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## **ZADÁNÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE**

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### **Z á s a d y   p r o   v y p r a c o v á n í :**

Diplomandka se bude ve své práci zabývat problematikou kombinované výuky (tzv. blended learning) anglického jazyka. V teoretické části práce nejprve definuje pojem blended learning a jeho různé komponenty, které lze vzájemně kombinovat. Dále popíše zvolený kombinovaný kurs. Z širokého pole informačních a komunikačních technologií se zaměří na telefon, uvede charakteristiku zvolené technologie včetně specifik komunikace zprostředkované telefonem. Dále bude diskutovat potenciál této technologie pro rozvoj komunikativní kompetence v anglickém jazyce. Cílem vlastního empirického šetření bude identifikovat výhody a nevýhody tohoto způsobu výuky angličtiny z pohledu učitele.

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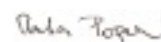
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# Abstract

The thesis concentrates on the issue of blended learning with the use of telephone. The thesis aims at providing findings that would be beneficial for teachers or anyone interested in the technique of blended learning with the use of telephone. The theoretical part explains the blended learning and describes its history abroad as well as the current situation in the Czech Republic. It mentions the components of blended learning, therefore e-learning and the new phenomenon m-learning are explained. The possible combinations of components are discussed, though there is not any rule as to what should be blended. The blend is chosen in order to be the most beneficial for students and teachers. From the wide range of information and communication technologies the telephone is selected. Next, the specifics of the technology are discussed. Further, the potential of the technology for the development of communication competence in English language is commented. The aim of the empirical research is to find out advantages and disadvantages of the blended course from the teacher's point of view and to find out if the types of the questions were repeated frequently or if the new questions appeared. The practical part describes the procedure of the research, analysis and the outcomes. During the research qualitative data were acquired and as the research tools the recordings and the diary were selected. The phone calls were recorded and analysed via open coding based on Grounded theory. The diary is based on the Introspective method and the notes were recorded always in the same structure. The conclusion states the findings in connection to the overall aim of the thesis

**Key-words:** blended learning, e-learning, m-learning, telephone, mobile phone, teacher's point of view, advantages, disadvantages.

# Abstrakt

Diplomová práce se zabývá kombinovanou výukou s využitím telefonu. Práce se zaměřuje na poskytnutí poznatků, které budou prospěšné pro učitele anglického jazyka nebo kohokoliv, kdo se zajímá o tuto techniku kombinované výuky s využitím telefonu. Teoretická část vysvětluje pojem kombinované výuky, popisuje historii v zahraničí, ale také současnou situaci v České republice. Dále se práce zmiňuje o komponentech kombinované výuky, z toho důvodu se práce zaměřuje na pojmy e-learning a také nový fenomén m-learning. Také jsou zde diskutovány možné kombinace komponentů v této výuce, nicméně je nutno dodat, že neexistuje žádné pravidlo z jakých částí by se tato výuka měla skládat. Kombinace je vždy zvolena vzhledem k tomu, aby byla vhodná jak pro studenty tak pro učitele. Z širokého pole informačních a komunikačních technologií je zvolen telefon. V další části diplomové práce jsou diskutována specifika této technologie a také potenciál technologie pro rozvoj komunikativní kompetence v anglickém jazyce. Cílem empirického výzkumu je odhalit výhody a nevýhody kombinovaného kurzu z pohledu učitele a také zjistit, zda se typy otázek opakují nebo se mění. Praktická část popisuje celý proces, analýzu a výsledky. Jedná se o kvalitativní výzkum a jako výzkumné nástroje byly zvoleny nahrávky a deník. Telefonní rozhovory byly nahrávány a analyzovány pomocí otevřeného kódování založeného na Zakotvené teorii. Základem deníku je Introspektivní metoda, a údaje do deníku byly vždy zaznamenávány podle stejné struktury. Závěry uvádí výsledky ve spojitosti s celkovým cílem práce.

**Klíčová slova:** kombinovaná výuka, e-learning, m-learning, telefon, mobilní telefon, pohled učitele, výhody, nevýhody

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# INTRODUCTION

The thesis deals with the issue of blended learning of English language. The main focus is on blended learning with the use of telephone.

The reason for choosing the topic is due to the personal experience. I subjectively found the technique captivating and rather unexplored. Therefore I have realised there is the need to expose the problem further with its various advantages as well as disadvantages. To use the telephone as a part of English language teaching is assumed by some people as something not to be trusted, not efficient enough and definitely not worth trying. Nevertheless, it was the complete opposite for those who have experienced such learning.

I personally started with blended learning with the use of the Internet (Skype) due to one of my students, who moved to another town. For that reason she could no longer attend the face-to-face classes as often as required. Since that time face-to-face classes have been combined with online classes, which has worked very well for both sides. The biggest advantage was considered no need to commute long distance or spend any time by that. Moreover, there were no major disadvantages. Not until then I got the opportunity to start using blended learning with the use of telephone at a language school. The initial idea was to aim the telephone lessons at business people travelling frequently. At those not having much time for face-to-face classes, yet having the opportunity to talk over the telephone while travelling. Later it has been understood that it could be used for all different kinds of students with many advantages.

The aim of the thesis is to outline the issue of blended learning and from the whole range of informational and communicational technologies focus on telephone. Furthermore, there will be discussed the potential of this technology for the development of the communicative competence in English language. The aim of the empirical research is the identification of not only advantages but also disadvantages of the technique from the teacher's point of view. The outcomes of the research are considered significant due to the fact that blended learning with the use of telephone is contemporary issue; moreover the use of communication technologies in English teaching is becoming more and more popular nowadays.

Regarding the content, the practical part is divided into four main chapters. Starting with the concept of blended learning and its components, where the general idea is defined, as well as the components and their combinations are discussed. The second part focuses on telephone as the chosen technology. The wide use of mobile phones and different types of mobile technologies are discussed. The further chapter deals with the potential of the technology, thus the communicative competence is mentioned within this part. Finally, the lesson planning concludes the theoretical part, where some methods and approaches, related to the course described in the empirical research, are commented. In addition, chapters concerning learner needs and psychological point of view are included, since a professional teacher should be aware of them.

The practical part introduces the chosen course. Further, the aim of the empirical research is introduced together with the research questions. The research reveals the advantages and disadvantages from a teacher's point of view. The following chapters deal with the research time plan and research methodology as well as background information. Next, the research tools are presented, followed by the whole procedure. The conclusion of the practical part summarises the findings of the research procedure in connection to the research aim. The thesis ends with conclusion of both parts and therefore the entire thesis.

Imagine the future now...it is with blended learning.

*Thorne (2003, p. ix)*

Throughout the thesis, the following abbreviations are used:

BL - blended learning.

ICT - information and communication technologies

F2F – face-to-face

CC – communicative competence

# 1 The Concept of Blended Learning and its Components

This part deals with blended learning in general. It explains several definitions of blended learning, as well as its history, in order to show that it is not a new idea. Further, the advantages in contrast to disadvantages are discussed. Next, the components of BL and some basic types of technologies are demonstrated. Moreover, within this chapter the popular and relatively recent concepts of e-learning and m-learning are introduced, due to them having significant meaning as the part of BL. Finally, there is a focus on possible combinations of components in order to create the best blend suitable for students as well as teachers.

## 1.1 What is Blended Learning?

Blended Learning is a new phenomenon, the same as e-learning some years ago. Nevertheless, only the name is new, the idea of blended learning is relatively old and will be discussed in more detail in section 1.2. There is not one specific definition, but many of them describing the same issue. Bonk & Graham state that blended learning has become somewhat of a buzzword in corporate and higher education setting. However there is still quite a bit of ambiguity about what it means. (2006, p.4)

Blended learning is a flexible approach that combines face-to-face teaching/learning with remote (usually internet-based) learning. (Harvey, 2004–9) It is a combination of learning components and learning events to create a meaningful learning. (Khan 2010, p.2)

Like its name suggests, it blends online learning with more traditional methods and developments. It is the most logical and natural evolution of our agenda. It tailors the learning for individuals. Moreover blended learning represents opportunity to integrate technological advances with the best of traditional learning. (Thorne, 2003, p.2)

Bonk & Graham provide their own definition: **Blended learning systems combine face-to-face instruction with computer mediated instruction.** The working definition reflects the idea that BL is the combination of instruction from two historically separate

models of teaching and learning: traditional face-to-face learning systems and distributed learning systems. It also emphasizes the central role of computer-based technologies in blended learning (2006, p.5)

To sum up, from the various definitions the BL can be understood as a combination of the traditional teaching (face-to-face) and educating at a distance that uses some kind of technology (for example the Internet, telephone, television etc.)

## **1.2 History of Blended Learning and its Existence in Different Countries**

Blended learning is by no means a new idea. It has had a long tradition, nevertheless the term BL has not been used previously. To prove the point, various facts are introduced.

Singh states that in the past blended learning was comprised of physical classroom formats, such as lectures, labs, books, or handouts (2003, p.6), and also seminars, tutorials, case studies, role plays, residential weekend courses, adventure training, and action learning groups. (Bonk&Graham 2006, p.185)

Blended learning has been in existence in the following countries:

a) *Since 1920s – USA, 1969 – the United Kingdom, 1960 – New Zeland*

It can be traced as far back as the 1920s, when it was known as “supervised correspondence study”, state Bonk&Graham. By 1930, it was a method used in more than a hundred public high schools across the nation. In more recent history, BL was introduced in 1969 in the United Kingdom as a basic component of the teaching system of the world’s first distance teaching institution, the Open University. A part of BL was for example providing instruction by correspondence based on study or prescribed texts and video programs. Teachers travelled to summer schools or study centres to advise or discuss study materials.(ibid.,p.xxiv) Therefore it was a turning point, since it was designed as a multimedia teaching institution, combining print, broadcasting, and face-to-face in an integrated manner, reflecting the high investment/high output potential of technologically-based teaching. (Bates 1995, p.24) Duggleby adds: “It proved

phenomenally successful” (2000, p.7) Further, it has also existed in New Zealand in Massey University and Open Polytechnic since 1960s. During the 1980s, universities, polytechnics, and some schools explored PC-based learning, educational television, video, and CD-ROMS all over New Zealand. (Wright, Dewstow, Topping, Tappenden, in Bonk&Graham 2006, p. 169)

b) *Since 1985 – Japan, since 1999 - Korea*

The University of the Air began to offer distance education to adult learners in Tokyo via terrestrial broadcasts channels in 1985, claims Suzuki. It extended its service area to cover all regions of Japan in 1990 by establishing video-based learning centres and in 1998 by using Communication Satellite Broadcasting. (ibid., p.269) Finally, Lee&Im show that the trend to BL in Korea began in cyber-universities: those that offer courses online via cyberspace as a form of distance education. They later began to offer F2F courses themselves or allowed students to take these universities incorporate both online and F2F elements in their design (ibid. p.282-283)

c) *The situation in the Czech Republic*

It seems that the most common use of BL is at universities and higher education. This is the opportunity for students who work and do not have the possibility to study full-time. Further BL can be found at some language schools, which again try to meet the needs of their students, to widen their courses and offer something new and more competitive. Finally, examples of BL can be found at primary or secondary schools, in order to motivate students or as the compensation for not having enough time in face-to-face classes.

Šulcová claims that there is the indisputable perspective of blended learning is in higher education, retraining and lifelong education. As an example she demonstrates the blended course at Charles University in Prague in the project MOODLE for students of chemistry teaching study program. (2010, p.4) In this perspective can be mentioned the Clinical Year Project, a specific course that was in existence at the University of Pardubice in 2001/2002-2009/2010. According to Černá it refers to a one year period of teaching practice combined with face to face sessions at the university and heavy

reliance on computer-mediated communication, provided via MAT Forum.(2005, p.83-86)

Further, BL starts to be popular with some language schools. LinguART language school offers a course, which combines of short phone calls with a teacher, usually twice a week, with the length of 10-15min and face-to-face lessons, that take place once a week/month/3months.(katalog, 2010, p.3, my translation) Also Studium ONLINE advertise courses with the use of Skype or mobile phone, in combination with self-study of e-mail materials.(2006-2010, my translation).

An example of BL at primary school is described by Zelíková.. She demonstrates in her Diploma Thesis the use of BL in geography classes. It is based on traditional face-to-face classes in combination with activities created in LMS Moodle, which is the abbreviation for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. Those activities include online discussions, study materials, homework and final test.(2007, p.62-65, my translation)

On the whole, BL has been used for decades. It started as supervised correspondence study in the USA as early as in 1920'. The establishment of the Open University in the United Kingdom was very innovative at that time and has been popular since than. Further, various schools and institutions across the world applied BL, such as Masary University and Open Polytechnic in New Zealand, The University of the Air in Japan, so called cyber-universities in Korea and many more. Finally and most importantly, it has been in existence in the Czech Republic, examples of implementation can be found at universities and higher education. It starts to gain its popularity at language schools, in order to be more available to specific students. Finally, BL courses can be found even at primary and secondary schools.

### **1.3 Why Blended Learning**

In the following subheads, the situation in the today's society will be discussed. Furthermore the advantages as well as disadvantages of blended learning will be outlined.

### **1.3.1 Current Situation**

Let us face the facts of the changing world. Letters are not sent by regular post anymore, however e-mails are more comfortable for most of us. It is not necessary to go to the bank, since there is Internet banking at disposal. Browsing through news or shopping on the Internet is often preferred.

Naturally new technologies are changing very fast. Actually, they have been emerging and changing rapidly for the last three decades. However students, especially the younger ones are used to those technologies. Therefore they should be used effectively in language learning/teaching. Hargreaves assumes that it is the time of educational history, when the world in which teachers do their work is changing profoundly. On that account there is the need for creativity and ingenuity among their pupils, by experiencing creativity and flexibility themselves. (2002, p.2)

In this connection, the term knowledge society is often used. It is considered to be a variation of information society. By the term information society is meant the ability to retrieve information. However knowledge society, also referred as learning society, is not only about finding information, but about the actual use of information, ability to learn, be creative and competitive. Thurow shows that: “in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the education and skills of the workforce will be the dominant competitive weapon.”(in Rosenberg 2001, p.6). Therefore today’s teachers must get a grasp of, and a grip on, the knowledge society in which their pupils live and will work. It has to be understood that knowledge society is about breaking barriers to learning and communication. Equally important, the knowledge society is a learning society. (Hargreaves 2002, p.2)

For that reason technologies should be used not only for searching information, but also as a tool to gain knowledge

### **1.3.2 Benefits versus Setbacks**

#### *a) Benefits*

As previously mentioned, BL is not new. Different approaches have been combined in order to be the most suitable for learners, in this case in convenient place,

time, cost or pace and at the same time for learners to get the most out of the learning process.

Singh comments that the concept of blended learning is rooted in the idea that learning is not just a one-time event—*learning is a continuous process*. Blending provides various benefits over using any single learning delivery medium alone. (2003, p.6) It can be motivating, especially for younger learners, in case it is used the type of technology they feel comfortable with. More importantly, students can be actively involved in the learning/teaching process and at the same time acquire information from various sources and therefore to remember it better. Singh adds that a single delivery mode inevitably limits the reach of a learning program or critical knowledge transfer in some form or fashion. For example, a physical classroom training program limits the access to only those who can participate at a fixed time and location. (2003, p.6)

Graham, Allen, and Ure (2003, 2005) show that people chose BL for three reasons:

1. *Improved pedagogy:*

For example model used by IBM (Lewis, Orton), where learners go through three phases:

- a) Online self-paced learning to acquire background information
- b) F2F learning lab focused on active learning and application experiences instead of lecture
- c) Online learning and support for transferring the learning to the workplace environment.

2. *Increased access and flexibility:* Those are of growing importance as more mature learners with outside commitments such as work and family seek additional education.

3. *Increased cost-effectiveness* (Bonk 2005, p.8-10)

In case of improved pedagogy, the first stage can be used in English language teaching for learning vocabulary in advance or reading particular information from realia, therefore a teacher does not have to waste time in F2F classes. The next stage can be used for practicing the vocabulary or working with the theory in an active way, for

example discussing the study materials. The last stage can be used for dealing with questions and problems students have or as another opportunity to practise what they have learned. As a result, students work with the information three times and remember it much better. Equally important, they learn in more interactive rather than transmissive way, which naturally leads to higher motivation.

Secondly, blended learning can be more flexible for students, who are not able to attempt classes at fixed time. And finally, it can be more financially effective. Due to the possibility to use the modern technologies, students and teachers do not have to commute and therefore waste their time and money.

*b) setbacks*

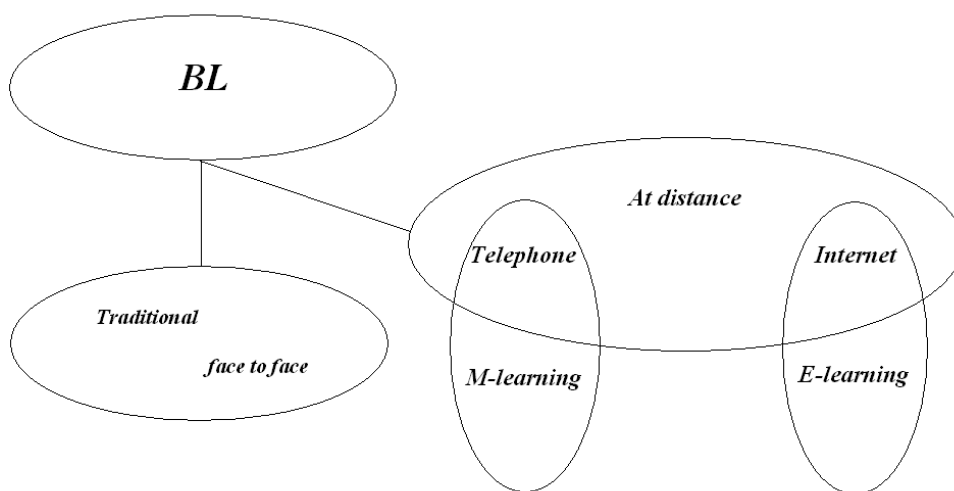
In any case, blended learning is not flawless and therefore it is necessary to mention some of the possible setbacks. According to Bonk&Graham online learning as a part BL could be frustrating, since it requires some basic level of technological knowledge. Also e-learning is considered by many students as isolated, it is difficult to keep track of the participants and finally there is the lack of facial and body language communication (ibid.,124) Students as well as teachers should be prepared that the technology will sometimes let them down (Duggleby, 2000, p.122) Finally, it can be much more time consuming for teachers, in other words the financial reward very often does not correspond to the amount of work that has been done.

To conclude, there are advantages as well as disadvantages. On one hand, it is beneficial since it takes into consideration the individual needs of the learners, such as different speed and at different time. Moreover, it can be cost effective for them; due to no need to commute on every single lesson and more beneficial if they hear/use information more times and have it from different sources. On the other hand, BL is much more demanding for teachers, especially demanding on preparation and evidently it does not have to be suitable for every learner. Particularly for those, who are not computer skilled or generally skilled in technology. Lastly, the real contact with other students is not sufficient or is missing completely.

## 1.4 Components of Blended Learning

As previously mentioned, BL is always some mix of methods or approaches. Naturally it is possible to combine them, in order to be beneficial for both a learner and a teacher. The components can be divided according to mode of communication, as synchronous and asynchronous. Further, according to the initial definitions in 1.1, the following diagram is demonstrated:

Picture 1.



### 1.4.1 Synchronicity versus Asynchronicity

First of all it is necessary to note that the components of BL in the process of teaching/learning are carried either in synchronous or asynchronous mode of communication.

*Synchronous mode of communication* means direct, place-based, social interaction between the student, the instructor and other students. Moreover, the strong features are the high motivation and engagement among students, as well as high fidelity (Bonk & Graham 2006, p. 122). It proceeds in a real time, it means that two people have to be connected to the Internet at the same time in order to interact. (Tinker, in Černá 1997, p.2)

a) Synchronous – physical/face-to-face components:

- F2F tutoring; coaching or mentoring sessions; classroom; workshops; conferences; meetings; labs

b) Synchronous electronic components:

- Internet and audio conferencing, live video, satellite or videoconferencing, virtual online classroom or instant messaging. (Khan, 2010, 10-11)

*Asynchronous mode of communication* is flexible, which means that course materials and messages between students and instructor are available anywhere and anytime, therefore student can study independently of time and space. (Bonk & Graham 2006, p. 122) As a result it is more convenient, more adaptable to a person's schedule, and as already mentioned available in 24/7 mode. Nevertheless the traditional classroom dynamics are neutralized. (Crystal, in Černá 2001, p.31) It is not financially demanding, however it requires students' high motivation. (Nocar 2004, p.232)

Asynchronous components:

- Web pages, e-mail, discussion forums, web/computer-based instruction, books, CD-ROM, audio, video etc. (Khan, 2010, 12)

### 1.4.2 Types of Technology

Bates assumes that there is a need to understand the relative strengths and weaknesses of different technologies. He claims that technology is neither good nor bad in itself, but it is the way how it is used that matters. The crucial are also the requirements for their effective use in widening asses or meeting the needs of learners in a flexible or open manner (1995, p.20)

Furthermore some lessons learned in the past with the older technologies are still relevant with new technologies. Each new technology that emerges in education becomes the latest ‘wave’, the technology that will revolutionise teaching. Yet there is often ignored the need to re-organise and re-structure teaching in order for technology to be fully exploited (ibid, p.21)

Since 1980 there has been the rapid expansion of new technologies, their listing can be found in the table below.

Table 1. (ibid, p.30)

<i>Type of technology</i>			
1	Audio cassettes	10	Video discs
2	Video cassettes	11	Computer-controlled interactive video
3	Telephone teaching	12	Video conferencing
4	Computer-based learning	13	Electronic mail
5	Cable TV	14	Computer conferencing
6	Satellite TV	15	Internet
7	Computer-based audio-graphics systems	16	Computer-based multimedia
8	Viewdata	17	Remote interactive data-bases
9	Teletext	18	Virtual reality

It is essential to realize the difference between medium and technology. The term medium means the generic form of communication associated with particular ways of representing knowledge. Some of the most important media in education are for example: direct human contact (face-to-face); text (including still graphics); audio;

television or computing. A single medium such as television may be carried by several different delivery technologies (satellite, cable, video, cassette etc.) (ibid. p.31).

### **1.4.3 E-learning**

E-learning is very broad and general term, connected to the use of a computer. The literature offers many different definitions that diverge and might be confusing. However discussing the issue of e-learning is significant due to e-learning being very often part of BL.

In the United Kingdom, the Department for Education and Skills (2004) suggests: “If someone is learning in a way that uses information and communication technologies, they are using e-learning” This definition includes any activity from the simple use of e-mail and PowerPoint presentations delivered on campus to sophisticated multimedia simulations for use in stand-alone study at any location in the world. (Bonk&Graham 2006, p.185)

E-Learning refers to the use of Internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solutions that enhance knowledge and performance. (Rosenberg 2001, p.28) Analogously Eger implies that e-learning is education that is provided electronically. The necessary device is a computer using the Internet or the Intranet. There is a multimedia platform based on CD-ROM or DVD as its component. The primary is the use of a computer, network and visual and interactive environment. The main issue is focused on educational aims. (2004, p.65, my translation)

Therefore the term e-learning suggests electronic means of teaching or learning, where the main device is computer. Further, multiple technologies can be employed; nowadays it is for example the Internet. Although, this has not always been the case, since the Internet or a computer were essential. To prove the point, the division of e-learning according to Nocar is stated:

- a) CBT – Computer-Based Training: considered to be the first stage of e-learning.

It is usually seen as the off-line form of e-learning, which means that there is no

Internet connection and therefore all study materials are available of FD, CD, DVD.

- b) WTB- Web-Based Training: the second stage of e-learning. It requires the connection to the Internet, which means that study materials are distributed over the Internet. The advantage is the availability anytime or anywhere. The important fact is that students are not isolated and have possibility to communicate with others.(2004, p.3 my translation) On the other hand Web-Based training alone is not appropriate or sufficient for all the problems. In some cases it is a breakthrough, extending the reach of training to people never before to attend the classes. In other cases it costs hundreds of dollars and sits of the virtual shelf. The goal of BL is to combine training media into an integrated mix (Bersin 2004, p. xv)

In short, e-learning can be either perceived as off-line, which means without the Internet connection (CBT), or at the moment more common on-line, with the use of the Internet (WTB).

#### **1.4.4 M-learning**

The expression M-learning, which stands for mobile learning, is relatively new. Nevertheless, if going further and understanding what it means, it would be realised that many of us have some experience with it already. O'Malley explains that it is any sort of learning happening when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies. (2003, p.6)

It is common, especially for younger generation, to use iPods or mobiles; however it is not the question of only music, or calling anymore. They are used in more sophisticated ways, often as an important part of their education. To explain the problem further, it can be demonstrated on the simple example: CD players are becoming rather old fashioned, therefore students often use iPods to listen the right pronunciation, instead of carrying CD player, when learning foreign language. Various listenings can be downloaded from the Internet; very popular are for example the BBC

podcasts. Finally, dictionaries in mobiles are used very frequently, due to them being always at hand and can serve as a quick help. Those are only few examples of many.

According to the eLearn magazine students already use various types of mobile devices, which provide access to the most current news stories, weather forecasts, movie trends, and restaurant reviews. Further the typical example would be podcasting, which can be audio or video and can create an environment similar to a face-to-face classroom, as the podcast can be played over and over again until comprehension is achieved. Due to modern learners experiencing an increasing demand on their time, podcasting can facilitate a more flexible, mobile learning option. (Zink, 2010) Stead&Colley from Tribal Digital Learning state various examples of m-learning:

- primary school: as a part of a lesson pupils use the PDA devices to do various exercises, filling in the missing words etc. As an example has been used the school in Birmingham.
- secondary schools: Italian catering school, students take pictures or record family recipes and share them with others, medical school: students again take pictures and notes while at hospital having learning practice.
- higher education: the summaries of lectures are recorded and published as an audio, students can download them into their mobile phones and therefore enhance their learning.
- employers: can test the skills of their employees and assess their weaknesses.
- the use of media board: taking pictures, interviewing people, taking short video clips, sharing them as a whole group and working with them collaboratively.

(Tribal Education Limited, 1998 – 2009)

Looking at mobile learning in a wider context, we have to recognize that mobile, personal, and wireless devices are now radically transforming societal notions of discourse and knowledge, and are responsible for new forms of learning. With increased popular access to information and knowledge anywhere, anytime, the role of education, perhaps especially formal education, is challenged and the relationships between education, society, and technology are now more dynamic than ever. (Traxler 2009, p.10)

As previously mentioned, with the advances in technologies m-learning is becoming part of our education. So as a traditional Irish saying proclaims: *'You have to listen to the river if you want to catch a trout'*, which means that if a teacher wants to motivate young learners or to approach them, he/she needs to use the new technologies, popular and available with those learners.

## **1.5 Combinations of Components**

Blended learning can be compounded of assorted components. However important is to mention that there is no any prescribed rule as to what technologies, media or components are supposed to be mixed. They are blended according to individual needs in order to create the most suitable and meaningful learning environment.

Some of the examples suggested by Mužík (2004) are seminars in combination with constant connection via e-mail or follow up dialog among participants. It can also be courses provided on web pages in combination with classic lessons at school. (in Nocar 2006, p.2, my translation). In this perspective can be added the previously mentioned Clinical Year Project at the University of Pardubice, which combines of teaching practice with face to face sessions at the university and computer-mediated communication, provided via MAT Forum. (Černá 2005, p.83-86). Another example is the course mediated through mobile phone in combination with F2F classes, which is the theme of this diploma paper and it will be discussed in the next part.

In the first chapter the attention has been paid to the general concept of blended learning and its components. Initially, various definitions have been introduced, further the history of BL has been revealed in order to prove that it is not a new idea. Further, the comparison of advantages and disadvantages of this technique has been commented. The next part is dedicated to the possible components of BL that has been in existence since 1980'. Furthermore, the idea of e-learning and m-learning has been mentioned and finally there have been showed examples of how the components can be mixed in order to create a suitable blend.

The next chapters will deal with the characteristics of telephone as the chosen technology, its potential for the development of communicative competence as well as

the methods and approaches in connection to the course described in the practical part of the thesis.

## **2 The Characteristics of the Chosen Technology**

The thesis focuses on the course that is based on the three pillars, the key role play the traditional face-to-face classes in combination with the phone calls. The final component of the whole blend comprises of e-mails send after each phone call. The chosen technology in this case is telephone, to be more precise mobile phone, which will be discussed in this chapter.

### **2.1 Telephone**

For the purposes of the thesis the focus will be specifically on mobile phones rather than on telephones in general. As previously mentioned, mobile phones are becoming to play the important role in the process of learning. They have undoubtedly many advantages, such as availability anytime or anywhere, the personal involvement in the learning, younger learners are usually motivated due to this type of technology they are used to. However the technology might not be suitable for everybody.

Rosman claims that nowadays we can hardly imagine to gain knowledge only from a teacher or some textbooks. Mobile technologies are very easily accessible moreover, many people have already been using mobile technologies not only to access e-mail, but also to search the internet or to organize his/her own schedule.(2007, p.1) Cell phones are everywhere, there are around 1.5 billion of them or even more. They can be used for mobile training, coaching, and performance support. Employees can access web-based databases or search engines through their cell phones. Short SMS can be used to send coaching tips, quizzes and knowledge checks, or to measure training transfer. And video clips can provide short examples of desirable performance in areas such as negotiation, managing meetings, or customer service (Rossett, Frazee 2006, p.5)

In this connection, MoLeNet (The Mobile Learning Network) implies: The use of mobile as the part of learning can take place in any location, at any time, including traditional learning environments such as classrooms as well as in workplaces, at home, in community locations and in transit. Mobile technologies include:

- mobile phones, smartphones, PDAs, MP3/ MP4 players (e.g. iPods), handheld gaming devices (e.g. Sony PSP, Nintendo DS), Ultramobile PCs (UMPCs), mini notebooks or netbooks (e.g. Asus EEE), handheld GPS etc.

M-learning involves connectivity for downloading, uploading and/or online working via wireless network. (2010)

The use of mobile as a part of learning is gaining its prominence at the moment. It is based on the active self-study and individual work, the advantage is the easy accessibility, not only at home, at work or while travelling. It is not limited only to teaching but also as a way to share and transmit information. (Rosman 2007, p.1) Moreover it is good for the learning styles, because the multimedia approach is applied. Audio is transmitted due to MP3 player, visual types appreciate animations or pictures. Finally, personalisation is important, because learners are actively involved and the learning can be tailored to students. (Tribal Education Limited, 1998 – 2009)

The contemporary novelty is for instance SMS learning. Moblearn states that the learners are often very motivated, and there are ways of supporting language learning via all sorts of media, including podcasts, web, email, skype and of course SMS (moblearn, 2007) Athabasca University created the cell phone lessons for those wanting to learn English as a second language. Students simply download an English grammar lesson, then answer a series of multiple choice, or true or false questions. They can work both in and out of their learning center. "You're controlling it, which is so nice," said Tracey Woodburn of Athabasca University. "A lot of people have been telling me, 'Oh, I can do this when I am watching my kid's soccer practice or when I am on the bus coming to school.'" (CBC news, 2007)

On the contrary, learning should be in a quiet place, in order for students to concentrate better, however this is not always possible. Another drawback is the technology in itself. Naturally, mobiles need to be charged. This might not be a problem for students, using the device once a day, as much as for teachers providing the online mobile lessons as their full-time job. Here it is referred to mobile lessons offered by the language schools mentioned in the section 1.2. In the same type of learning/teaching process is also sufficient the signal strength. The minor problems might represent the

size of display, this is relevant for example in case of grammar exercises or possible health problems. Dr Maier of Imperial College claims that up to five per cent of the population could be suffering headaches, mood swings and hearing problems caused by radiation from handsets (London Evening Standard, 2005)

In conclusion, nowadays exist many various mobile technologies, which are used in learning/teaching process and have their indisputable advantages. According to several authors one of the most important advantages is the access to use it anytime and anywhere, however signal strength and the need to charge it have to be taken into consideration. Equally important is high motivation and different learning styles involved. In general, the use of mobile phones is becoming popular; to illustrate the fact the novelty of SMS learning has been mentioned.

### 3 Telephone Mediated Teaching and the Development of Communicative Competence

This chapter deals initially with the concept of communicative competence. The term is explained, due to the importance in English language teaching. The second part is dedicated to the potential of mobile phones, since the technology is used in the research described in the theoretical part.

#### 3.1 Communicative Competence

The communicative competence is considered to be the aim of ELT nowadays. Nonetheless, it has not always been this way. There has been a shift from focus on grammar to focus on communication. In Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias is the term communicative competence explained as the ability to communicate. It not only refers to a learner's ability to apply and use grammatical rules, but also to form correct utterances, and know how to use these utterances appropriately. (2010) Communicative competence has been described by various authors, who have perceived it from different points of view.

First of all Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure came up with the division of *la langue* and *la parole*, he sees them as the two opposite sides. Saussure explains: “*la langue* is the whole system of language that precedes and makes speech possible. A sign is a basic unit of *langue*. Learning a language, we master the system of grammar, spelling, syntax and punctuation. These are all elements of *langue*.” He adds, that on the opposite side is: “*la parole*, which is the concrete use of the language, the actual utterances. It is an external manifestation of *langue*. It is the usage of the system, but not the system itself.”(Changing Minds, 2010)

Further, According to Chomsky, competence refers to the underlying knowledge of language (the generative rules that can produce all possible sentences). On the other hand there is performance, which means the way language is actually used in practice (e.g., the way we produce or interpret a particular utterance on a particular occasion).

“Language performance may be affected by such things as attention, stamina, memory, and beliefs about our interlocutors. All of these things lie outside of a theory of grammar proper.”(Philosophy of Cognitive Science, 2010) Therefore, Chomsky perceived competence and performance as the two separate parts.

It was probably Dell Hymes who initially used the term communicative competence in 1966. Hymes (1972; 1977; 1994) focused on the ethnographic-oriented exploration of communicative competence that included 'communicative form and function in integral relation to each other. His ideas were originally research-based rather than pedagogical, however the ideas undergone an epistemic transformation: from empirically oriented questions to an idealized pedagogic doctrine. He opposed to the distinction between "competence" and "performance" by Noam Chomsky (Leung, 2005, in Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopedias, 2010). Chomsky's view of linguistic competence, served primary as part of developing a theory of the linguistic system itself, idealized as the abstract language knowledge of the monolingual adult native speaker, however it was not converged to pedagogy. Hymes, rather than Chomsky, had developed a theory of education and learning. (Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopedias, 2010). Thus, Hymes understood competence and performance as one unit.

Another linguist dealing with communicative competence was Bachman who perceived it as a combination of the following competences:

Table 1.2.

Tree Model of Communicative Competence		
Language Competence	Strategic Competence	Psychophysiological mechanisms
Organizational Competence (gramatical, textual competence)	interactional view	channel - visual / auditory
Pragmatic Competence ( illocutionary, sociolinguistic competence)	psycholinguistic view	mode - productive / reflective

(Bachman 1990, in TESOL page, 2010)

Bachman came with the tree model of communicative competence, dividing language and strategic competence, moreover he included psychophysiological mechanisms. For the purposes of the thesis it is important to mention strategic competence in more detail. According to Faerch & Kasper (1983) strategic competence is to know how to recognize and repair communication breakdowns, how to work around gaps in one's knowledge of the language, and how to learn more about the language and in the context. (in NCLRC, 2003, 2004) Bachman included three components in strategic competence which are assessment, planning and execution (2003, p.100)

Lastly, Choděra et al. claim that it refers to the secondary ability of higher level, where are interrelated verbal and non-verbal means of communication, factors of intercultural sensitivity and tolerance, socio-cultural, extralinguistic and paralinguistic factors typical for the particular language community (2001, p.41, my translation)

On the whole, communicative competence has become apprehended as the goal of language education. For that reason, it is important to understand the concept of CC, which primary means the ability to communicate. Moreover it includes the correct utterances, the ability to use the language appropriately in different situations and complex knowledge of all areas such as spelling, pronunciation, grammar, syntax.. Some linguists considered CC as one inseparable unit others contemplated it rather as two opposite sites, the knowledge of language rules in contrast to the ability to use it. Authors such as Chomsky and Saussure considered CC as two completely opposite sides. Finally, Bachman came with the tree model of communicative competence.

Regarding communicative competence, it is necessary to mention the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, abbreviated as CEFR. According to the University of Cambridge ESOL examinations it was created by the Council of Europe and it defines achievements of learners of foreign languages. The six reference levels are becoming widely accepted as the European standard for grading an individual's language proficiency. (2010) The reason for mentioning CEFR is due to the students of the course, that is the subject of the empirical research, are assessed according to their level of English (see 6.6.1)

Table 1.3:

A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive device.

C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.
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(ibid.)

## 3.2 The Potential of the Technology

Firstly, in regards to the potential of BL in general, many authors or professionals dealing with the issue agree that the technique will be even more popular and more widely used in the future as well as there will be the need for the mix of techniques or methods, since the use of only one technology will not be sufficient enough.

Ross&Gage claim that almost all courses in higher education will be in a long run blended and it is almost a certainty that BL will become the new traditional model of course delivery in ten years. Moving forward, it will not be the question whether the schools have BL, but rather how they do the blending. (in Bonk Graham, 2006 p.167) "Within five years, you'll see a very significant number of classes that are available in a hybrid fashion," claims similarly professor Bourne. "I would guess that somewhere in the 80 to 90 percent range of classes could sometime become hybrid." And he says he expects to see more students choose to take online courses even if they live on campus (hybrid learning, 2010). Finally, Bates agrees that since learning requires a mix of individual study and two-way communication with other learners and teachers, most learning will probably require a mix of models. The potential of the new technologies will be exploited. (1995, p.223)

Secondly, there is the huge potential of modern technologies. Particularly the use of mobile technologies will increase, due to its fondness among then new generation and the ability to motivate them.

Oblinger (2003) and Wendover (2002) define students born after 1980 as the new generation called millennials. They have grown up with new technologies and are proficient in the use of communicative technology. (in Bonk Graham, 2006 p.204) In this connection Bates points out that within the next 10 years technological developments will be so commonplace that they will be found in the majority of homes

in developed countries. At the same time, and not surprisingly, the demand for education and training will increase. Teachers then will be advisors, managers and facilitators of learning, rather than providers of information. Access to information will be primarily through telecommunications. (1995, p.228-231)

According to Stead and Colley from Tribal Digital Learning there is a strong potential of mobile technologies in the future, due to pedagogy being dependent on technologies. Further they admit that the use of only one mobile technology can not be the only learning experience, but there needs to be some mix. Learners will be much more mobile, they will learn at school, at information centre or on the job working and they will still need to have access to learning, to have all the tools to have the holistic experience. (Tribal Education Limited, 1998 – 2009)

Finally, mobile phones can help to develop the communicative competence. The primary function of mobile phones is to be in contact with others, to communicate, to gain information. Hendrich et al. state that communicative aim of teaching a foreign language is for the language to serve as a means to communicate. The aim emerges from the primary communicative function of the language, which serves as a means to share information or to communicate (1988, p.89) Also as previously mentioned communicative competence is the knowledge of all areas, such as pronunciation, grammar, morphology, syntax, cohesion, coherence, the knowledge of the correct utterances etc. According to Studium ONLINE a student by learning over the mobile phone practises spoken mode, expands vocabulary and improves the knowledge of the language (2006-2010, my translation). Further, LinguART Agency s.r.o. claims that the mobile learning combined with face-to-face lessons is effective, because learners develop communicative competence in speaking within several several weeks, thanks to regular communication over the phone. (katalog, 2010, p.9, my translation) Therefore mobile phones help to develop the communicative competence; however this is not always the truth. It depends on the way the mobile phones are used. The development of CC is in the case they are used communicatively, this means for instance if a teacher talks in English to his/her students.

To sum up, there are tendencies for blended learning to be widely used in the future; moreover new technologies will be used in teaching/learning process, including mobile

technologies. Currently, it is a new trend. Due to m-learning being a part of blended learning there has appeared a new kind of blend. Lastly, mobile phones develop communicative competence in English language, if they are used communicatively. Even the cutting edge technology will not be effective if not used in the correct way.

## 4 Lesson Planning

The issue of lesson planning does not include only a plan itself, but also establishing the aim, that should be achieved. In addition a teacher takes into consideration learner needs, he/she uses some kind of methods or approaches and finally a professional teacher is aware of the psychological point of view.

Firstly, it is necessary to note that lesson planning is important part of preparatory phase. The plan is either a formal, as it is very often the case of new and inexperienced teachers. Or informal one which is on the other hand preferred by more experienced teachers.

According to Scriviner, it is better to be prepared before going to the class. A teacher should be clear about exactly what he/she wants to do and they should be prepared to respond to the learners, since the lessons can be never completely predictable.

*A formal plan* is an outline of the procedure of the lesson (description of the activities, their order, timing). It contains background information (for example aims for the lesson, target language, material used, predicted problems, etc.) On the other hand, *an informal plan* is rather than writing any sort of formal plan, this is more about writing down notes about procedure that is supposed to be followed. The simplest type would be 'running order' of activities, possibly with a note of specific language points materials that will be used. (1994, p.44-49)

### 4.1 Methods and Approaches

Previously has been mentioned communicative competence, which can be developed by Communicative Language Teaching. For the purposes of the thesis, this section will deal with Communicative Language teaching as well as with Krashen's Natural order and Affective filter hypothesis.

Richards and Rodgers reveal that the origins of the Communicative Language Teaching go back to the late 1960s, concerning the British language teaching at that time. There was the need to focus in language teaching on communicative proficiency

rather than on mere mastery of structures. The proponents see the approach to be aimed at: communicative competence, which is the goal of language teaching. Furthermore, at the procedures of the four skills, acknowledging the interdependence of language and communication, which should be developed. (153-155)

Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) perceive the approach as:

- Language learning is learning to communicate
- Any device that helps the learners is accepted – varying according to their age, interest etc.
- Attempts to communicate may be encouraged from the very beginning
- Translation may be used where students need or benefit from it
- Communicative competence is the desired goal (i.e., the ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately).
- Teachers help learners in any way that motivates them to work with the language.
- Language is created by the individual, often through trial and error
- Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: Accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context. (ibid, p.157)

In comparison to the course described in the theoretical part, the overall aim is also to achieve the communicative competence mainly during the phone calls. Further there is the attempt for spontaneity of the calls, however the issue will be discussed in the practical part. Next, the mistakes are perceived as the natural, consequently the focus is on fluency rather than on accuracy. Students are let to speak most of the time. However, the translation is allowed, as well as the short explanation of the grammar, since it saves the time. Moreover, there is the attempt for the language to be spoken without thinking, drills are not used. Finally, a teacher motivates students, praises their achievement and keeps reminding students of their progress.

According to Krashen's language acquisition theory there are five hypotheses. For the purposes of this thesis, the focus will be on:

a) The natural order hypothesis

Regarding the natural order, the hypothesis claims that certain grammatical structures or morphemes are acquired before others in the first language acquisition and a similar natural order can be found in the second language acquisition. Moreover errors are seen as natural. (ibid.,182). As previously said grammatical rules precede speaking. Also a teacher, in the research of the practical part, expects students to make mistakes, those are mentioned in an e-mail, following a phone call.

b) The affective filter hypothesis

Krashen believes that student's affection to for instance fear or embarrassment influences negatively the process of acquiring the language (ibid., 183). Therefore, in the course there is the attempt to establish friendly relationship between a teacher and his/her student. Furthermore, the oral part of the learning takes place in the environment suitable to the each a teacher and a student.

In conclusion, the main aim of the Communicative language teaching is the ability to communicate rather than the profound knowledge of grammatical rules. In comparison, the discussed course is also based on speaking as the core of the teaching/learning process. Further the course follow the approach in many ways such as the development of four skills, intensity of comprehensible input, students having opportunity to speak most of the time in comfortable environment and friendly relationship, moreover mistakes are seen as the inevitable part of learning. Finally, the course follows Krashen's natural order and effective filter hypothesis.

## **4.2 Psychological Point of View**

The knowledge of psychology is significant for teachers and it is the indispensable part of teacher's training. If they are aware of the psychological aspects, they can establish better relationship with their pupils or prevent possible problems with discipline and misbehaviour. Obviously, the teaching/learning process can be therefore improved.

According to Čáp in education, as well as in other forms of work related to people, it is the truth that if we want to influence somebody we need to know the person. Thus,

the knowledge of pupils is certainly influencing a teacher's success. Psychology helps a teacher to get to know and understand pupils, due to pieces of information provided during teacher's training. (2007, p.365)

For teachers and other pedagogical workers is also important social psychology. It is consequential because the speech, which people use to communicate, has social context. Teachers guide the social interaction with pupils; they get to know pupil's parents, as well as the school can be the place of social conflicts. Further the class is the group of peers, which is affected not only by a teacher but by the peers themselves, which influences the achievement of aims. (Trpišovská, 2000, p.11, my translation) Social psychology deals with individual's behaviour, actions and experience, which is affected by impulsion of social environment. Important is also social learning that has several forms. (Kelnarová, Matějková 2010, p.134-136)

The issue of psychology in teacher's profession is very complex, therefore it has been mentioned only shortly in this chapter. However, teachers should have the psychological knowledge and should be aware of it in their profession.

### **4.3 Learner Needs**

At this point learner needs should be mentioned, since they can affect the learning process considerably. Each student has different needs, for instance availability at different time or speed of learning. Therefore it is a student, who plays the key role in the learning process.

Rodgers shows that recent developments in pedagogy, moving away from the transmissive, behavioural models and more toward the constructivist or socio-cognitive models, place the active learner at the heart of activities. The socio-cognitive view would also add that learning takes place in a social context (Rodgers, in Taylor 2003, p.1)

According to Rosenberg, there are three most important learner needs, in connection to the employee learning. It is first of all access. By that he means access to the information. The learners need to be able to connect to the information, to have the permission to use it, as well as the schedules need to be flexible and finally need to have

time for it. Therefore without access to learning, nothing else matters. Secondly, it is comprehensive approach. In another words, the information should be reliable, accurate, complete, organized, and labelled for easy retrieval and use. Moreover it should be in this way all the time, otherwise it would be worthless. Thirdly, it is balance. It refers to symmetry between training and information. Some types of information do not have to be delivered other skills or knowledge must be part of the training. The important factor is to differentiate on this point. (2001, p.15)

In brief, there is the current tendency for learner needs to be more important and to be paid more attention than in the past. Some of the most important learner needs in the employee learning is access to information and flexibility of learning/teaching process. Secondly, students should gain information in the suitable form, which means to be organized, accurate and reliable. Finally, there should be the balance between information and training.

## **5 Conclusion of the Theoretical Part**

The theoretical part deals first of all with the concept of blended learning. From the history it is evident, that blended learning has been in existence in various countries for several decades. It has been used also in the Czech Republic; examples can be found in higher education, at secondary and primary schools. Further, it starts to be popular at language schools. BL is the most typically the combination of face-to-face classes and online lessons, usually over the Internet or a less common mobile phone. Nevertheless, there is not any rule as to what should be blended. The courses are arranged in a way to be the most suitable for learners and teachers.

Further, as the technology has been chosen the mobile phone, which popularity and the use in learning/teaching English language are increasing. The technology itself has its advantages as well as disadvantages, which will be discussed in the practical part. Mobile phones have the potential to develop communicative competence, but naturally they need to be used communicatively, otherwise they do not develop CC as a whole.

## **6 Research**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Every time new phenomenon appears, whether it is e-learning, m-learning, blended learning or others, the first question asked is if the new method, approach or technique is effective or whether it is better than the old one. However, very few people are interested if it is also beneficial for teachers, how much more time it takes them to prepare the lessons and what the advantages or disadvantages are from the teachers point of view.

The practical part of the thesis focuses on the actual research of the above stated problem. First of all, I will introduce the course, and its components. Further, I shall define the aim and research question. Next, I will briefly mention a research time plan. The following part focuses on the research methodology and background information. Finally, the description of the research tools concludes the introductory part.

The next stage starts with the description of each research tool, followed by the research procedure, analysis and the outcomes. The conclusion presents the outcomes of the research and evaluates the whole procedure.

### **6.2 Description of the Course**

The chosen course that the research is based on is constituted of three main parts. The elemental parts are face-to-face classes combined with the short lessons over the mobile phone. The blended course is aimed at students who do not have enough time or possibilities to attempt each F2F class; the amount of those classes is tailored to student's needs. The face-to-face classes are mainly more theoretical, the student's book is used or the grammar is explained. On the contrary, the phone calls serve primarily for the active use of the language, there is the attempt for a student to talk most of the lesson. A teacher asks questions, corrects occasional mistakes, explains briefly the possible problems and finally, motivates a student. At the same time he/she makes notes for the following feedback.

Further, an e-mail is send after each phone call, in order to give a student the feedback of the lesson, since there is usually not enough time during the short lesson. The e-mails deal mainly with the particular mistakes that were not corrected during the call, there is the brief explanation of grammar and finally it should motivate students for further learning, praise their good work and progress that has been done. Naturally, the attempt to motivate is not expressed in every single e-mail in order not to create the false feeling of achievement in students. The extra part of the whole blend is an SMS send to a student one time a week. It comprises of a new phrase or proverb that might be interesting or useful.

### **6.3 Aim and the Research Questions**

The above stated course is quite complex and naturally, the various parts need to be prepared in advance. The research is based on the research question, which evolved from the theoretical part. The research question *is if the advantages prevail the disadvantages from the teacher's point of view.*

Further, the phone calls are relatively short and frequent, during them there might not be enough time to discuss new topics and there might be the tendency for a teacher to use routine questions. Therefore, the second research question should find out *if the types of the questions asked during the phone calls are always the same or if they change.* In case the types of questions repeat, students are prepared in advance therefore, the teaching/learning process missing spontaneity. On the other hand if the questions are new and different, there is progress and therefore it is more effective.

The main aim of the research is to find out the advantages and disadvantages from the teacher's point of view. In order to achieve the aim, the adequate use of research tools will be used.

### **6.4 Research Time Plan**

The research was carried out for 5 weeks. It started on the 1.December and finished on the 15. January. The length and the frequency of the various parts of the blended course are stated in the following table:

Table 2.

Phone calls	Length	20 min
	Frequency	2x /week
E-mails	Frequency	2x / week
F2F	Length	60 min
	Frequency	1x / week
SMS	Frequency	1x / week

Concerning the specific time of the phone calls, they were agreed at the beginning of the research with the students. I as a teacher always called the students. This was due to the contract with the mobile operator and therefore, the phone calls being more favourable for me. Nevertheless, there was a minor problem with the time of the phone calls. It was not possible to set the times of the phone calls one after another thanks to students' different time schedule. Thus, there was a time gap of 1,5 hour between the two calls.

Regarding the research tools, there were used two. First of them was a diary which was kept for 5 weeks, so there were 20 short written records at the end of the research. The second tool were the recordings of the phone calls. There were again 20 recordings, since there were 2 students involved in the research; the phone calls proceeded 2 times a week for the overall period of 5 weeks.

## 6.5 Research Methodology

Before doing the actual research it is important to become familiar with the research methodology as well as with the whole research process. According to Gavora there are six stages of research process. First of them is the establishment of the research problem, followed by the preparation of the research information. After this the researcher can proceed to the selection of research methodology, collection and

processing of data. Finally there is the interpretation of data and the creation of the research report (2000, p.13-14, my translation). Regarding the research methodology, Gavora adds that a researcher needs to find out how he/she will answer a research question. A researcher needs to choose the relevant research method and within the framework of it he/she selects a research tool. (ibid.,p.13). In order to find out the relevant methodology, it is important to mention the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research. Nunan states that qualitative research advocates the use of qualitative methods, concerned with understanding human behaviour from the actor's own frame of relevance. It involves naturalistic and uncontrolled observation. On the contrary quantitative research advocates the use of quantitative methods, seeks facts or causes of social phenomena without regard to the subjective states of the individuals. It involves obtrusive and controlled measurement (2005, p.4). The thesis focuses on acquiring qualitative data only.

Further, it is important to mention the ethnographic research. Brewer (2000, p.6) explains the meaning of ethnographic research. He states that it is a study of people in the natural setting by methods of data collection which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting in order to collect the data (in Bell, 2005 p.16). Nunan adds that it is based on the detailed description and analysis of a particular context or a situation. Due to quantity of the data it is possible to include only small amount in the research. Audio or video recordings allow for the preservation of the primary data.(2005,p.58-61). I have mentioned the ethnographic research due recordings being a tool employed in the research.

Another method connected with the research is the introspective method. Nunan comments that introspection is the process of observing and reflecting on one's thoughts, feelings, motives, reasoning processes and mental states with a view to determining the ways in which these processes and states determine out behaviour. (2005, p.115). In the research I used the diary which belongs to the group of introspective methods.

Regarding previously mentioned qualitative research, one type of it is the grounded theory approach developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960'. According to Strauss it is not really a specific method or technique. Rather it is a style of doing a qualitative

analysis that includes certain methodological guidelines such as the use of coding paradigm, to ensure conceptual development and density. (Strauss 1987, p.5 in Bell 2005, p.18) Further, Strauss and Corbin point out that the part of data analysis, in case of grounded theory, is open coding. (1999, p.43). In the research is used open coding in order to analyse the data acquired during recordings. The issue of open coding will be discussed in more detail in section 6.8.1.2.

To sum up, there are certain stages of the research that should be followed. In case of the thesis, there was used qualitative research. Besides, ethnography and introspective method were explained. Finally, grounded theory approach has been mentioned.

## **6.6 Background Information**

### **6.6.1 Students**

For the purposes of the research were chosen 2 students. They are completely different in regards to the level of English, age and genre. The different levels of English were selected in order to see if the questions asked by the teacher are always the same/change in both cases. Further, if the higher level of English influences the teacher's preparation, by that it is meant if the teacher needs to prepare longer time for the lessons or vice versa.

To protect the identity of the students, they are labelled as a student A and a student B. No proper names are used throughout the paper. The first student is a female, in her late thirties; the level of English is B1 (according to CEFR, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages stated in the Section 3.1). The second student is a male, in his mid-twenties; the level of English is ranging from A1-A2. It is important to mention that both of them are highly motivated. Regardless, they do not need to speak English at their work; they are both keen on travelling. Their main reason for learning the language is to speak in foreign countries, the knowledge of grammar is less important than speaking.

### **6.6.2 Teacher**

The research was carried out by myself as a teacher, in order to note down information, personal feelings and events as accurately as possible. I have been teaching the students A and B for quite a long time and therefore I know their strengths and weaknesses. However, the new for them was the technology used, since this was their first encounter with the mobile as a tool for learning English as well as this was their first experience with the blended course. For me it was not the first encounter with the blended course, since I was teaching it previously for a language school.

### **6.6.3 Technology**

First of all, the necessary technology for all participants of the research was naturally the mobile phone; it was not required to use any special type of the mobile phone. Secondly, the use of Hands-free device was helpful (see appendix 1). The 20 minutes time is relatively short if the lesson would take place in a classroom face-to-face. Yet, it is long time to hold a mobile phone for such a period. This concerned particularly me as the teacher, in regards to the fact of having 2 x 20 minutes, which is 40 minutes. Another reason for using Hands-free device was that I needed to make notes of students' mistakes or problems during the mobile calls. In order to save time, I was writing the notes down directly to a Microsoft Word file which was faster and more comfortable by using both hands. All the notes were kept in one Microsoft Word file and from here they were easily copied to the e-mails send to both students.

Further, the connection to the Internet was essential. This was not a problem for any of the participants. Indeed, there was no need for fast internet connection, since it was used only for writing/reading e-mails.

### **6.6.4 Textbooks**

During the face-to-face lessons were used textbooks New Headway by authors Liz and John Soars (see appendix 2). In the research were used two textbooks according to the students' level of English, elementary and pre-intermediate (published 2004 and

2002).The textbooks are notoriously known for most of English teachers and remain popular due to its visual aspect, interesting up-to-date topics and its availability. They have been widely used at secondary and language schools.

The reason for selecting the textbooks as a part of the research was due to both students being familiar with New Headway and they have been using them from the very beginning of learning English.

### **6.6.5 Environment**

The environment is very important, the same as other aspects of the teaching/learning process. During the phone calls all three participants, students and me as a teacher, could have chosen the environment that was comfortable and the most suitable to individual needs. For me personally it was home, since I needed to write the notes down into the computer. However, for the students it was either home, work, public transport or a car. Regarding public transport or a car, this was not always the best option, since noise or problems with the signal strength appeared. Next, students could not fully concentrate. The mentioned problems will be discussed further in the thesis.

The face-to-face lessons took place at students' homes, the same way as they were used to from previous lessons.

Finally, according to Krashen's affective filter hypothesis (section 4.1 Methods and Approaches) student's affection to for instance fear or embarrassment influences negatively the process of acquiring the language (ibid., 183). Hence, the students are aware of the fact that mistakes are inevitable part of learning process and they are not afraid of trying to use new vocabulary, expressions or collocations. Further, there has been established good, friendly relationship between the students and the teacher therefore, the students feel comfortable speaking in the foreign language. So they are not negatively affected and as a result they are motivated for further learning. It is important to mention that the above stated friendly relations would not be always possible with pupils or younger students at primary or secondary schools.

In short, the above stated facts influence also the teacher. Comfortable place of teaching, the friendly relationship and student's motivation have indeed positive effect on the teacher.

### **6.6.6 E-mails, SMS**

As previously mentioned, e-mails send directly after the phone calls and a short SMS containing useful proverb or phrase were also the part of the whole blend

The function of e-mails was to give students a feedback, inform him/her about the mistakes that were not corrected during the phone call or shortly explain the grammar or send the vocabulary student did not know. Here is the example of the e-mail send to a student:

Hallo Peter,  
Great work today! We were talking about cycling.  
Grammar: Be careful about past simple x present perfect.  
Past simple: I got the bike when I was 6.  
Present perfect: I have had this bike for 2 years (you still have it)  
Vocabulary:  
down-hill skiing – sjezdové lyžování  
Gross-country skiing – jízda na běžkách  
Repair/ fix – opravit  
Lend – půjčit (někomu něco)  
Borrow – půjčit si (od někoho něco)  
Have a nice day and I'll talk to you on Tuesday.

## **6.7 Research Tools**

In order to carry out the research it is important to select the suitable tools. For the research were chosen two tools. First of them were the audio recordings, in order to find out if the types of the questions were always the same or if they changed. As the next

tool was chosen the diary (see appendix 3), its aim was to find out the advantages as well as the disadvantages from the teacher's point of view.

Recording was the first tool deployed in the research. According to Nunan, mechanically recorded data is the strategy that researches can use to guard against threats in internal reliability. However, he admits that due to quantity of data it can be difficult for outsiders either to analyse the data themselves (and thereby establish the internal reliability of the study) or to replicate the study (thereby establishing its external reliability). However, it depends on the scope of the research. This strategy preserves the primary data. (2005, p.58-61) I used audio recordings to record the phone calls. Even though the research was not long-lasting, the amount of data was quite extensive.

As I previously mentioned above, the second tool employed was the diary. According to Nunan, diaries are an important introspective tool in language research. They can be kept by learners, by teachers, or by participant observers and can focus either on teachers and teaching, or on learners and learning. Further, on interaction between teachers and learners. (2005, p.118-120). Bailey (1990, p.215) defines the diary as a first-person account of a language learning or teaching experience, documented through regular, candid entries (ibid.) They deal mainly with behaviour rather than emotions, though they can be adopted to suit whatever purpose you have in mind. (Bell, 2005, p.103) I personally used the diary that was written always in the similar way, noting down particular data such as date, name of the student, length of the preparation, negative/positive events or feelings.

## **6.8 Research Procedure**

### **6.8.1 Recordings**

#### **6.8.1.1 Preliminary Information**

As previously mentioned, I selected two students of different levels of English, age and gender in order to see if the types of the questions changed or were always the same. Further, if the mentioned differences also influenced the selection of the questions. The reason to choose the audio recording as a tool was first of all due to

primary data being recorded in the exact form as they were used. Secondly, it would be difficult for me as a teacher to use any another tool during the phone calls, because it would be time consuming and the questions noted down after the lessons would not be in the exact form or not complete.

The nature and the purpose of the recording, as well as the whole research was explained to both students. The fact that they were recorded influenced only the student B during the first lesson, since he was a little nervous. However, the next lesson was everything back in normal and none of the students were negatively influenced. The types of the questions given by me as a teacher were not modified in any way, it means that I continued in the teaching process as they were used to.

Regarding the types of topics discussed during the phone calls, I would like to note that students' aim is to make themselves understood in English speaking countries, they would like to use the language for travelling purposes. They do not need it at work or at school. Therefore the typical topics except discussing past or future are associated with restaurants, hotels, airports or directions.

#### **6.8.1.2 Analysis**

As noted above, I recorded the phone calls over the mobile phone and subsequently rewrote all the questions that I had used. The types of questions were analysed according to open coding. (mentioned in Section 5.6) Strauss and Corbin state that it is a process of selecting and naming categories from analysis of the data. It is the initial stage in data acquisition. Variables involved in the phenomenon are identified, labelled, categorised and related together in an outline form (1999, p.43). According to Hendl, it is possible to apply open coding in different ways. It is possible to code one word after another, single paragraphs, the whole texts or particular cases. It is important not to lose the aim of the coding – divergence of the text (2005, p.247)

Therefore, I went through all the questions used during the research and created common groups. I labelled them with a title representing the whole group. The questions had different aim, first of all for a student to realize different functions such as greeting or reporting about past/future events. I decided to create 8 main groups:

- 1) greeting
- 2) past
- 3) future
- 4) present
- 5) family
- 6) grammar
- 7) spare-time activity
- 8) travelling
- 9) unspecified

To explain the single groups, the types of questions labelled as tenses: past, present and future were the simple questions reporting events of for example this morning, yesterday, last weekend. Further, in case of future it was for instance this evening, tomorrow or next week. Therefore, those were the typical questions of near future, or past. Whereas, for example the story of the book or sport events though I asked them in the past I assigned them to spare-time activity group. Yet, I would like to note that in a few cases it was difficult to decide about the group to which a particular question belonged to. Naturally, all the questions could have been divided according to the tense. Nevertheless, this would not show the diversity of the questions.

Regarding the term grammar, occasionally it was needed to practise actively the grammar which students learned during face-to-face lessons or they had problems with. This was more often with student B (the lower level of English). The examples of questions related to problem grammar were: Student A, grammar- *for x since*, student was suppose to answer each question 2 times, first time use for, the second time since: a) How long have you been living in Prague? b) How long has your daughter been reading the book? Student B, grammar – *ago*, student was suppose to use ago: a) What time did you come home from work? b) When did you start learning English?

Further, travelling was a topic discussed in several lessons due to students' aim. Since travelling was students' main reason for learning English. We discussed either the real holiday events or directions. In case this was not possible, we performed a role

play. Students were supposed to imagine situation at an airport or a hotel and I was asking the questions, trying to make the situation as real as possible. The topics discussed during the lessons will be further mentioned in the subsection 6.8.1.3.

Regarding unspecified questions, those were the types of questions which did not belong to any of the previous groups. In this group were specific questions and they were usually not asked repeatedly.

The types of the questions as well as the whole conversation were obviously influenced by student's interest in the topic. The higher interest in the theme meant that we discussed the particular issue longer and I asked more questions regarding one topic. For example student A was keen on reading books on the contrary student B was interested in various sports such as riding a bike, skiing, or hiking. Consequently, if we discussed interesting topic, students tried to make up for words they did not know by describing the problem or thing. Naturally, during this process I asked questions clarifying the meaning, such as:

- 1) *What do you mean by that?*
- 2) *Pardon?*
- 3) *Sorry? Could you say that again?*
- 4) *What is it? I don't know the word.*

Those are the questions regarding to strategic competence by Bachman, mentioned in the section 3.1. I classified them as unspecified.

Finally, the phone call and the subsequent questions can never be fully planned. I wrote down the general questions before each lesson; however the plan was not strictly followed. In case there appeared some interesting topic it was discussed further.

I would like to demonstrate some of the phone calls and particular questions used during them. Even though the following lesson was planned in advance, it went completely different way due to the initial information from student B about *being on the Internet*. Later I noticed that the student was keen on cycling therefore, most of the time was spent by discussing cycling or skiing. The positive side for the student was his profound knowledge and deep interest in both kinds of sports, so during describing and

explaining issues regarding those kinds of sports he learned a great amount of vocabulary. Unfortunately, there was not enough time, so we continued in the topic the following lesson.

Here are the types of questions employed during a phone call, student B:

1. Can you hear me?
2. How are you?
3. What are you doing?
4. What internet page are you looking for?
5. Have you found anything interesting?
6. Would you like to buy any clothes there?
7. Do you prefer brand clothes?
8. Where do you normally buy them?
9. What's your favourite sport?
10. How long have you been riding a bicycle?
11. Would you like to buy a new one?
12. How much would you like to spend on the new bicycle?
13. Would you like to sell your blue bicycle?
14. How often do you ride it?
15. Do you usually ride alone or with somebody?
16. Who is he?
17. Have you ever been doing it professionally?
18. Have you ever participated in any competition? (student did not understand: to participate)
19. Have you ever taken part in/ attended any competition?
20. When was it for last time?
21. Who won?
22. On which position?
23. How many people participated in the competition?
24. Did you have any friend there?
25. Do you do another sport except cycling?
26. Do you prefer down-hill skiing or cross-country skiing?
27. Do you go skiing every winter?

The types of the questions are also influenced by the level of English. Student A (higher level) was able to talk quite well about the story of the book/film or describe a recipe, therefore I asked those types of questions quite often. Surprisingly, the conversation was not always one-sided, which means the teacher giving questions and the students answering, but also vice versa.

The questions employed during a phone call, student A:

1. Are you ready?
2. How was Christmas for you this year? Did you enjoy it?
3. Did you have flu?
4. Did you go to the doctor?
5. Did you take any medicine?
6. Who was cooking when you were ill?
7. What did she cook?
8. Do you like schnitzel?
9. Tell me about the honey cake...how did she make it?
10. Is it typical in your family?
11. Did you like it?
12. And do you personally like baking?
13. Is your mum a good cook?
14. Did you have time to watch any fairy-tale when you were ill?
15. What's your favourite fairy-tale?
16. Have you seen any nice film at Christmas?
17. What is it about?
18. How about the New Year's Eve? Did you go to sleep early or did you celebrate?
19. Are you reading any book at the moment?
20. What is the story about?
21. Where are you planning to go for your holiday?
22. For how long?
23. Which mountains? Are they in the Czech Republic?
24. Why did you decide to go to the Arabian Emirates?
25. Which city would you like to visit?
26. What would you like to see there?
27. Is it expensive?
28. Have you ever been there before?
29. What is the official language there?

30. How is it with visa? Is it easy to obtain visa to go there?
31. Who will take care about your daughters?

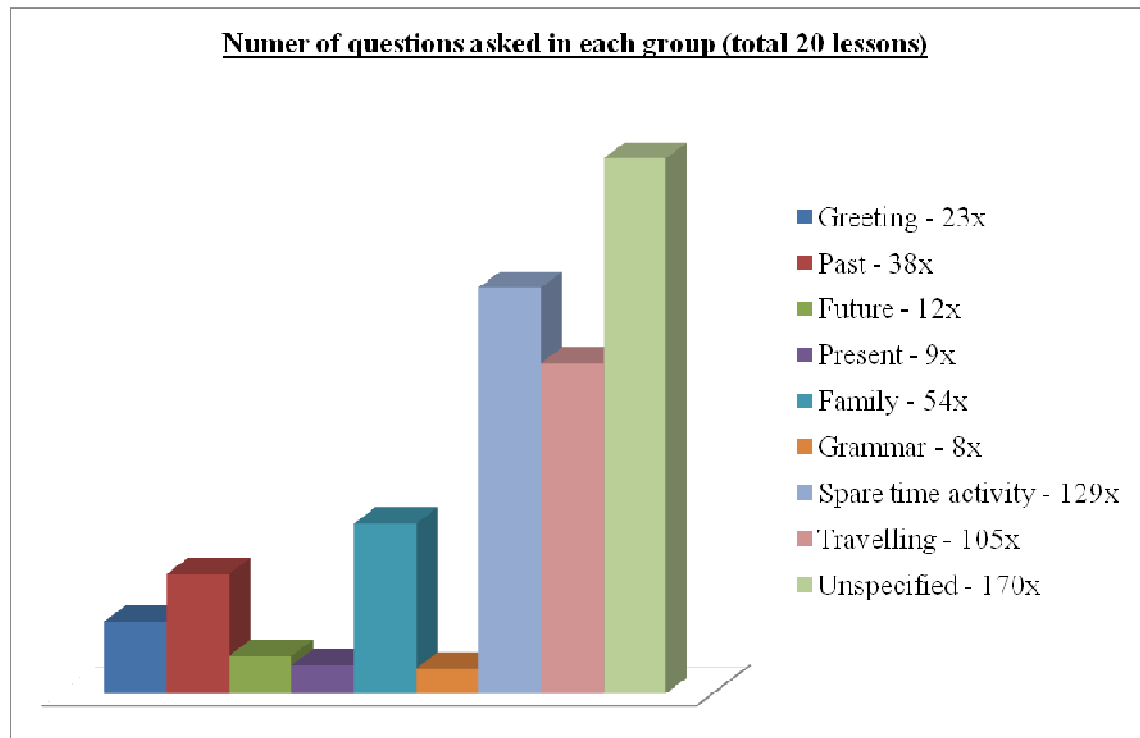
Later, I briefly mentioned the trip to Prague and student A surprisingly asked me questions such as: *What did you do there? Did you buy anything? How did you go there? Did you like the play?* Even though the student was not used to asking questions, she managed it well.

### 6.8.1.3 Outcomes

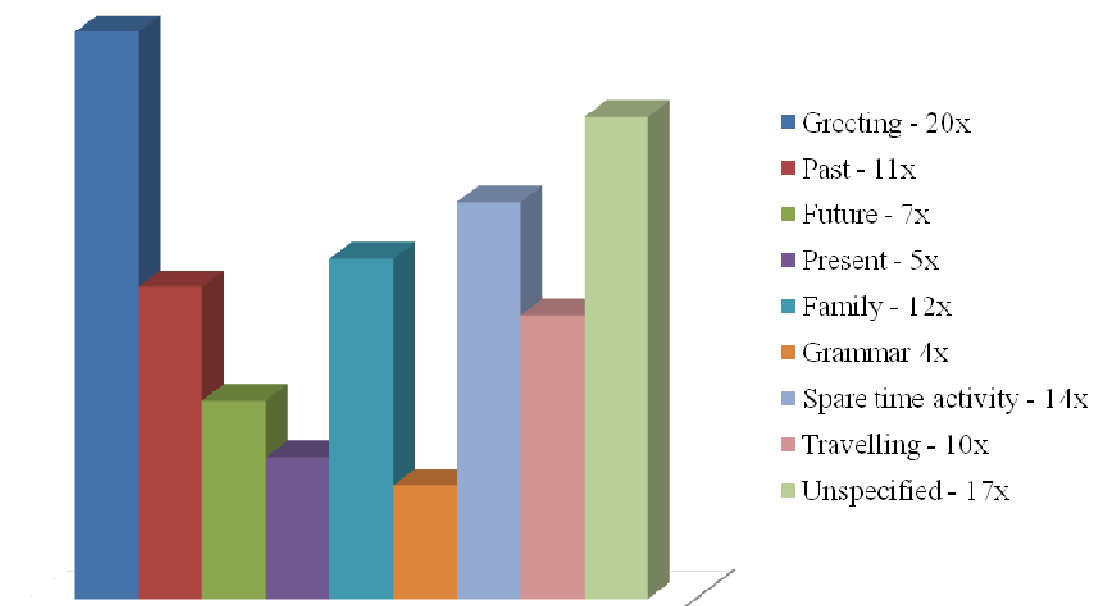
The recordings were precious source of information due to having the exact questions from the whole research, which would probably not be possible to gain via any another tool. In the first graph I would like to demonstrate the amount of questions asked in each group. According to the graph the most often asked questions are in the groups spare-time activity, travelling and unspecified. On the contrary, questions reporting past events or future plans were not asked that often. The smallest group represents grammar which is understandable since the phone calls should primarily practise speaking and not explaining or discussing grammar. As a result, some kind of greeting was used in nearly every lesson, those include for example: *How are you? Are you ok? What's new?* The group also includes the initial questions such as: *Can we start? Are you ready? Can you hear me? etc.* It was necessary to greet students or ask how he/she was, otherwise it would be impolite. The second group of questions is aimed at the events happened most typically today, yesterday, at the weekend. The questions regarding past were not asked in every lesson, but in 11 lessons out of 20. The total number 38x means that the past was discussed in one lesson more times, however by different questions. For instance: *did you have breakfast this morning? What did you have? Did you like it?* However, there were a few cases when similar/the same question was employed. The next two groups future and present were again not asked in every lesson, for future it was in 7 lessons and present in 5 lessons. So the questions were used occasionally. The fifth group concerning family questions is much bigger. It is due to both students' family being extend and there are endless opportunities to discuss various family or friends issues. Again, I need to stress that the topic did not appear in every

single lesson nevertheless, there were a few cases when similar/the same question was used. Here is the example of the common question: *How is your family? What are your daughters/parents doing?* As I have previously suggested grammar was included only marginally, in order to clarify students' problems or as a short revision. By comparison, spare-time activity questions, travelling and unspecified questions appeared in most/all of the lessons. This was due to students' interest in the topic, due to their aim for learning English or in order to include some new questions and subsequent discussion. The outcomes can be seen on the following graphs:

Graph 1 and 2:



**Number of lessons in which was the topic asked (total no. of lessons 20)**



Regarding the topics discussed in particular groups; I would like to present the following table 3:

<b>Unspecified</b>	<b>no. of ques.</b>
Christmas/New Year's Eve/birthday/Valentine's day	26
Theatre	7
Famous people	10
Shopping	21
Private English lessons	5
Exams/school	12
Diet/healthy life style/bio food	6
Health problems/ illness	8
Weather	6
Music	4
Food/Drinks	5
Money/salary/rich people/investing/bank account/tax	12
Burglary/thieves	5
Homeless people	6
Dreams/ambitions	3
City x country/ house x flat	2
Feelings: scared/tired/angry/disappointed	5
<b>Spare-time activity</b>	
Books	19
Watching Tv	12
Newspaper/magazines/news	14
Sports (cycling, skiing, hiking, swimming, billiard)	41
History	11
Cooking	17
Party/ball	8
Hairdresser/beautician	7
<b>Travelling</b>	
Directions	29
Airport	14
Hotel	25
Restaurant	17

As it is evident from the table, the range of topics discussed was quite wide. Some of them were mentioned only during one single lesson; in many of them we continued the next lesson.

#### **6.8.1.4 Conclusions**

The aim of the recordings was to find out if the types of the questions asked during the phone calls are always the same or if they change.

Generally speaking, a limited amount of questions were repeated to some extent. However, this depends on students' level of English. In case of student B (A1-A2), it was reasonable to ask questions concerning past or future, since he still made mistakes in them. Naturally, those familiar questions were asked at the beginning to make student feel comfortable enough and then there was an attempt to introduce new or different questions. In comparison to student A (B1), there were very few cases that the questions would be repeated, there was usually some polite question at the beginning which had the greeting function rather than to acquire information. Further, in the conversation, we either continued with the topic from previous phone call/face-to-face lesson or discussed new and more difficult topic. This was possible due to student's higher level of English and at the same time with her being more comfortable in speaking.

Regarding the topics discussed, they varied according to students' interest or aims. In spite of phone calls being planned in advance there appeared new themes during the phone calls that completely changed the previous plan. In regards to the proportion of questions asked by the teacher to those asked by the students, the high majority of questions were asked by the teacher. From the overall number of 592 questions, the teacher asked 548 x and the students 44 x. Further, the student A asked 38 x and the student B 6 x, this is understandable in connection to their level of English

### **6.8.2 Diary**

#### **6.8.2.1 Preliminary Information**

The diary was kept in order to find out the advantages and disadvantages from the teacher's point of view. I noted down the information after every phone call, so finally there were 20 short written records. The structure of the diary was always the same (see section 6.7). In order to support the findings of the research, I would like to present some of the notes from the diary. One of the initial positive notes states: *Great, finally I don't have to commute to every single lesson.* However, the following negative record

says: *Problems with the signal strength. And what a noise on the train!! I have to talk about that with student B.*

### 6.8.2.2 Analysis

To demonstrate clearly the advantages and disadvantages I would like to show the following table. In order to make the analysis easier it shows the outcomes of the analysis with the further explanation:

Table 4:

Advantages	Disadvantages
anytime anywhere no need to commute	time consuming sufficient financial reward personal contact problems with technology cost limited by: signal strength charging noise

To explain the terms, the phone call can take place relatively anywhere. However, this was not entirely the truth in my case. I needed to write down students' mistakes for further feedback and as I previously mentioned the fastest way was to use PC. Therefore, this was a limitation for me. Similarly, it can be anytime as long as it suits to both sides. Again, here was the slight problem, since it was not possible to arrange the phone calls one after another. So there was one hour time gap between them. Yet, it has no connection to technology, and it can also be a problem with face-to-face lessons or lessons via Skype. As the biggest advantage I personally see no need to commute for every single lesson.

On the contrary, as the biggest disadvantage I consider the time demands and at the same time no sufficient financial reward. In order to prove the point I will discuss the problem later in this chapter. Secondly, the lack of personal contact was a problem, because the non-verbal communication can help a teacher to understand a student better, to see if he/she is bored or has any problems. Regarding the technology, I used the hands-free set. The setback was that students complained about not hearing me

properly. In this case I believe it can be improved by better technology. Equally important was the signal strength. Again this was the problem at the beginning, because I was teaching from my room and there was no signal everywhere. Another inconvenience was the noise, in case a student was in public, usually on a train or a bus. Finally, the cost of the phone calls was additional disadvantage.

As I stated the course was time consuming in terms of preparation. In the diary I always noted down the length of preparation. The average time to prepare the phone call was 12 minutes, to prepare the subsequent e-mail for a student 14 minutes in average. To find some proverb or phrase and write the SMS 10 minutes (it was send only 1x a week, therefore I will count only 5 minutes). It means that together with 20 minute phone call it amounts to 51 minutes of work. This is connected to the financial reward. If I would consider the average price 170 CZK/60 minutes for a teacher without university degree, it means that the teacher would earn 57 CZK/ 51 minute work, in another words 67 CZK/ 60 minute work. This is certainly not very favourable for a teacher.

### **6.8.2.3 Outcomes and conclusions**

To summarise all the advantages and disadvantages I must admit that in this particular research the disadvantages prevailed the advantages from my point of view as a teacher. The main reason is for the course to be time consuming and at the same time there is not sufficient financial reward. Another important setback is the lack of personal contact, followed by minor problems such as the cost of the phone calls, the need of signal strength and charging of the mobile phone. Nevertheless, the blended course can be under some conditions interesting for teachers. First of all they would need to be paid for the whole time they spend on preparation and subsequent work, not only the phone call itself. Further, the cost of the phone calls can be solved by the contract with the mobile operator, it means students would have SIM cards from a teacher and therefore the cost of the call would be diminished. Finally, the noise can be limited by agreement with the students.

## **6.9 Conclusion of the Practical Part**

The practical part focuses on answering the underlying questions as well as the main question of the whole research. Recordings, as the first selected tool, was analysed via open coding. It was found out that the types of the questions repeated only at the beginning of a phone call. This was done in order to greet a student or to make him/her feel comfortable or motivated by introducing familiar question. Moreover, the types of the questions were influenced by students' level of English. With student A (B1) were usually introduced new questions, on the contrary with student B (A1 – A2) one of the familiar questions were asked before introducing a new topic. Concerning the topics discussed during the phone calls, they varied according to students' interests and even though the lessons were planned, much more interesting topic often emerged during the conversation and was further developed.

The diary, as the second selected tool, revealed that the disadvantages in contrast to advantages of the blended course from the teacher's point of view prevailed. It also includes the calculation of the financial reward for a teacher which was not sufficient. Nevertheless, the course can be under some conditions beneficial and interesting for teachers, especially by employing better technology or improving the financial conditions in relation to the course being time consuming. Finally, I believe there are many aspects that differ, and might influence teacher's choice of technique greatly. It means that for one teacher is not problem to come to the lessons since living in the city for another teacher it might be a waste of time due to living in the countryside. Similarly, this is connected to the signal strength. Further, I am aware of the fact that it depends on the teacher's personal preference of one technology or technique over another. Therefore, I wanted to present the conclusions of the concrete research and to stress the possible setbacks that as I stated can be eliminated.

## 6.10 Conclusion

Blended learning is still relatively new phenomenon, however according to several authors it is not a new idea. It is just a new name for an old technique. Nevertheless, m-learning which stands for mobile learning is the buzzword that has not been in existence for a long time. For this reason the thesis focuses on blended learning with the use of telephone, or more specifically mobile phone. Further, there has been the tendency with any new phenomenon to look for positive and negative sides for pupils/students, but there are not many authors interested in a teacher's side. Therefore, I wanted to show the teacher's point of view from my own experience.

The thesis is based on the blended course which constitutes of face-to-face lessons; their main aim is to learn grammar. Further, there are phone calls between the teacher and the student in order to use the language in an active way, to communicate and therefore improve speaking skills. They are followed by the e-mails which serve as the feedback for the student, the e-mail is sent after each phone call. Finally, there is a short SMS containing an interesting proverb or phrase.

Regarding the practical part, the underlying questions were set, in order to find out the advantages and the disadvantages of the blended course and at the same time to discover whether the types of questions used during the phone calls changed or repeated frequently. So as to answer the questions, two main tools such as the recordings and the diary were selected. The phone calls were recorded via the mobile phone and all the questions asked were subsequently retyped into the computer for further analysis. The research showed that the types of the questions repeated often in case of both students only at the beginning of the phone calls, in order to make students feel comfortable or to motivate them. Further, the phone calls differed according to students' level of English. With the first student of higher level of English the questions were predominantly new and different, on the contrary with the second student of lower level they repeated in several cases, but again the majority of time was spend by introducing the new topic. Next, the research dealt with the variety of topics discussed. Likewise, the theme of the conversation differed according to students' level of English and their interests. During the research students talked about the wide range of topics. The second selected tool the

diary was kept in order to find out the advantages and disadvantages of the blended course. It was structured always in the same way, noting especially the date, time and length of the phone call, further the name of a student and most importantly positive or negative feelings. The result of the analysis shows that the disadvantages prevail in comparison to advantages. As the most important setbacks are considered time demandingness of the course which is connected to the financial reward for a teacher, followed by the lack of personal contact. As the minor disadvantages are considered the cost of the phone calls and the possible problems with the technology. Balanced against the advantages, the most important one is considered that the lessons can be anywhere, it means that it can be at home in the comfortable environment and there is no need to commute to the lessons. Yet, the expressions *anytime* and *anywhere* are limited by several factors. In case of the research they were limited by the signal strength, the necessity to have the mobile charged, the need to write the notes into the computer and by occasional noise in case a student was in the public transport. Generally speaking, the problems that appeared in this particular research can be under different conditions eliminated and the course can be beneficial and attractive to teachers.

To sum up, the thesis dealt with the blended learning with the use of telephone. Further, the research findings can help teachers or anyone interested in the topic to better understand the both sides of this particular type of blended learning.

## 7 Resumé

Současná situace se díky novým technologiím velice rychle mění. Dnes už ve většině případů neposíláme dopisy běžnou poštou, ale e-mailem. Většinou není potřeba chodit do banky, vzhledem k tomu že máme k dispozici internetové bankovníctví. Můžeme si také číst noviny nebo nakupovat na internetu. Tyto nové technologie se objevují a mění rapidně poslední tři desetiletí. V této souvislosti se také mění vzdělávání, které reaguje na současné potřeby společnosti. Objevují se nové techniky, metody nebo přístupy. Předmětem diplomové práce je stále ještě poměrně nový způsob kombinované výuky a v tomto konkrétním případě s využitím telefonu.

Avšak u kombinované výuky jde pouze o nový název, vzhledem k tomu, že kombinovaná výuka má poměrně dlouhou tradici. Jak už její název napovídá, jedná se o tradiční hodiny s učitelem v kombinaci s e-learningem popřípadě s m-learningem. Z toho vyplývá, že jde o dva historicky různé přístupy tedy té tradiční s novými. Jak už bylo řečeno, kombinovaná výuka má relativně dlouhou tradici a to především v zahraničí jako například ve Spojených státech nebo ve Velké Británii díky the Open University, která existuje dodnes. V České Republice můžeme najít příklady kombinované výuky především na vysokých školách, populární se také stává na jazykových školách a několik konkrétních příkladů můžeme najít také na školách středních nebo dokonce základních. Důvodů pro zvolení kombinované výuky je několik. Je především flexibilní a vhodná pro studenty, kteří se nemohou účastnit výuky ve stanovený čas na stanoveném místě, často z pracovních nebo rodinných důvodů. Dalším důvodem může být lepší využití času pro výuku, kdy se například studenti mohou s učivem nebo informacemi seznámit předem a čas s učitelem/lektorem může být využit efektivněji pro aktivní procvičení nebo diskuzí o problému. Poslední fáze pak může být využita k případným otázkám nebo vyjasnění problému. Vzhledem k tomu, že se studenti přijdou do kontaktu s informacemi 3x je výuka efektivnější. V neposlední řadě mohou být výhodou snížené náklady na výuku. Na druhé straně nelze opomenout negativní stranu věci. Jde jednak o nedostatek osobního kontaktu, ale také o technologii samotnou, kterou musí umět jednak všechny strany ovládat, ale která také nemusí vždy pracovat stoprocentně. Pro učitele je pak největší nevýhodou časová náročnost a s tím

spojené nedostatečné finanční ohodnocení. Jak už bylo zmíněno, součástí kombinované výuky je e-learning nebo m-learning. Výraz e-learning je velice široký pojem, který je spojován s použitím počítače při výuce. Existují různé definice e-learningu, z nichž některé upřednostňují potřebu Internetu nebo Intranetu jiné uvádí že se jedná o způsob výuky za použití informačních nebo komunikačních technologií. Nicméně se shodují, že se jedná o elektronický způsob výuky. E-learning se dále dělí na CBT, tedy zkratka anglického názvu Computer-Based Training. Je považováno za první stádium e-learningu a to bez použití Internetu. Materiály byly dostupné například na CD nebo DVD. Druhou a v současnosti převážně využívanou formou je WTB, tedy Web-Based Training. V tomto případě je vyžadováno internetové spojení a materiály jsou dostupné na internetu. Další zmiňovanou možností kombinované výuky je m-learning. Zde se jedná o nový fenomén výuky přes mobil nebo mobilní zařízení. Jeho hlavní předností je, že studenti se mohou učit prakticky kdekoli nebo kdykoli. Dále také dnešní generace žáků a studentů vyrůstá v době počítačových a mobilních technologií, proto tato výuka je pro ně mnohdy více motivující. Nicméně zde není žádné předepsané pravidlo, jakým způsobem nebo z jakých technologií by se kombinovaná výuka měla skládat. Vždy by se mělo jednat o kombinaci technologií tak, aby odpovídaly individuálním potřebám studentů a učitelů a aby se vytvořilo co nevhodnější prostředí a podmínky k učení. Zde se také nabízí otázka jestli kombinovaná výuka s použitím telefonu rozvíjí komunikativní kompetenci. Výraz komunikativní kompetence vnímali autoři různými způsoby, nicméně je považována za cíl v jazykovém vzdělávání a primárně znamená schopnost komunikovat, je to ale také schopnost používat pravidla gramatiky, správně se vyjadřovat a vědět jak používat správně jednotlivé výrazy. Zcela určitě je zde potenciál kombinované výuky a jejího využití v budoucnosti, stejně tak jako budou nové technologie využívány v učebním procesu. Dále také mobilní technologie rozvíjí komunikativní kompetenci v anglickém jazyce, pokud jsou používány komunikativním způsobem. Není nutno dodávat, že ani nejnovější technologie nebudou efektivní pokud nebudou použity správným způsobem.

Cílem empirického výzkumu bylo především zjistit výhody a nevýhody konkrétní kombinované výuky z pohledu učitele a také se zaměřit na typy otázek používaných během telefonních rozhovorů a stanovit jestli se tyto typy otázek mění a tím pádem je

výuka efektivní a nebo se stále opakují, což znamená že se student nikam dále neposouvá a nezískává žádné nové znalosti. Již zmiňovaný kurz se skládá z tradiční výuky s lektorem, která slouží především pro výklad gramatiky a práci s učebnicí, dále z telefonních rozhovorů, kde si studenti procvičí své znalosti aktivně, komunikací s lektorem. Následně dostávají studenti e-mail se zpětnou vazbou a úplně poslední součástí kurzu je krátká SMS obsahující zajímavé přísloví nebo frázi. Jako výzkumné nástroje byly zvoleny nahrávání a deník. Samotný výzkum byl proveden na dvou studentech jiné úrovně podle Společného Evropského Referenčního Rámce, jiného věku a také odlišného pohlaví. Student A je úrovně B1 a student B úrovně A1 – A2, učitelem jsem já osobně a proto výsledky výzkumu jsou moje poznatky a názory. Samotný výzkum pak probíhal během 5 týdnů a jedná o kvalitativní výzkum

V první části výzkumu byly všechny otázky z nahraných materiálů přepsány a zpracovány pomocí otevřeného kódování, které je založeno na zakotvené teorii od autorů Gaser and Strauss z roku 1960. Byly vytvořeny hlavní skupiny do kterých byly otázky přiřazeny a bylo zaznamenáno kolikrát byly jednotlivé otázky použity. Z výzkumu vyplývá, že typy otázek byly různé podle studentovy úrovně anglického jazyka. V případě studenta A, tedy s vyšší úrovní, se v několika případech opakovaly otázky na začátku rozhovoru, které byly součástí pozdravu nebo uvítání. Tyto otázky měly studenta spíše motivovat než zjistit jakékoliv informace. Bez jejich použití by byl rozhovor pravděpodobně nezdvořilý. Dále pak byla tendence používat v rozhovoru nové otázky a nová témata. Na druhé straně ale v případě studenta B, tedy s nižší úrovní anglického jazyka, se mimo úvodní otázky v několika případech opakovaly také otázky týkající se minulosti nebo budoucnosti. Otázky byly použity proto, že studentovy komunikační schopnosti ještě nejsou dostatečné aby mohl diskutovat o složitějších tématech jako student A, stejně tak proto, že stále chybí při popisu minulých událostí nebo plánů do budoucnosti. Většina času byla i přesto věnována novým otázkám. Co se týče probíraných témat během telefonních rozhovorů, které opět byly různé podle studentovy úrovně anglického jazyka a také osobních zájmů. I přes to, že byly hodiny předem připraveny, struktura rozhovoru se často změnila, díky tomu že se objevilo nové zajímavější téma, které bylo dále diskutováno. Největší skupinu představují otázky nazvané *Nespecifikované*, tato skupina obsahuje širokou škálu specifických otázek,

které se ve většině případů objevily pouze v jednom rozhovoru a byly pak rozvedeny dále. Další velkou skupinu tvoří otázky nazvané *Aktivita volného času*, které obsahují otázky týkající se zájmů nebo sportovních aktivit. Další neopomenutelnou skupinu tvoří *Cestování*, kde byly hlavními tématy situace na letišti, v hotelu, restauraci nebo popis cesty. Tato skupina otázek byla pro studenty velmi důležitá vzhledem k jejich cíli, který je cestování a snaha domluvit v anglicky mluvících zemích. Dále je také důležité zmínit skupinu *Gramatika*, tyto otázky tvoří jen velmi malou část z celkového počtu. Otázky byly použity v případě, že student měl problém s určitým gramatickým jevem. Druhým výzkumným nástrojem byl deník, který rozpoznal výhody a nevýhody daného kurzu. Struktura deníku byla vždy stejná, zaznamenávající datum, čas a délku hodiny, jméno studenta.

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## **9 Appendix**

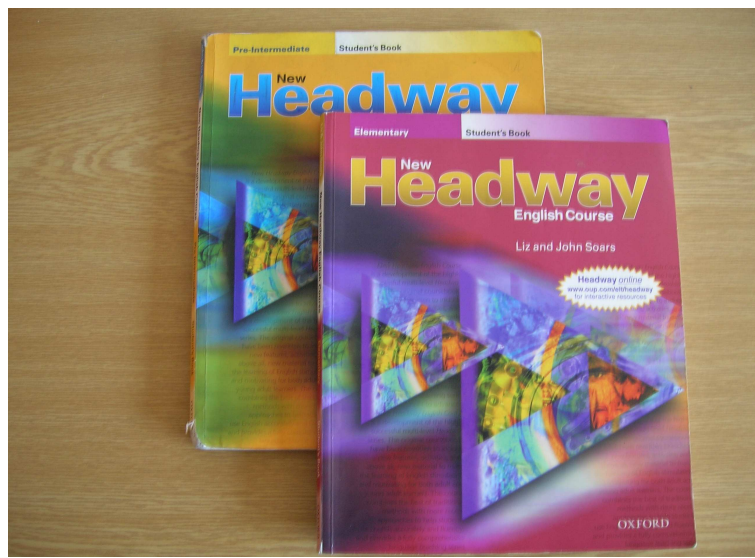
### **List of appendices:**

- 1. APPENDIX 1: HANDS FREE SET, MOBILE PHONE**
- 2. HEADWAY ELEMENTARY, PRE-INTERMEDIATE**
- 3. DIARY**

## **APPENDIX 1: HANDS FREE SET, MOBILE PHONE**



## **APPENDIX 2: HEADWAY ELEMENTARY, PRE-INTERMEDIATE**



## **APPENDIX 3: DIARY**

# Diary

Date: 1. December

Student: A

Length of preparation: 15min

Negative/positive events or feelings:

(+) Great, finally I don't have to commute to every single lesson.

(-) Problems with the signal strength - I have to find a better place like house!

And what a noise on the train!!

I have to talk about that with

Student B (maybe better calling time would solve it).