SUSTAINABILITY OF E-LEARNING IN THE UNDERGRADUATE EFL CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the probable sustainability and effectiveness of e-learning in English language teaching (ELT) to learners in an English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. Since the beginning of technology, it has always influenced our lives, thinking, and learning areas. One significant model in today's world in education is E-Learning. Today, one aspect of technology that has a considerable impact on our livelihood is English language learning in the EFL context. Data were collected using a Google form questionnaire with 20 close-ended questions on a 5-point Likert scale and analyzed in percentage. Ninety-two undergraduate EFL learners randomly participated in the survey. The quantitative method has been used to analyze the data. The results showed that integrating e-learning is a blessing to language learners though students face some challenges entirely using it. Learners have found educational technology effective in developing their fours language skills, including vocabulary problem-solving skills, performance improvement, etc. The study finally recommended increasing e-learning practices alongside the traditional approach in the EFL context of Bangladesh along with secured and controlled techniques.

Keywords: Blended Learning, E-Learning, EFL, ELT, Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Since the advent of technology, its blessing has been experienced in all domains of daily life. From government bodies to business companies and casual households, e-learning has benefited. Although it brought immense advancement in the English Language Education sector, the stance of people who either got in the vanguard of this advancement or merely have any idea about it is fearsome. In today's world where life is busy and living is competitive, e-learning in learning the English Language presents multitudes of options that profit and make Teacher-students' life comfortable and serene. E-learning provides organizations with other resources set forth by tech giants to assist learners in gaining additional knowledge, certificates, and degrees in English language learning Courses. This helps learners learn regardless of their full-time jobs if they are living in distant countries, as well as mastering skills outside their mainstream course.

Nevertheless, as pupils and adolescents explore aspects that come with the good fortune of accessing the internet, it is overwhelming. They are also recorded to have spent countless hours using various applications and browsing eccentrically on devices. The parents' despair and endless worries reach prodigious levels with time. Questions arise about whether their immediate next generation is appropriately raised as complete human beings. E-learning can be found in language apps, video conferencing tools, virtual tutoring, online learning software, Moodle, and many more (Li & Lalani, 2020). However, the time-honored axiom of e-learning brought a new spectrum on how the present generations depict their English language learning grid and pursue their degrees. Despite being lauded universally, in Bangladesh, virtual learning or online education is passing its early stage, and therefore, it requires providing all technical support to the students for virtual learning (Yesmin & Khan 2021).

To the language teachers, though the uses of mobile phones, computers, projectors, and the internet are not new, the practice of computer-based learning, e-learning, distance-learning, or online learning is very new to many which are regarded as a dynamic, complex, and interdisciplinary enterprise (Shifat, Khan & Chowdhury, 2021).

The infrastructure of blended learning lies upon the infusion of web-based technology and mode of convenient learning. This realm of understanding allows English Language Learners to gain access to a wide range of information to conceptualize their learning object from different angles. From higher education to primary level schemes, all incorporate electronic devices and the internet depending on studies. This lattice of information and communication technologies constructs downhill innovative ways students can interact with tutors online and offline, fellow peers and faculty, and content. As Bangladesh has faced several challenges in the education sector during the covid-19 pandemic, to continue the adequate flow of education in the post-pandemic situation, it is essential to utilize the modernization of blended learning (Khan, 2021). Instead of simply relying on rigid traditional techniques, such as memorizing grammar, vocabulary, re-writing, and re-reading volumized books, students can access authentic and experimented methods of effective English language learning. The web offers multitudes of collaborative materials and ideas, which elevates students' total depth of knowledge that assists them in understanding better. The emerging arrays of multimedia learning improve legitimate learning strategies of English language learners. According to Rabbani, Raihan and Khan (2020), to increase students' more profound knowledge of technology by using internet supported education, it is required to increase the rate of administering tests and homework or assignment through the internet as a means of formative assessment, which can make them more collaborative, cooperative, and communicative. According to Zakarneh (2018), e-learning mood is a better mode of enhancing performance and a better tool for testing and evaluation.

Moreover, recently many universities and colleges proffer longstanding and near-term courses on numerous English courses in parallel with vast fields of interest. The certificate and degrees earned from these programs later help learners of different ages to have supplementary incomes and set ingenious demonstrations for others to follow on the internet. Apart from institutes, many organizations offer such English programs at a much lower price through websites for people to join. This way, e-learning based on blending

learning is applicable for long-distance classes and could be appropriately used for the conventional education system (Kristanto et al., 2017).

Different industries, agencies, and business associations accept online certificates and accreditations for individuals applying for positions depending on expertise in a particular English Language sector. Thus, practitioners explore an array of opportunities to enhance their careers further. Apart from promising career advancement and raising employee qualifications, English Language learners working part or full time can immediately bring new cognizance and competence to their job, increasing profits, including innovations. Furthermore, Students no longer have to commute to multiple destinations, juggling several tasks within a single day. Hence, they get to spend some time on self-enhancement, meditation, or even make a trial run on courses outside their academic program. Most students engaged in an e-learning do not have to incur traveling expenses or afford to live in foreign cities, as they get to study from home. The framework of e-learning creates feasible opportunities to help people be trained virtually.

However, the integration of media technology assists learners in acquiring four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Ahmad, 2012). Technology-based learning provides flexibility and pacing option. Hence students can absorb information with more concentration in a comfortable environment. Pupils can practice self-discipline at a young age as no teacher would aggravate the assignment deadlines, nor would a friend call on a Monday morning to ensure the group project has reached the end completion. As a result, students build a more robust self-governance and determination. This plays a significant role in other aspects of life such as fitness, work ethics, or even relationships between friends and family. Unlike the synchronous learning environments where students have to focus on ongoing lectures despite feeling unmindful, students can now choose to have a very altering study schedule. So, this paper aims to investigate the effectiveness of e-learning as a mode of teaching the English language in universities in Bangladesh. Also, to determine the factors of e-Learning that contoured the dogma of the traditional learning environment.

Since the beginning of the rise of technology, it has always influenced our paths of life, way of thinking, and learning options. In the present day, it shapes our daily life. One aspect of technology that has a massive impact on our livelihood is our English Language learning. The time-honored axiom of e-learning brought a new spectrum on how the present generations depict their English Language Learning education grid and pursue their degrees. Even though there are two sides to every story, both sides of this concept are hard to judge, and even if a conclusion is reached, the snowball effect would be hard to amend. Several studies have been conducted on e-learning and its feasibility, effectiveness, and challenges in different streams. Very few have been on the English language teaching, which made researchers interested in studying its energy and difficulties in teaching English. Various literary works revealed that an e-learning platform is an effective platform for teaching the English language. After the pandemic outbreak, Google Classroom has become popular around the world. Google Classroom helps carry out this online learning well (Anggraini & Syahrul, 2021).

Zakarneh (2018) conducted a study on the effectiveness of e-learning mode in Arab universities for teaching the English language. He found e-learning appropriate for acquiring vocabulary, speaking skills, listening skills, reading skills, and writing skills more effective than in the traditional classroom. Students can learn better through e-learning. Such an e-learning platform is considered an appropriate and better means for acquiring vocabulary, developing speaking skills, English language grammar, reading skills, writing skills, listening skills, and a better mode of enhancing performance in English than the traditional classroom model. They find e-learning a better tool for testing and evaluation and prefer it to other conventional methods. Sung and Yeh (2012) found the perceptions of online technology among Taiwanese university students in language education and found students' satisfaction because of its convenience and practicality.

Ahmad (2012) studied the integration of media technology to English language teaching and found satisfactory results from students' perceptions. Cai (2012) found out that with the help of computers and the internet, e-learning can change pedagogical strategies and improve teaching and learning efficiency. Mutambik (2018) conducted a study on the role of e-learning on Saudi Arabia students and found out it is a flexible, interactive way of learning the English language. Mohammadi et al. (2011) studied the effects of e-learning on language learning. They found that People can be autonomous by using the internet, and they can be independent of books and teachers. Also, internet media like blogs; message boards, podcasts; and video sharing are other faces of e-learning that provide teachers and students with creative and practical ideas. However, the researchers found a considerable gap in the previous related studies for surveying the present research on the efficacy and probable sustainability of e-learning in the Bangladesh context.

METHODS

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire aimed to discover the opinions of students on the effectiveness of e-learning in developing English language skills and vocabulary in the classroom in comparison with face-to-face instruction and on the implementation of the e-learning course for distance students based on the frequencies of their responses and the qualitative signs (year of study, field of study). The questionnaire was supportive as the research instrument to collect data on phenomena that cannot be observed, such as attitudes, self-concepts, etc.

The questionnaire was prepared in Google form; it was designed to be automatically scored and summed up. EFL students were given the freedom to keep their identities anonymous. The questionnaire consists of 20 close-ended questions. All questions were written in English, as the participants were chosen from the undergraduate level. They have been studying English since their primary education till now. The questions emphasized learners' opinions, views, and attitudes towards e-learning. Twenty close-ended questions were written on a 5-point Likert scale of always (A), very often (VO), sometimes (S), rare (R), and never (N). The questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first part deals with students' demographic information; the second part deals with whether e-learning in their classroom is practical to their language learning.

The questionnaire was sent to the undergraduate EFL learners of the English departments of three universities. Participants and universities were selected randomly, and a total of 20 questionnaires were filled out by the 96 participants and returned. The participants were chosen from the undergraduate level who went through placement tests, assignments, and quizzes were categorized for English language achievements.

The researchers used the random sampling technique because it uses randomization to ensure that each population element gets an equal chance to be selected. This non-probability sampling technique was used for the convenience, availability, accessibility, and proximity of participants from whom data was collected, which is identified as the most appropriate method. The use of this random sampling technique method made it easy for the researchers to sample and collect data from participants. Qualitative data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Accordingly, participants' responses were analyzed using graphs and tables.

RESULTS

Data Analysis and Findings

Table 1. Participants' Responses to the sustainability of e-learning in the EFL classrooms

SL	Items	A (5)	VO (4)	S (3)	R (2)	N (1)
		Percentage (%)				
1	Our teachers integrate e-learning into our traditional classroom.	41.9	22.6	30.1	33.2	22.2
2	E-learning is an enjoyable and exciting learning tool.	42.1	23.6	26.3	3.2	0
3	I find a wide variety of sites and information to learn.	66.3	15.8	15.8	2.1	00
4	E-learning helps to learn more English vocabulary and grammar.	66.3	15.8	15.8	1.1	1.1
5	I can develop my writing skill through e-learning.	34.4	18.8	33.3	8.3	5.2
6	Our linguistic skill is fastened by e-learning.	36.8	24.2	20	13.7	5.3
7	My listening skill is increasing through e-learning.	58.3	11.5	24	4.2	2.1
8	My reading skill is improving through e-learning.	36.8	28.4	23.2	10.5	1.1
9	I perform better in English through e-learning mode than in the traditional classroom environment.	29.5	21.1	30.5	10.5	8.4
10	It is an immense motivation for me to learn using the internet.	57.4	16	20.2	6.4	0
11	Integrating e-learning makes me more autonomous and independent.	44.7	20.2	27.7	3.2	4.3
12	ELT courses assessment is tested better through the e-learning method.	30.9	22.3	30.9	7.4	8.5
13	It is better to learn through e-learning than traditional learning.	27.1	13.5	34.4	8.3	16.7
14	It is a waste of time to learn through this mode.	7.4	6.3	25.3	15.8	45.3
15	Students lose interest in their studies for internet-based learning mode.	16.8	12.6	44.2	10.5	15.8
16	During online classes, students have physical problems (back pain, headache, blurred vision).	30.5	23.2	31.6	10.5	4.2
17	E-learning can be a standard method of teaching besides physical classrooms.	38.9	15.8	26.3	6.3	12.6
18	All English language courses should be taught through the e-learning mode.	21.1	15.8	31.6	5.3	26.3
19	I understand English courses better if E-learning is used.	29.5	27.4	21.1	10.5	11.6
20	E-learning should be incorporated to traditional classrooms.	0	46.3	38.9	3.2	11.6

Teachers' integration of E-learning into the traditional classroom

When learners were asked whether their teachers integrate e-learning into their traditional classroom majority, 41.9% replied that they always use it. In comparison, 30.1% sometimes said they use it, and 22.6% responded very often. The results indicate that e-learning has been one of the integral parts of teaching in the classroom (Item-1). All incorporate electronic devices and internet-dependent studies from higher education to

primary level schemes. This lattice of information and communication technologies constructs downhill innovative ways students can interact with tutors online and offline, fellow peers and faculty, and content. Based on the survey result, 41% of participants consistently demonstrated that integration of e-learning was helpful in the traditional classroom. More than 50% of the students agreed with the teachers' integration of e-learning in the English classes. Around 5% of the participants were unaware that e-learning was a valuable teaching model. In the statement, whether it's better to learn through e-learning than traditional learning, the total of 61.5%, the aggregated result of always 27.1% sometimes 34.4% agreed on it. Only 13.5% answered 'very often', and 16.7% said 'never' (Item-13). Also, in the opinion of whether e-learning can be the traditional method besides offline classroom majority of 65.2 %, the total of always 38.9% sometimes 26.3%, agreed on it. Only 15.8% said very often, and 12.6% never said (Item-17).

Insights about E-learning as an exciting tool

Many students (42%) think that a mingling of blended learning lies in the infusion of web-based technology and mode of convenient learning. More than 60% of the students believe this realm of learning allows English language learners to access a wide range of information to conceptualize their learning object from different angles (Item 2 and 3). Instead of simply relying on rigid traditional techniques, such as memorizing grammar, vocabulary, re-writing, and re-reading volumized books, now can rout out authentic and experimented methods of effective English Language learning. The web offers multitudes of collaborative materials and ideas that elevate students' real depth of knowledge that assist them in understanding better. The emerging arrays of multimedia learning improve legitimate learning strategies for English Language Learners. It enthuses learners to navigate the theoretical and practical complexities of recontextualizing the concepts taught in traditional manners.

A relatively large percentage of participants (36.8%) were agreed with the statement that e-learning fastened by e-learning. However, only 13.7%% did not agree strongly with the idea. On the contrary, 24.2% agreed with the information (very often-24.2% and sometimes-20%) that e-learning was a better means of developing language skills (Item-6). Participants (34.4%) consistently agreed that e-learning was better for learning writing skills, with 18.8% very often and 33.3% sometimes agreeing. However, only 8.3% rarely agreed with the statement that e-learning was better for learning writing skills (Item-5). More than 36% of participants (always-36.8% and very often 28.4%) were in agreement with the statement that e-learning was better meant for developing reading skills. 23.2% of participants agreed that sometimes e-learning helped build reading skills, and 10.5% rarely agreed with the statement that e-learning was a better means for developing reading skills (Item-8). However, the majority of participants (58.3%) were in agreement with the statement that e-learning was always better meant for developing English listening skills. On the contrary, only 11.5% of participants mentioned it very often, and 24% agreed with the statement that e-learning was a better means of developing listening skills (Item-7).

Challenges in e-learning for EFL learners

Although it has an abundance of bright sides, E-learning has shortcomings too. Based on research, studies, and surveys, the students find e-learning, especially the online classes, much more challenging to manage for learning all the English courses (21.1% said always, 15.8% said very often, 31.6% said sometimes, and 26.3% said never) (Figure-18). Individuals found it challenging to shift pedagogically from age-long in-class practice to mentally and physically electronic learning with fewer materials. Thus, students faced several physical problems such as back pain, headache, and blurred vision during online classes (30.5% of the participants suffered all time, 23.2% of learners suffered very often, and 31.6% of the students sometimes suffered during or after the class), (Item-16). This led to depression, frustration, and anxiety as well, of which there is no option in traditional in-class learning. Although e-learning lays out a diverse array to ensure proper education, teachers and students fail to understand that the effectiveness of e-learning in teaching and learning the English Language lies under the strict rote learning system and interactive critical thinking sessions. Therefore, 46.3% of the participants thought e-learning could not be the standard teaching method; rather, it would be best for 'sometimes' beside the traditional classroom. 38.9% agreed very often, and 11.6% disagreed with the statement (Item-20). 16.8% of students always lose interest in studying for internet-based learning mode because the home is not an ideal study environment. A classroom creates a quiet and actual place to learn, inspiring them and bringing along the vibe to study. 15.8% of students felt the household is chaotic and busy with chores, causing students to lose concentration, even no work to be accomplished. They (12.6%) feel lost hurrying to finish and turn in assignments under pressure. 44.2% of the students often experience the absence of willingness and desire to study (Item-15). Although 30.9% of the students felt that ELT courses evaluation and assessment were tested better through the E-learning method, 22.3% said it was often done better, and 30.9% said sometimes English courses were tested better through the online mode. Interestingly, 8.5% of the students usually had a rush to complete their assignments to obtain passing credits without even giving reasonable efforts to learn the course material and disagreed with the statement. They also claimed that authorities at the same time gave relatively easy question papers and designed assessments that could be graded quickly for mass people to pass on their first attempt itself (Item-12).

DISCUSSION

Although e-learning providers are constantly trying to pave new ways to keep learners engaged in studies in the best effortless way, they still found that people generally fail to culminate and finish their course. With the emerging innovations, although e-learning outlays innumerable opportunities, many learners look for the sustainability of online learning. In parallel with third-world countries, many students, from teenagers to young adults in first-world countries, spend more time browsing the internet in the name of online classes and e-learning. With just a few clicks and taps, pupils can gain entrée to various sites, social media, and games. English language students spend uncountable hours fidgeting

through the internet, playing games, and scrolling through social media sites aimlessly. Researches show that individuals usually become obsessed with content represented and fall into internet addiction. This leads to detrimental effects on their psychology and mental health. Besides inefficacious and out-of-reach internet connections in rural areas, parents are now more concerned about young learners' deprivation of the internet. The results of this study are supported by several comparative studies that have investigated the effectiveness of e-learning or online learning against the traditional forms of learning and found differences in student outcomes. Cai (2012) also showed similar results when he found out how students find it interesting to get the reading materials from the internet. Zakarneh (2018) showed that an e-learning platform is an appropriate and better means for acquiring vocabulary, developing speaking skills, English language grammar, reading skills, writing skills, and listening skills than the conventional classroom model. They see e-learning as a better tool for testing and evaluation and prefer it to other traditional methods. The findings also supported the study of Sung & Yeh (2012), where the usefulness of computer-based English learning for developing essential skills like listening (Gruba, 2004), reading, and writing was encouraged.

The increased presence of ELT learners has raised serious concerns about the safety of Internet and social media use. Difficulty in self-regulation, lack of awareness of the repercussions of privacy compromise, and susceptibility to peer pressure are reasons for teenagers' cavalier attitude towards online risks such as cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate content as they navigate the tricky waters of social media (Ramasubbu, 2015). Besides the devastating effects on their mental health, it has adverse aftermaths on physical health too, whether by studying or habitually browsing without any useful purpose. Keeping eyes fixated on that one bright, many-hued screen for excessive hours disposes of damaging effects on the eye (Alavi et al., 2011). According to the findings of Ahmad (2012), a large number of students reported that media technology provides students with an exciting experience in the learning process, tremendously increases their motivation level, and improves their performance rate. So, this study recommended expanding the e-learning system for the undergrads but in a controlled use of e-learning with utmost security and safety ensured by the respective institutions.

CONCLUSION

E-learning has gained a new height in recent days. The study reported that exciting e-learning tools, a multidimensional learning environment, distance learning, digital classrooms, and online gadgets have already paved sustainable ways for modern learners to improve their English language skills. The learners have found the e-learning effective and time-saving, which indicates the future sustainability of e-learning in the Bangladesh context. However, interventions are brought forth to make academic life facile, pleasant, and comfortable. Similarly, the basis of the combination of English Language education with technology is to make its branches accessible to the majority of the teachers and students out there. E-learning has its place. It has given opportunities and improved lifestyles,

especially for students who would otherwise not attend in-class sessions, especially in the covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the jeopardy of the hopeful prospect needs to be given enough attention. However, students and their guardians feel the need to rethink e-learning in English language teaching with proper guidance, practiced discipline, and standardized cutting-edge well-structured courses to eliminate the many concerns and improve effectiveness. Moreover, it is time to think about sustainable learning techniques, which are more productive than the traditional, convenient learning system, to brighten a career in English communication. Further research can be conducted on the efficacy of e-learning at different levels of education in the EFL context.

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