The Implementation of EFL Online Learning

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Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness and broad adoption of online instruction for English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Considering the difficulties that instructors and students encounter in this kind of instruction, the study uses an extensive literature review approach. The goal is to underscore the positive impact of online learning on the sustainability of education and identify key factors that contribute to its effectiveness. Drawing literature from academic databases, journals, books, and reputable online platforms, the collection process is guided by specific terms like "EFL" and "Online Learning." Inclusion criteria target studies addressing the positive impacts and challenges of online learning in EFL. Thematic coding is applied to organize the literature into sections covering positive impacts, challenges, and influencing factors. Thematic analysis identifies common themes, while a comparative analysis emphasizes differences and similarities across studies, ensuring a cohesive exploration of the topic. The research suggests potential avenues for future studies to further enrich our understanding of online learning in the EFL context.

Keywords: *EFL, Online Learning*

Introduction

In this digital era, online learning has become commonplace in education. With qualified technology, the learning process can be carried out not only in tin the classroom andvarious learning methods. Seeing the comfort level of students and teachers in online learning makes this increasingly applied internationally as an opportunity for alternative learning (White in Atmojo & Nugroho 2020). Online learning is becoming more attractive to many students and is already used in elementary, junior, and senior high school. In addition to presenting learning materials, online learning is also helpful for students to work together with other students (Krish in Atmojo & Nugroho 2020).

Apart from students, using the internet in online learning is also considered one of the things that can help teachers present materials and get assistance in the learning process and progress through learning experiences (Ally in Atmojo & Nugroho 2020). In this increasingly modern world, the internet is not commonplace for people. The internet can be easily accessed using smartphones, laptops, and

computers with internet connection. There has been a lot of various applications which are user-friendly for both teacher and students.

The various applications provided for online learning have also been widely applied by teachers in teaching both face-to-face via video calls and written assignments through online learning applications. In addition, using suitable online learning applications or tools, students can participate in discussions, provide opinions, and share knowledge, regardless of classroom learning. (Harasim, Calvert & Groeneboer, 1997 as cited in Kuama, 2016).

Although technological advances have made online learning increasingly applied worldwide, several things sometimes make online learning less efficient. Davies & Graffs (2005) stated that online education could make students and teachers face difficulties they may never have encountered in classroom learning and negatively impact their learning activities. This cannot be separated from learning English as a foreign language, especially in Indonesia.

English is one of the foreign languages categorized as one of the compulsory subjects in Indonesia, which is applied in secondary or even elementary school. According to Lauder (2008), as cited in Atmojo & Nugroho (2020), in its role as a foreign language, the Indonesian government places this language as a particular language among other languages. Mastering English sometimes is a requirement to get a job in Indonesia.

During the last few months in Indonesia, all learning has been carried out online through various available applications due to the pandemic that is currently sweeping the world. Many teachers minimize this distraction from the Coronavirus 2019 pandemic or covid-19 by continuing to carry out online teaching and learning activities, including learning English (Khatoony, 2020). Online learning provides new experiences for students, especially teachers.

Previously, there has been research conducted by Dashtestani (2014) under the title "English as a foreign language – Teachers' perspectives on implementing online instruction in the Iranian EFL context." Researchers conducted this study to find out the perspective of English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher on the application of online EFL teaching. They found that teachers expressed their opinion on implementing mixed instruction rather than online instruction due to the lack of online facilities and tools and teachers' limited knowledge about using computers and the internet. EFL teachers think that online EFL teaching will not be effective. Another study carried out by Atmojo & Nugroho (2020) revealed that challenges in online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning stem from various sources, including students, teachers, and parents. The underlying reasons for these

challenges encompass: (1) the absence of personal smartphones among some students, (2) challenges in navigating the applications and platforms utilized for online learning, (3) financial constraints hindering students and their families from purchasing internet data, (4) a general lack of literacy among students, and (5) some students exhibiting reluctance to complete assignments or projects assigned by teachers.

Methods

This study employs a thorough literature review research design to explore online learning in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The participants are literature sources from academic databases, journals, books, and reputable online platforms. Using key terms like "EFL" and "Online Learning," relevant articles are systematically collected, ensuring their relevance and reliability. Inclusion criteria focus on studies addressing positive impacts and challenges of online learning in EFL, excluding irrelevant sources. Thematic coding organizes literature into sections on positive impacts, challenges, and factors influencing effectiveness. Thematic analysis identifies common themes, and a comparative analysis highlights differences and similarities across studies, ensuring a cohesive exploration of the topic.

Discussion

EFL Teaching and Learning

Language is often used to communicate or relate with other people; because of that, language becomes more effective when someone needs communication with other people. A person's language is strengthened by the presence of a mother tongue that has been known since toddler until someone reaches the age where they are already started school and was taught Indonesian as the primary language and English as a foreign language.

A foreign language is one that is not the native language or the official language of a particular region but is learned for educational purposes (Al-oglah, 2018). English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to the study of English in countries where English is not the primary language. The objective of teaching English in schools is to enable individuals to communicate with people from other countries and potentially read English-language books (Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill & Pincas, 2003). Teaching English as a foreign language presents challenges due to the difficulties encountered in teaching a language that is not native to the learners. Hindi, as cited in Al-oglah (2018), noted that

teaching English as a foreign or second language poses a challenge for both experienced and novice teachers. The teaching method employed by the teacher is identified as one of the factors contributing to teacher difficulties in helping students achieve their communicative goals in English (Mukattash in Al-oglah, 2018).

Furthermore, teaching English serves the purpose of assisting students in mastering the four fundamental English language skills, facilitating communication with foreigners, and enabling the promotion of Indonesian cultures to other nations (Jayanti & Norahmi, 2014; Smith, 1991 as cited in Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). The success of EFL teaching and learning is influenced by the materials and activities employed in the learning process. Therefore, teachers are urged to develop relevant materials and activities in the EFL classroom (Cantero, 2011). Sulistiyo (2016) emphasized that teacher competence is crucial for the effective exposure and learning of English during classroom activities in the context of EFL teaching and learning. The teaching of English is indispensable for students engaged in EFL learning to optimize their language skills.

Online Learning System

Online learning worldwide has covered various technologies, from the web, email, group chat and new text, and video conferencing implemented via computer networks to help students according to their convenience. Online learning provides many benefits for students and teachers because it offers more conveniences such as place, time, and speed. Besides, it offers many more ways of interaction and motivation than traditional learning settings (Dondorf, 2016). According to Buhari & Roko (2017), online learning with the use of computer technology can enhance learning and, empower students and be flexible and innovative, enabling quality of learning and teaching. Online learning through the delivery of innovative and interactive content can attract students and bring back their happiness in learning (Dhull & Sakshi, 2017). Online learning has changed the way students learn with the ability to deliver high-quality learning so that it is easily understood by students and changes people's views on education (Buhari & Roko, 2017). Sakarkar, Deshpande & Thakare (2012) also stated that online learning is enhanced by evaluating student performance and providing good feedback to tutors with computerized intelligence. According to Dhull & Sakshi (2017), online learning is an excellent option in education when there are hindrances to traditional learning situations. According to Krish, 2008 as cited in Atmojo & Nugroho 2020 stated that besides being beneficial for access to knowledge and material for students, online learning is also helpful in associating and

collaborating between students. Online learning can be used to provide current educational opportunities to suit the unique needs of students who have problems in managing time, managing learning strategies, and having problems in solving their problems because of their anxiety in the learning process (Diaz and Entonado, 2009).

Comparison between Online and Offline Teaching Learning

Online learning and offline learning differ in numerous aspects. According to Li, Qi, Wang & Wang (2014), offline classroom learning operates within a structured system, focusing on materials, learners, and variations in learning abilities and skills. Learners are required to align their learning techniques and abilities, with offline classes often lacking sensory and cognitive stimulation, leading to rote learning. Offline learning offers advantages such as immediate feedback and face-to-face communication, simplifying teaching and learning activities (Ilie & Frăsineanu, 2019).

On the other hand, online learning revolves around electronically assisted instruction, commonly associated with computer and internet-based teaching. Electronic delivery methods facilitate information transfer and interactions (Li, Qi, Wang & Wang, 2014). Ilie & Frăsineanu (2019) note that online learning is convenient, flexible, time-saving, accessible via mobile devices, and provides various formats, including videos and documents, using modern learning methods and tools. Diaz & Entonado (2009) assert that the design and content structure of online learning programs are more effective than classroom programs because the mental structure needed for content development in a classroom is pre-prepared in online learning.

In classroom learning, explaining concepts often takes precedence over practical activities, whereas online learning encompasses a wealth of valuable content that can engage students in diverse learning activities. The interaction between teachers and students is considered more effective in offline learning due to the visual contact that motivates students. Whether in a classroom or online setting, course design requires teachers to make informed decisions based on psycho-pedagogical theory to guide the teaching process. Razeeth (2019) emphasizes that students can benefit from interaction, motivation, and accessibility in offline learning, fostering communication between teachers and students, allowing students to develop their activities with guidance, and providing mutual support among peers.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Learning

The development of the digital era causes changes in people's lives. Society seems to be forced to "migrate" from manual methods to digital media, as in the case of education. The community is increasingly using digital-based learning or better known as online learning. However, unlike the name, which sounds advanced, the application of online learning also has advantages and disadvantages that need to be known.

a. Advantages of Online Learning

Undeniably, the longer human life will be difficult to separate from internet-based digital technology. According to Yuhanna (2020), the Internet is a multi-purpose tool for conveying information to students worldwide. The Internet can contain a variety of media, including text, animation, video, and other software. Currently, with the ability to connect worldwide, students can access the library and a database that is frequently updated daily. Students can have conversations with experts in specific fields. Rawashdeh (2021) stated that online learning systems enable improved communication between students and instructors. Online learning allows people to advance their education from any location and for students to learn flexibly with online learning, which can be accessed anytime and anywhere.

b. Disadvantages of Online Learning

Online learning refers to the conveyance of educational information or knowledge management through electronic media, encompassing various platforms like the Internet, Intranet, Extranet, satellite broadcasts, audio/video tapes, interactive TV, and CD-ROM (Al-Hujran, Aloudat, Al-Hennawi & Ismail, 2013). As noted by Orlando & Attard (2015), considerations for the technology used and the curriculum content taught are crucial in online learning, recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach is not suitable. Despite the global implementation of numerous online learning systems, previous research has highlighted the challenges in creating a successful online learning environment. Limited knowledge exists regarding students' experiences and preferences in online learning. Dhull & Shakshi (2017) identified several issues associated with online learning:

1. Poor Communication

   Face-to-face interactions between students and teachers are absent in online learning, impacting the establishment of meaningful bonds.

2. Feeling Isolated

While online tools enable communication, the lack of in-person meetings may contribute to feelings of isolation, which, studies suggest, can lead to stress.

3. Lack of Motivation

   Online students may struggle with motivation due to increased distractions, difficulties in time management, and procrastination tendencies.

4. Lack of Quality

   Some online instructors may not prioritize lesson preparation, potentially compromising the quality of the online learning experience.

5. Poor Accessibility in Remote Areas

   Remote places have limited access to computers and the internet, making online learning difficult to access. Additionally, psychological elements such as frustration, fear, worry, stress, and sadness might have an impact on the effectiveness of online learning.

Teaching Media Used in Online Learning

The online learning platform offers students various advantages, allowing them to manage their study time in alignment with their individual needs and learning objectives (Coman, 2020). Galy (2011) defines web 2.0 as an emerging technology encompassing wikis, blogs, podcasts, social networks, and video-sharing features like YouTube, widely utilized by students since the inception of online learning systems. Handarini & Wulandari (2020) highlight the diverse methods employed in online learning, including assigning tasks via WhatsApp, video conferences, Google Forms, or dedicated applications. Assignments sent through the Google Form app display scores automatically upon completion. Anugrahana (2020) notes the variety of online learning models teachers employ, such as WhatsApp (WA), Google Form, Google Classroom, Google Drive, YouTube, WA groups, Tuweb, and some incorporating face-to-face interactions via the Zoom Meeting application. WhatsApp, commonly referred to as WhatsApp, is a preferred choice for many teachers who create groups where all students actively participate. Abidah et al. in Herliandry (2020) emphasize the availability of free online learning platforms, including discussion rooms in Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Smart Class, Zenius, Quipper, and Microsoft. These platforms offer a range of benefits, from facilitating forum discussions to virtual face-to-face interactions (Heeliandry, Nurhasanah, Suban & Kuswanto, 2020).

Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

The advent of online learning has resulted in significant impacts and transformations across multiple dimensions. One notable effect is observed in the dynamics of the teaching and learning processes within different educational institutions. Students tend to exhibit reduced engagement in expressing their ideas and opinions, leading to a potentially dull learning atmosphere. In such circumstances, it becomes imperative for teachers to demonstrate understanding and creativity in structuring online learning content to capture students' interest and motivate their active participation. Additionally, students face various challenges in the realm of online learning, including signal limitations, limited technological knowledge, high costs of internet quotas, and inadequate access to facilities and infrastructure.

Suggestion

After reviewing all the related literature, the writer proposes several suggestions as follows:

1. English Teachers

    Teachers must have a precise preparation of the material that will be used as learning materials that are made as attractive as possible. So the students do not get bored quickly and can understand the lessons given by the teacher, as well as train themselves a lot in using online media as online learning media.

2. Parents

    Parents should pay more attention to their children's learning time and improve the facilities children use during online learning.

3. Government

    The government should pay more attention to infrastructure to support online learning for students and teachers, especially those living in rural areas, so they can also enjoy a proper education.

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