, maybe some students valued the modern design of exercises. Moreover, the immense databank of activities also broadens the limits of a traditional workbook. Most answers conceivably refer to advantages of MEC provided by computer technology, where *immediateness* (e.g. immediate feedback) is a key factor.

The mentor teacher pinpointed the following positive attributes:

− MEC is a vast databank of pre-designed activities,

− students spend more time doing quality homework,

− ease of revision,

− ease of supplementing content.

When elaborating on supplementation of revision, the mentor highlighted that "there are many online revision tasks that can be assigned to students and therefore revision might as well take place at home."

The teacher-researcher saw a major advantage of blending in the ease of administration. MEC stores online progress, therefore the chance of forgetting to check if the learner in question made up for missing homework is reduced to zero.

On the other hand, the main disadvantages of MEC according to students were (W3/Q5):

− possible technical difficulties (5 mentions)

− the Internet is not always available (2 mentions)

− MEC is not available for smartphones (2 mentions)

− it is not always clear which activities are already completed (1 mention)

− the whole task needs to be redone even if there are only one or two mistakes in it (1 mention).

As informants noted, traditionally assigned homework also has its advantages. If there was a power cut or technical difficulty with the campus, they might not be able to practice at home at all, yet no student reported on any power cuts throughout the experiment.

The mentor teacher added the following factors to the possible disadvantages:

− accessibility (it costs money and it is unreasonable that a teacher, parents or the school finances access)

− lack of a free reliable and not restricted blending software or database with pre-designed activities.

As also observed by the teacher-researcher, there are no proper free blending software available to the knowledge of the mentor and the teacher-researcher that include a databank of exercises as well as the possibility to register students to monitor progress. Some blending softwares offer a trial period or a free access, but in the latter case accessibility is heavily limited.

5. Conclusions

5.1 A Brief Summary of Main Findings

Blending does not necessarily raise learner awareness and learner responsibility (Q1). Although students' answers related to preparation for classes and utilising the features of MEC positively affected learner responsibility, not all informants discovered a development in their learning awareness. Additionally, while awareness grew, the fact that the teacher is provided insights into all bits and pieces of homework writing process might raise stress levels, at least for some learners. Consequently, blending sporadically raises learner awareness and responsibility.

Blending results in learner awareness of higher quality homework (Q2). From the first week of the study on, learners depicted positive changes regarding their homework quality. This trend remained steady throughout the four weeks of the research. In addition to the learners, the mentor also reported a positive trend regarding quality homework, immensely thanks to immediate feedback.

The online campus has many advantages as well as numerous disadvantages (Q3). Major advantages of the software included immediate feedback on performance, being equipped with thousands of ready-made resources, some learners do homework online faster, it is impossible to forget about any homework, the teacher can easily monitor progress and discover ambiguities, students spend more time learning at home, the revision may take place at home, MEC assists classroom administration and aids supplementing content. Some informants also argued that MEC provides good grammar practice activities as well as useful inter links.

Conversely, in case of any technical difficulties the online campus is not accessible as well as learners might be unable to access it for several distinct reasons (e.g. travelling etc.). Some learners miss a smartphone application of MEC. Although it has methodological reasons, for some learners having to recommence the complete activity even if they had few mistakes was a disadvantage. Both the mentor and the teacher researcher find accessibility a fundamental drawback.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

Due to time constraint, limited resources and limited availability, a large-scale research could not have been conducted. Consequently, a smaller-scale research was conducted with a smaller data sample.

The selection of informants was purely based on opportunity and participants were far from representing a nationwide scope. Furthermore, the research was limited to a specific online campus and introduced data obtained from it. Any deficiency of the campus, therefore, contributed to the limitations of the present study.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

A larger-scale research with MEC would be welcome to trace long-term effects of blending both from the perspectives of the learners and the teacher. It would also be advisable to implement further research into blending in the EFL classroom specifically focusing on language learning areas, age groups, content or tool.

Professional EFL literature gives numerous guidelines to teachers on questions and possibilities to consider before blending, yet studies focusing on implementation are lacking. Although this study aimed to contribute to research into secondary EFL blending, further research with similar targets would be welcome.

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