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Previous Studies on The Impact of Online Education in EFL and ESL contexts

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Abstract. Unexpected Covid-19 global outbreak in the world, has had a broad effect on people's life and their daily activities. Globally, education at all levels as an important part of people's lives has been influenced due to the pandemic of Covid-19. Teachers and students, as the key role players of education, have felt the impacts of online education both negatively and positively. Hence, this article aimed to collect and analyze perception of EFL and ESL learners and teachers toward online education during Covid-19 pandemic and put effort into finding some solutions for the negative effects of online learning. The selected previous studies about this topic were chosen from different published articles in multiple countries in EFL and ESL context. As a result, the article found that online education had a negative impact on the majority of the learners and teachers, although there were some positive impacts too.

Keywords. Covid-19 outbreak, online education, EFL context, ESL context

Introduction

As a result of advancements in technology, along with the widespread use of the Internet, have seen a dramatic growth since the 1990s, online learning has been in use for educational purposes for more than two decades.

Online learning mainly refers to the use of internet-based and electronic-based technology and their features (Efriana, 2021). In other words, it is a system of learning without face to face interaction between teachers and learners (Allen & Seaman, 2006). A great range of applications and platforms can be used, namely Zoom, Google Meet, Adobe Connect, Microsoft Teams, Edmodo, Google Drive and so on.

In the early days of online learning, it was usually offered to students as an alternative to traditional in-class learning. However, since the unexpected COVID-19 global outbreak, online learning has become the sole means of education rather than a simple alternative. In other words, online learning has become an irreplaceable part of education since the worldwide pandemic started (Han, Öksüz, Şarman & Nacar, 2020).

Online education has been in active use across many countries, a great range of departments in universities and various subjects in schools. Therefore, the widespread use of online learning as an educational tool has gained great popularity as well as creating a space to discuss its nature, function and importance. Although e-learning or online learning are the most common terms in the literature, since it is a recently heated matter of discussion, there is still disagreement on the use of the terminology. Using distant or distance education, e-learning,

online training or education, and asynchronous/synchronous learning are some of the most popular terms which have been used widely in different contexts (Gluchmanova, 2015; Moore, Dickson-Deane & Galyen, 2011).

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL), online education was a part of learning and teaching even before the global outbreak. Learners often accessed online materials in English to further improve their competence and skills, which was usually an individual effort. In addition, formal instruction in the classroom was supplemented by online language learning tools and materials. With the COVID-19 coming into existence, online tools and materials have been an essential part of English learning and teaching to the extent that it has fundamentally become the norm (Tallent-Runnels et al. 2006; Gluchmanova, 2015)

Since the widespread use of online education in EFL and ESL contexts, there have been many questions regarding the impacts and effectiveness of it. Answering these questions plays an important role for educators, administrators, and learners. Various challenges and problems related to technology have been experienced during the online education period, many of which have had certain impacts on student satisfaction and motivation. In contrast to reported issues and challenges, many different benefits of online education have been reported since the implementation of e-learning has taken place since the 1990s and more commonly during the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, both learners and teachers have reported varying attitudes including increased or decreased motivation satisfaction and engagement for English language education by means of online tools, platforms and material.

Literature review
1. Challenges Faced by EFL/ESL Teachers and Learners in Online Education

There have been a good variety of challenges and problems reported since the sudden shift to online education took place due to the COVID-19 global outbreak. These challenges mainly consist of technology related issues.

Since online education requires the help of technology, various technical issues have occurred, which may have hindered the effectiveness of online education (Dawadi et al., 2020; Halim & Hashim, 2019, Melvina et al., 2020).

One of them is a lack of required technological devices (Adnan & Anwar, 2020; Han. et al. , 2020; Wahab and Iskandar 2020). There is a considerable number of students who do not have a computer or any other device that is required to access online lessons. Also, Melvina et al. (2020) in a research study proved that countries with advanced infrastructure and high technological tools could quickly enhance their online education platforms and provided learners easy access to online contents via their mobile or computer devices; whereas the countries which had problems in providing the required technological devices had difficulties. Moreover, Mevlina et al. (2020) revealed that different regions in a country, especially in rural areas, had more difficulties in running online education due to the lack of required technology. Pandit (2020) had the same results concluding that because of unequal distribution of ICT infrastructure in rural and urban areas in Nepal, learners in rural areas had difficulties in accessing the internet which caused inequalities in online education.

Another problem is related to the teacher's lack of sufficient ability, skills and experience to use technology and technological devices in online learning (Ko and Rossen, 2017; Melvina et al., 2020; Lestiyanawati & Widyantoro, 2020; Efriana, 2021). Not all teachers are completely confident or competent in using the required technological devices or internet-based platforms and applications, especially senior teachers who were reported to have difficulty adapting to online learning tools (Schleicher & Reimers, 2020).

The third problem is due to poor network connection of both students and teachers (Adnan & Anwar, 2020; Lestiyanawati & Widyantoro, 2020). Many teachers and students who reside in areas where internet infrastructure has not seen significant developments have had challenges and difficulties (Ghavifekr et al., 2016; Mevlina et al., 2020). Moreover, Amin and Sundari (2020), and Mahyoob (2020) reported that students who live in remote towns where the network system is underdeveloped and overused experience difficulties accessing online lessons, assignments, materials and exams. Aryanti (2020) also reported that the students had problems accessing certain online applications for lessons because of their low internet connection. As a result, the unstable connection issue may be one of the most crucial challenges as student engagement is tightly related to sufficient accessibility to the provided lessons, materials and many more (Ali, 2020). Furthemore, Mabrook (2020) concluded that poor internet connection caused disappearance of both teachers' and learners' voices. According to his results, some students failed to have their online exams successfully because of their poor internet connection. Mabrook (2020) also mentioned that poor internet connection gave the learners less opportunities to be exposed to listening and speaking. In addition, he argued that teachers' awareness of the internet connection problem made them allocate less time to speaking activities.

2. The Attitude and Motivation of Teachers and Learners toward Online Education

For Bandura, motivation is an inner stimulus which causes mimicking the learner behavior in EFL and ESL context (Bandura, 1977 p. 43). In Bandura's view, motivation is not only a process which enables learning but also, it leads into "self-efficacy", which is a component in human behavior (Bandura, 1994). In Bandura's opinion, motivation and self-efficacy regulate learner's performance and as a result motivation gives the learners an attitude to the amount of their ability they will use to be successful in learning (Bandura, 1994). In the Affective Filter Hypothesis, Krashen (1985) considers motivation as one of the variables playing a key role in second language acquisition. Lumsden (1994) believes that motivation plays a key role in the willingness of students during the language learning process.

Motivation in online courses had been receiving attention even before the global outbreak of COVID-19 (Chen & Jang, 2010; Baker, 2010; Hartnett et al., 2011; Richardson et al., 2015; Li & Tsai, 2017; Kyewski & Kramer, 2018; Özhan & Kocadere, 2020). Although these studies do not specifically focus on L2 teaching and learning, their reported findings and results seem to be still relevant for foreign language education via online instruction. Learners' motivation and satisfaction are important factors in successful implementation of online education autonomously (Estelami, 2012). In many studies, it was repeatedly indicated that motivation and success are intertwined as it has direct impact on learners' improvement and potential growth in the process of learning the English language (Stefanu & Salisbury-Glennon, 2002; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Hung, Chou, Chen & Own, 2010; Bilgic, Dogan & Seferoğlu, 2011).

The research exploring learner motivation, satisfaction and engagement has yielded varying results. While a number of studies reported findings that indicate a positive correlation between online learning and learner motivation and engagement (Hotho, 2000; Ushida, 2005), a reasonable amount of research results showed an opposite correlation.

Regarding the positive impacts of online education on learner motivation and engagement, there has been a good body of research which shows that learners' motivation and engagement towards learning English has shown an increase in online education (Ilter, 2009; Wang et al., 2019). The findings of these studies were in line with Cinkara and Bagceci's

findings (2013). They reported high levels of motivation and engagement towards foreign language education via online tools and materials.

Halim and Hashim (2019) discussed self-confidence as one of the benefits of online education. For them, there was an improvement in learners' self-confidence during the online education. They also mentioned that online education had a positive impact on learners' engagement as well as their communication skills. They included the convenience of an online education environment for both teachers and learners as another benefit of education in an online format.

Some other researchers (Morat et al., 2016; Gavin, 2019; Pazilah et al., 2019) believe that online education can increase learners' motivation if the implemented online activities are fun and engaging for the learners. They also claim that using authentic videos, texts, and audios from the mostly used media sources like Youtube, Wikipedia, online TV channels, and Spotify can improve learners' online education experience.

In Oraif and Elyas' (2021) study, learners showed a high level of engagement during the online education. Further, a positive correlation was found between their level of satisfaction and motivation, and online instruction. In detail, learners had a good classroom participation engagement with their teachers and classmates as well as emotional involvement with online materials. In summary, a high satisfaction was seen among the students for learning through online education.

Another research conducted by Fitriyah and Jannah (2021) revealed that online assessment mainly had positive impacts in online EFL Indonesian classes during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of this study, because of the enhanced flexibility and improved language knowledge in online assessment, as well as leading the learners to autonomous learning, the majority of the learners had positive attitudes to the online testing.

On the opposing side, in terms of negative effects of online education on learner motivation and engagement, there has also been a lot of research indicating a decrease in learners' motivation and engagement.

In Alawamleh's (2020) research it was proven that online education had a negative impact on the productivity level of students as well as the teacher - learner communication. In this study, due to the decreased level of motivation, suffering from understanding online materials, low frequency of communication between the teachers and learners, and more importantly their isolation feeling because of online education, the majority of the learners preferred conventional classes over online education.

Mese and Sevilen (2021) investigated learners' perceptions of motivation in relation with online education. Based on the findings, it was reported that the participating students showed a mostly negative view towards online learning. For their lack of motivation, the students expressed a number of reasons such as not being satisfied with the lesson content, materials and activities, lack of self-discipline and interaction with peers and instructors. Moreover, Adnan and Anwar (2020), based on their results, indicated that the lower level of motivation and engagement of learners was mainly a result of lack of proper interaction between other students in class and teachers The two studies were in line with the findings of Lin et al. (2017) where extrinsic and intrinsic motivation of the participating students were found to be lower in online education in comparison to conventional, face-to-face education. The main reason for the findings was due to the absence of social and inquisitive interaction between peers and instructors. Erarslan and Topkaya's (2017) study, on the other hand, reported the negative correlation between motivation and lack of feedback from instructors along with interaction with peers. For these reasons, most participating students reported a higher level of desire for conventional education when compared to its online counterpart. Moreover, the

students in Mese and Sevilen's (2021) study found that it proved to be difficult for the students to sustain their motivation and self-discipline at a desired level during the online learning period.

Furthermore, in a research, Meeter et. al (2020) concluded that students were less interested in online learning than conventional university education. Dealing with the problems connected with necessary facilities as well as absence of social and real - life interaction caused a motivation loss in the learners through online education.

Finally, Evisen, Akyilmaz and Torun (2020) and Efrian (2021) conducted different research resulting in similar findings. They realized that a large number of learners preferred to switch to traditional education and they had no interest in online education. These studies also revealed that students were not mentally and financially ready to have a quick switch from conventional education to online education.

Discussion

A good body of research on the implementation of online education and its impacts on learners have been carried out, especially since the beginning of the global pandemic, because of which many institutions of education in various contexts including EFL and ESL.

The studies reported many challenges for teachers and learners alike. One of the most challenging problems has been due to technical issues including lack of required technological devices, poor and unstable network connection and teachers' lack of ability, skills and experience related to using technological devices for online learning. For the problems in question, a range of solutions have been put forward. In the case of not owning required technological devices, the first step is to provide teachers with up-to-date computers and required online tools and software for online instruction. For students, on the other hand, institutions may offer students the option to provide them with the minimum required technological equipment by including costs in tuition fees, which is the case in many universities and schools. As far as connection problems are concerned, infrastructure of networks in areas where these problems regularly occur may be reconstructed and developed up to the minimum levels of requirement for a stable and adequate connection to online lessons. In addition, students may need to upgrade their internet bandwidth to desired standards in order not to face any possible problems during online lessons such as lagging, freezing or disconnecting (Mishra, Gupta, & Shree, 2020; Putri et al., 2020; Tanveer et al, 2020). Finally, teachers' lack of adaptability and competence in using online tools can be helped by a number of ways. In the beginning, every teacher should be provided with enough opportunities to get themselves accustomed to the online tools, software and material to be used. Further, teachers who are not completely up-to-date may be given the necessary training so that they can have the chance to keep up with the required skills and knowledge. Another suggestion may be that the tools that are used should be selected carefully considering their user-friendliness for both teachers and students.

The conducted studies have also reported how learner motivation, satisfaction and engagement are affected during online education. The findings of results seem to be mixed . Some reported that learner motivation and satisfaction showed an increase, students found activities beneficial and productive due to their engaging and authentic nature. Also, autonomous learning and flexibility in online assessment were positively viewed by learners. On the other hand, some other research findings indicated that a decrease in learner motivation and satisfaction was observed due to lack of interaction with teachers and peers, which led to feelings of isolation in learners. Dealing with this issue, asking learners to turn on their cameras and microphones along with the teachers during the lesson can make the online lesson more

interactional. Teachers also can use break-out rooms in softwares like Adobe Connect to give the opportunity to the students to interact more frequently and confidently in smaller groups. Other reasons for the said decrease were because of difficulty in understanding, following and participating in the online lesson materials and activities, which caused students not to have enough opportunities for learner output and production. Regarding the mentioned problem, utilizing more visualized materials such as Powerpoint and short video clips can make the lesson easier to understand and learners can follow the lesson in a more focused way. Concerning students' unwillingness in participation in the online lesson, having a limited number of learners in one class can give a better opportunity for the teacher to let the students speak out more and learners would feel more responsible to participate during the lesson.

Conclusion and suggestions for further research

This article aimed to review, and reported on a good body of research claims and findings of the impact of online education on teachers and learners in EFL and ESL contexts during COVID-19 breakout in the world. The article analyzed both negative and positive effects of online learning and the results covered in this article were mostly not in favour of online education due to students' decreasing motivation, lack of required tools, training and infrastructure.

This article suggests doing further research on the impacts of online education in EFL and ESL contexts for several reasons.

Firstly, most of the studies and research have been conducted focusing on the learners. Considering this fact, more research should be done about the impact of online education on teachers as well.

Secondly, the majority of studies have analyzed the problems in online education but only little research has been conducted to find solutions. This means, there should be further studies focusing more on suggestions and solutions.

Lastly, there can be larger amounts of research on developing online materials and designing a better syllabus based on those online materials.

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