

The Impact of Online Learning of English as a Second Language by Students: An Experimental Study

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Abstract

This study presents the impact of the online mode of education on learning English as a second language by the student. There were 40 students of Allama Iqbal Open University, who took part in this experimental study. They were divided into two groups randomly. The control group was provided English language instructions through a communicative approach and followed the instructions of doing exercises and completing tasks traditionally. While for an online group, a learning management system was used for instructional purposes. Then, a standard general English test (TOFEL) was taken as a post-test by both of the groups. Thus, the results indicated that the online group showed better outcomes than that of the traditionally learned control group in learning the English language. The outcomes of this experimental study have educational uses for training session developers for students, curriculum designers, material producers, and all who played their role in their learning process.

Keywords: English as a Second Language; Online Learning; Survey Study; AIOU Students

Introduction

In these modern days of technology, English has become the international language, and learning this language thoroughly for communication is the necessity of this era. Time is changing rapidly with technological and scientific progress. Thus, the demand for English is also increasing in every field. So, students need to learn it for better communication. The crucial element in learning English is the teaching methodology by the instructor. This teaching methodology includes choosing specific methods that can provide a good learning experience and leave a good impact on the development of this foreign language proficiency. With the commence of electronic learning (e-learning), there have come much innovation in learning and teaching strategies. E-learning is the use of electronic instruments for learning. These instruments include computer, TV, and thus content delivery through the internet and intranet (Ozkan&Koseler, 2009; Shee & Wang, 2008). This study focuses on the importance of the online learning of the English language by the students

Learning management system

Learning management system (LMS) is an innovative website that empowers e-learning programs, connecting online teaching with the process of learning. Learning management system is usually implemented by universities, in the form of open-source code such as MOODLE. Their course is supported by a variety of tools which include chat, sharing of files, online grade posting, form, discussion boards, online exams, management of syllabi, assignments, schedules, course plans,

and announcements (Cole et al., 2019; Coskuncay & Ozkan, 2013). Through this online learning management system, the activities of the students can be enhanced by connecting them and with their instructor; strengthening sharing of helpful material, textbooks, and even library resources. Thus, learning activities are integrated with the administrative systems (Klonoski, 2005). Learning management system is particularly adopted by those higher education institutions that have low budget to provide facilities to their students. This mode of learning is highly cost-effective (Keller, 2005). Several institutions use this online mode of learning to facilitate distant learners and to replace the traditional learning mode (Busaidi, 2012; Cigdem & Topcu, 2013; Dutta et al., 2013; Sahebjamei & Moradimokhles, 2012). Thus, LMS is an online learning platform that makes use of the intranet, internet, and other network types for processing; provides learning resources, and supports the learning process efficiently. The vital factors for success in online learning are autonomy, self-regulation, and flexibility by the learners (Barnard et al., 2009; Bonk et al., 2005; Van Laer & Elen, 2017). It was concluded that online courses provide much better outcomes than traditional modes (Means et al., 2009).

English language skills for students

English is a mode of communication in almost every field. So, students need to learn this second language thoroughly. Deficiencies in this language may result in misconceptions and misunderstandings in communication (Allan et al., 2009), as a result of which may cause serious issues and losses (Crawford & Candlin, 2013; Kawi & Xu, 2009). Therefore, student's English learning for proper communication is of high worth for the future of every country. In learning the English language thoroughly, only basic competency is not required for students. In this modern era, they should have a full grip on this language to compete with proficiency (Edgecombe et al., 2013). It was stated by the experts that, a practical curriculum is very helpful for learning of English language by the students (Choi, 2005). Some of the basic skills for learning this language are cultural competency such as participation in small talks with instructors and fellows (Holmes & Major, 2003). Besides this, students should participate in socio-cultural activities such as in-jokes and stage shows in their institutions (Kawi & Xu, 2009).

Therefore, there are required many competencies in this issue in terms of what is said and how it is said. It means competency in terms of both content aspect and pragmatics. There must be language education elements in this curricula. The purpose of this curricula is not only to enhance the skillful grip of the technical rules and regulations of this second language but also to develop competence for pragmatics. This is a capability to use forms that are proper to a specific purpose and context (Lum et al., 2015). For teaching English language skills, several programs are available which focus on this second language learning for students. But most of these programs have no evidence and no serious research has been made on their effectiveness (Zizzo & Xu, 2009). Therefore, this study suggests the inevitability of learning English for students. The main point is the right choice of an educational model for its learning in a proper way.

Literature Review

At the start of this century, many changes have come in the literacy of the new generation. Many people are using the English language in their routine life because they are trying to shape it and learn completely for perfect communication. They are studying this second language in educational institutions. In this article, a research project was reported which made a research on the metropolitan youth of Indonesia. It focused on the way of their using English online, their attitude toward the traditional mode of learning, and finally their motivation for online English learning. For this research, a mixed-method design was selected which consists of the 56-item survey at a well-known university. Follow-up interviews were also conducted with four

participants. All these participants showed a different level of motivation and activities. In online education, its activity and level were exactly according to the findings. Students found proper guidance from their instructor and it was also entertaining mode. There is no social activity in this mode. So, the social relationship is a positive factor in the traditional model of education. Several ways are discussed in this article which tells about teacher's way of teaching to their students who are less proficient in English. They do so by training them through the pressure of major curriculums. The instructors use English informally in online classes which makes replacement of traditional classrooms. In this new era, the internet plays a crucial role in instructions and course delivery. There has been augmenting shift away from traditional mode to online mode. E-learning is playing a pivotal role in education and modifying the traditional mode of learning. This paper gives an outline for the conversion of mode from traditional to online. Other factors are also discussed such as technology used to make online learning effective. The most prominent technology, which is discussed here, is English Interactive Online. Technology-based learnings are focused here by considering relevant studies in this article. In Jordan, the effectiveness of EIO programs was highlighted in public schools at Amman Directorates. Technology-based pedagogy is indicated here. For the effectiveness of EFL learning results, an effective online environment is central. This paper aims to enlighten the power of technology in supporting English language learning. Various techniques and methods are discussed here which help in assisting students to learn the English language with proficiency by learning its basic skills. Online English learning websites are also available. Other techniques are presentation software, email messaging and chatting programs, electronic dictionaries, computer-assisted language learning programs, and video-clips for learning. This study was made on a student of an English language traditional classroom who used technology in his learning process. A case study was made on his response about his experience. This is an experimental research paper in which the details of conventional software such as English learning tools are given. The disadvantages and drawbacks are explained along with recommendations and suggestions.

This paper aims to explain the importance of MOODLE in learning and teaching a foreign language. So, relevant literature is reviewed and a MOODLE based environment is created. The aim of making such a setup is to provide chances of maximum practice for the English learners on this platform. Firstly, the main purpose of this platform is an education in which English language learning is the most prominent objective which is discussed in this paper. Secondly, the rational summary behind this platform is discussed here. Finally, the features of this platform are discussed and its snapchat is presented vividly. An argument was made in the conclusion of the paper that many e-learning platforms are available which provide the best services in learning a foreign language. One of these platforms is MOODLE.

An experimental study was made for predicting the outcomes of student question-generation strategy in online mode and the way, it is involved in communicative activities. This study focused on the meaningful ways for language learning by motivation development. Thus, the effects of this approach on English learning were studied in this paper. For this purpose, a drill-and-practice strategy was adopted online and its comparison was made with the online student question-generation strategy. A quasi-experimental design was selected for research. The participants of this study were four classes of sixth-grade. The total participant's number was 106. Different treatment groups were assigned to them randomly. An online learning model was adopted which could support various learning activities. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVAs) was adopted for estimated. So, the outcomes illustrate that the performance of the online question-generation group of students in English assessments was much better than that of the rival group. In the former group, learning motivation was also higher. The significance of this

research and the future work on this topic is also presented here. In this paper, suggestions were made for instructional implementation.

This study aims to examine the significance of online language learning strategies (OLLS). Their role in the effective perception of foreign languages is also considered here. All the participants of online learning are examined. The interconnection between the application of OLLS, outcomes of online English learning, and interest in learning online were investigated in this study. A compulsory online English course was completed by 346 university students who participated in this study. The participants were distributed in two parts based on the outcomes of the course: online language participants who succeeded ($n = 260$) and online language participants who remain unsuccessful ($n = 86$). The rating was made by participants for three OLLS which they used: resource management, cognitive and metacognitive. They also rated their perceptions and views about affection in online learning. OLLS questionnaire was the central instrument. Besides this, in-depth interviews along with a stimulated recall were also instruments of this research. The outcomes showed that the successful learners did best using OLLS as compared to unsuccessful learners. Within the mean figures of successful learners and unsuccessful learners for metacognitive ways ($t = 2.55^{**}$). There was much variation found at the level of 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). In the case of using resources management strategies, there was no prominent difference between successful and unsuccessful learners. When the study was made on online learning, a prominent difference was seen in terms of perception. There is a prominent correlation of appealing of online learning and metacognitive strategies with the outcomes of online learning of the English language. The results suggested that the students who are less proficient in English showed low outcomes from online learning mode, thus lacking these experiences and skills in self-directed learning. Such students cant learn in online mode ever. This study aims to examine the Saudi undergraduate EFL learner's views and perceptions of the significance of language learning methods by online platforms in making their English better. Many other aspects of learning English are also considered here. This paper also aims to determine the impact of various factors on the perception ability of learners and their role in learning this foreign language. A quantitative design was selected for this study. So, data was collected by using a written questionnaire. The research was made in the second semester of the academic year (2017-2018) in the Science Department of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia. 171 students were involved in this practice. For data analysis, different techniques were adopted such as SPSS, version 22.0 was applied. The results were highly positive because students showed good perceptions in learning through online communication in boosting their English. Further statistical analysis showed that several factors affect the learning process. These factors include the use of the internet frequently, the level of the university, and foreign friendship. Contrary to these results, some other factors have no effect on English learning by online communication. These significant factors are age and online use of the English language frequently. The best opportunity is provided to students to learn and grasp this language completely. Thus, online communication is used not only for learning foreign language professionals and to use it in the education process.

The main aim and the research question

This research paper aims to investigate the impact of online communication in learning the English language by students. The participants involved in this research are the students of Allama Iqbal Open University. They are native speakers of the Urdu language who would learn English through this online mode. These well-qualified students are trained in a very effective way by using training curricula for developing student's proficiency in this second language. It is very important to check the impact of training time on the learning process. The research question is given as following:

How to learn English as a foreign language by students through online mode of learning? At this phase of the study, we can't make any hypothesis about research results because it depends on the student's expectations about learning this language in various countries.

Method

Participants

There were 40 students of AIOU, Pakistan who took part in this experiment. Two separate groups of the students were made on a random basis (systematic random sampling). Now each group consists of 20 members (10 males and 10 females). The age of participants ranges between 20–23 years old. It was made confirmed before starting the study that the native language of all of them is used and none of the students spent time in any English language speaking country. So, all were equivalent in respect of English proficiency. All of them were science students who were enrolled in university after passing the entrance test of the university. Hence, the whole participants were homogenous in this study. The training session of this experiment consists of five weeks (two sessions per week) in which all participants had to take part.

Procedure

At the start of the research, a pretest was taken from the participants to estimate their general English ability. The purpose was the verification of the grip on the English language proficiency of the two groups. The standard Longman's English ability test (TOEFL) was taken. Different modules were taken to test the general English skills of the learners. The module of this test is as follow:

- (1) Comprehension in listening: 30 items
- (2) Comprehension in reading: 30 items
- (3) Written expression and structure: 40 items

For the two groups, the training session began after the pretest. After the test, the training session began for both of the groups. One of the two groups is the control group that took instructions for the English language from the instructor. It was done by using a typical curriculum. It was a traditional way of language teaching. Communicative language teaching (CLT) is a technique that is used in this research study. The use of this approach is language teaching in such a way that emphasizes particularly on interaction as both the final goal of the study and the means. The second group (experimental group) received the instructions for English language skills from the instructor on the LMS platform. There was a place on LMS through which all students can help out each other and share their knowledge and ideas about their learning. For this online group, the instructor already guided his students on the proper use of LMS so that they don't have to face difficulties during their training session. So, the participants of this group don't find any difficulty in LMS usage.

The instructor was the same for both of the groups for training and teaching. At the end of this training session, the post-test was taken from all participants to check their English proficiency level. Standard Longman test of English language proficiency was used for both tests. Both of the tests had the same difficulty level and both were taken in the classrooms so that tests could be held in the same atmosphere for both groups. During the training session, formative tests were also taken to check the progress level of the students and the problems that the students had to face in training. The purpose of this formative test is to investigate student's learning progress to provide feedback. This feedback would be helpful for the instructor to modify his teaching style and by the student to boost his learning process. Particularly, this kind of test help students identifying their weaknesses and strengths to improve them further. Through this test, instructors find the areas of struggle for the students, and thus they can address them to solve these issues. Both pretest and

posttest were the objective type. The scores of the test were done objectively. For both tests, the score range was between 0 and 100.

Results

To confirm the homogeneity of the participant's groups, the pretest was taken from them to check their general English proficiency before the training. Participant's TOEFL scores are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The English proficiency test TOFEL of the control group and the online group.

	Control group	Online group
Mean value	535.04	540.03
SD	34.52	36.91

Table 2. Total scores of English language skills in the pretest, posttest, and the variation in both tests (on a scale between 0 and 100).

	Control group			Online group		
	Pretest score	Posttest score	Gain	Pretest score	Posttest score	Gain
Mean	81.7	82	.3	81	83	2
SD	7.4	7.6	.2	8.1	7.4	.7

For unrelated samples, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied. The outcomes illustrated that there is no significant statistical impact on the group. So, it is suggested that there was no significant difference between the two groups in general English language proficiency at the beginning of the training session Table 2. The overall scores of the control group were much higher than that of the experimental group in the pretest. The control group was 0.6 points higher than the experimental group on a scale from 0 to 100. Statistical analysis indicated that there is an insignificant score difference between both groups in the pretest. Therefore, this assumption was made at the beginning of the training session that both of the groups were almost equal in their grip of general English language proficiency. The overall scores of the control group were almost the same as were in the pretest. The control group improved 0.3 points in the post-test while the experimental group improved 2 points in the post-test in comparison with the pretest. For more precise visual comparison, the mean of pretest and posttest in both of the groups has been showing rather than the sum of scores.

Discussion

The outcomes of the research expressed as the online mode of learning have highly positive effects on the learning of student's English language. The outcomes are according to some of the recent studies into LMS (Barnard et al., 2009; Bonk et al., 2005; Van Laer & Elen, 2017; Zhang et al., 2013; Zhang, De Pablos, et al., 2014; Zhang, Ma, et al., 2014). It was stated by the experts that online mode has the highest positive enhancement of educational success of students in solving various problems. It was also stated that the most basic strategies in learning the English language are repetition, practice, and usage of multimedia. By clicking on the words, the students can learn

the exact pronunciation of words. The pronunciation can be repeated many times by using software if it was needed. This repetition can be achieved in the regular curriculum of the traditional mode of English learning (Yenkimaleki & van Heuven, 2019). Besides this, there are many other advantages of online learning such as interactivity, group processing, personal accountability, and interdependence. These features dominate it over the traditional mode of English learning (Van Laer & Elen, 2017). It was stated by Klonoski (2005) that universities are searching for cost-effective approaches in online mode to learn the next generation of students the modern technology use in learning activities. When the latest technologies get common in the classroom, it replaces the expense of using electricity as crucial components and finally, thus it becomes the necessity of time (Klonoski, 2005). There are several merits of online learning which include flexibility (Graham, 2006; Ocak, 2011), cost-effectiveness and educational effectiveness (Graham, 2006), no time restriction (Ocak, 2011). There are many challenges in the education process such as how to enhance the autonomy of learners and how to boost self-direction in students (Reynard, 2007; Rigby et al., 2012). In this study, much emphasis is given to the relation between online learning, learning elements, and the environment of learning. To solve this issue, online learning is an ideal methodology. Studies show that the online mode of learning encourages learning by passion (Ireland et al., 2009; Rigby et al., 2012), and enhances the autonomy of learners (Reynard, 2007). The instructors need to consider the educational implications carefully, by making up to date designs for teaching. The following are included: (1) powerful grip of instructional approaches which are specific to the age and subject matter of the learner (it is also known as pedagogical content knowledge); (2) the teaching and learning content should be meaningful; (3) there should be the availability of good chances for the students to answer the questions and expand discussion upon responses; (4) There should be helpful use of English terms in routine language; (5) various learning activities; and (6) Student's positive attitude for learning and their belief on their leaning capacities (McCown, 2010; Mohanna et al., 2008; Reynard, 2007).

Conclusion

This research paper investigated the impacts of online learning of English as a second language by students. The outcomes showed that this technological learning is very supportive and effective in enhancing student's proficiency in this language. The results also indicated that the online mode of learning improves English language skills learning more than that of traditional learning mode. Suggestions are given for online English language learning and practice of language skills because, in the traditional model, there is only limited time in which the instructor can teach the students. So, guiding completely in a specified time is quite tough for learning thoroughly. The outcomes of this study showed the role of the learning management system in learning the English language. The academic use of this research could be applied in all virtual universities for training student's next generations.

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