

The Application of E-learning in English Teaching at Dong Nai Technology University

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Abstract – Many colleges and universities in Vietnam have employed e-learning platforms in teaching English with the hope to better students' English proficiency. Recently, e-learning programs such as DNTU-LMS and Canvas have been implemented at Dong Nai Technology University. With their features of flexibility and efficiency, they have been being used as crucial tools for teaching and learning in various faculties in the university especially during the widespread of Covid-19 pandemic. The present study aimed at identifying the views of the EFL learners from Faculty of Foreign Languages on the application of e-learning platform. A group of 100 EFL students was chosen randomly to participate in this study. Data was collected using questionnaire. After analyzing student's responses, the results proved that the introduction of e-learning was effective. E-learning also stimulates students to learn English and brings them comfort and joy.

Keywords – English language, teaching and learning, E-learning, EFL setting, learners' views.

I. INTRODUCTION

In a world of rapid change, students are required to prepare themselves to keep track with the fast development of technology that helps them live, study and work more effectively. Needless to say, technology has been making education much closer to every students than ever before. Due to the advantages of using modern technology in education, most universities in Vietnam have deployed teaching and learning via computer and Internet. After a long time conducting research, Dong Nai Technology University has started applying e-learning program since the beginning of 2018 in Faculty of Foreign Languages as well as other faculties in the university.

Many language teachers have recommended using e-learning systems to teach English thanks to the benefits they bring. According to [1], e-learning is one of the modern methods which contributes in expanding educational opportunities and makes the teaching and learning process more effective. Obviously, e-learning is flexible because students are able to manage their study depending on their own schedules. The increasing application of e-learning is also based on findings of some studies that indicate the effectiveness of e-learning comparing to traditional methods. Studying through e-learning, students can increase high level of learning achievement and higher-order thinking abilities because they engage to the learning process actively anytime and anywhere [2]. In addition, [3] stated that e-learning supports both teachers and learners with useful and available resources to gain knowledge easily.

To keep up with the trend of teaching via e-learning, Dong Nai Technology has applied two versions of e-learning platforms for students. The first one is DNTU-LMS which has been established and implemented successfully since 2018 for online teaching. Later, students are taught through a modern e-learning platform called Canvas. From the researcher's experience of using e-learning

programs mentioned above in teaching English, he believe that the learners can take advantages of lectures through e-learning system. Therefore, the research was conducted to explore how students majoring in English react to e-learning program at Dong Nai Technology University. This study examines the following research question: What are students' views on the application of e-learning?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Referring to innovation in education, it would be a mistake not to mention the utilization of e-learning programs to English teaching in particular and other subjects in general. The application of e-learning has received a lot of attention due to the advances of technology and computer science. It has been presented as an effective aid in the learning process in many universities around the world. Undeniably, e-learning has proved its superior characteristics of convenience and easy accessibility which makes most schools invest financially and intellectually to adopt e-learning in teaching.

Many researchers have defined the term e-learning in their studies. First of all, [4] considered it as "the use of new multimedia technologies and the internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration". Equivalently, [5] defined it as a medium of computer technology that could be utilized to develop the application of learning and teaching. Similarly, e-learning was defined by [6] as "any learning that involves using internet or intranet." Besides, [7] pointed out that "the use of Internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solutions that enhance knowledge and performance" was e-learning. It is apparent that the growth of e-learning is associated with the advance in technology, computer science, and internet.

According to [8] "e" in e-learning should not stand for electronic; it should be an abbreviation for "evolving, enhanced, everywhere, every time and everybody." Obviously, these qualities are considered as the advantages of e-learning. The positive effects of e-learning in education were also mentioned in many studies. [9] claimed that using e-learning is advantageous in terms of cost effectiveness; cost efficiency, easiness of learning; long life education; saving on the part of the student and teacher; less geographical barriers; greater flexibility; and better administration. Likewise, [10] classified several usefulness of e-learning including sharing ideas easily, promoting learner-centred teaching approaches, enhancing the availability of learning materials, and being helpful for instructors. On the evidence of mentioned insights, the application of e-learning results in numerous effectiveness.

In English teaching and learning, a number of researches have been done to investigate how e-learning platforms develop student's English competences. [11] looked into the effect of e-learning on EFL learners' writing achievement. It is revealed that the use of multiple technologies in teaching writing skill assisted students with diverse studying styles, abilities and interests. Students also had opportunities to practice more types writing at the same time. Moreover, [12] created a helpful pattern that encourage teachers to implement the e-learning mode. He also evaluated the effectiveness of e-learning in teaching English in Thailand. The results illustrated that in light of e-learning, English courses meet the diversity of both teachers and students. A year later, [13] studied the use and value of exploiting e-learning to teach English. He found that the distinctions of e-learning were accessing to information easily, improving learners' comprehension skills, and encouraging students to master English. Similar findings were reported in English teaching context. [3] demonstrated the effectiveness of e-learning. He stated that e-learning provides students suitable materials to enhance basic English skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) and its components (grammar and vocabulary).

Despite the positive outcomes of applying e-learning in education, many researchers also concern about its negative impacts. One of the barriers of e-learning were the limitation of face to face interaction [14]. Other disadvantages were categorized by [15] like high production cost; demanding skills; expense condition; and negligible social interaction. The most important problem in e-learning is the low level of students' participation. According to [16] high dropout ratio is one of the difficulties that teachers face while teaching. Also, [17] revealed that the distance between instructors and learners limits the communication and discourages students from participating persistently and continuously in online learning. Additionally, [18] claimed that students distance reduces the interaction between learners and teachers, so students tend to enroll less in e-learning courses. Furthermore, instructors cope with the learners autonomy problems. While many language teachers argue that students become less dependent on teachers and more involved in different kinds of learning opportunities, others believe that many students do not take enough responsible for their own learning. Clearly, there are still unavoidable shortcomings when applying e-learning in teaching.

III. METHODOLOGY

Data collection tool

The present study used questionnaire to collect quantitative data from the participants. In this study, questionnaire which consists of 8 closed-ended Likert scale statements was designed and delivered to all participants in the third semester in the academic year 2019-2020. This questionnaire had the partakers respond to each items in a five point Likert scale which descend the meaning respectively from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree to strongly disagree. This design is helpful to figure out students' reaction, attitude, and ideas towards the application of e-learning in previous terms.

Participants

The questionnaire was sent via email to 100 sophomore English majored students from Faculty of Foreign Languages at Dong Nai Technology University. Totally, there are 90 questionnaires were completed by participants and returned. Actually, 90% return rate was large enough to ensure the validity and reliability of the results of the study.

Data Analysis

After gathering and grouping information from questionnaire, all quantitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel Program in which the responses of participants were displayed by graphs and tables.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participants were asked to appraise whether they enjoy the utilization of e-learning in the first question. It can be seen clearly in the below pie chart that the majority of the students revealed their agreement including 38.9% of strong agreement and 45.5% of agreement. It is true that they are fond of the use of e-learning when learning English. On the other hand, only 6.7% of the students disagreed with this statement and 5.6 % of the responses were strong disagreement. Although there was a small amount of neutral feedback (3.3%), these figures show that e-learning really attracts students in the learning process.

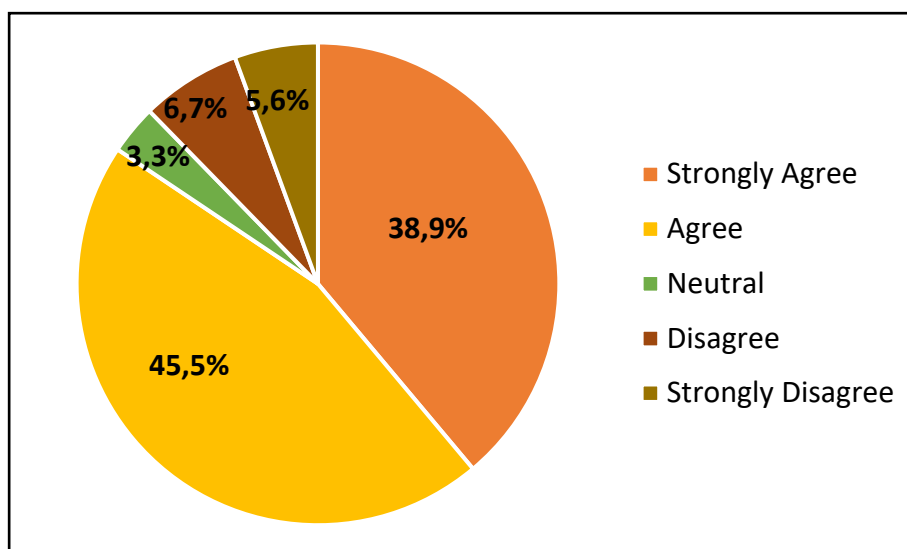


Figure 1. Student's interest about the application of e-learning

From the below bar graph, it is indicated that the high rate of the students agreed (40%) and strongly agreed (38.9%) with the idea "e-learning provides more learning experiences" in the second statement. This is no doubt that students have experienced a totally different type of learning environment in comparison to traditional teaching and learning approaches. In addition to appealing to English lessons as revealed in the above pie chart, students have countless new learning experiences with e-learning platform. Nevertheless, the total number of students expressed disagreement and strong disagreement was 10 out of 90 participants occupied 11.2% . Anyway, there are 9% of students showed their neutral opinion.

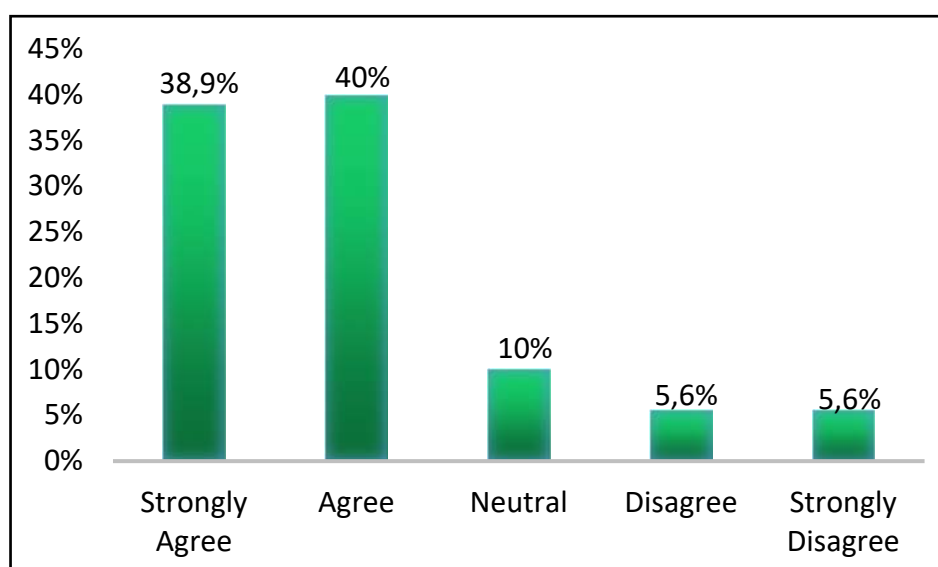


Figure 2. Students' learning experiences promotion

Moreover, the respondents showed their views about the enrollment in e-learning classes in the following semesters in the third questions. Overall, students had the tendency to take e-learning courses. This is understandable because most of the students agreed that they had many experiences while learning English via e-learning programs in question 2. While the percentage of students disagreed and strongly disagreed with the idea was low at 10% and 6.7% respectively, a relatively high proportion of responses were agreement including 42.1% of students agreed and 35.6% of students strongly agreed. This proves that the trend of teaching and learning through e-learning has met the learners' needs. In terms of neutral opinion, 5.6% of responses were collected.

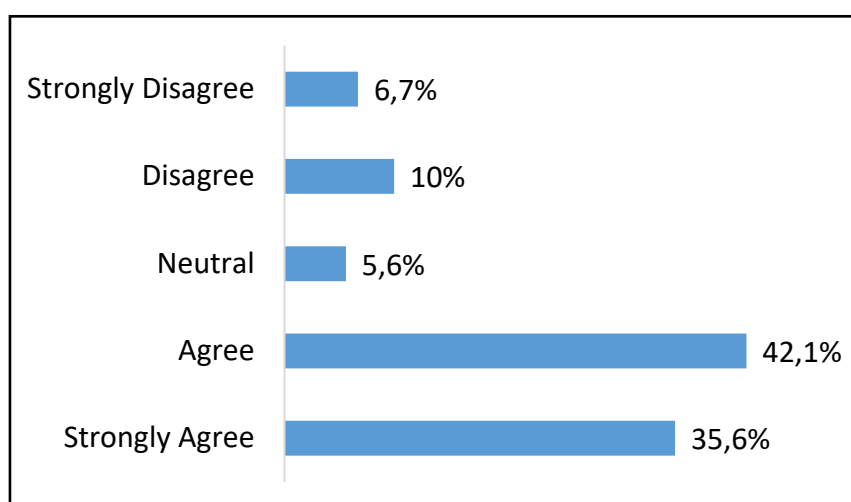


Figure 3. Students' views of enrollment in e-learning classes

The participants also rated their opinions about other features of e-learning. The following table demonstrates the findings of the students' responses.

Table 1. Students' opinions about other features of e-learning

E-learning makes English courses.....	SA	A	N	DA	SD
more effective	43.3%	35.6%	11.1%	5.6%	4.4%

less stressful and enjoyable	37.8%	45.5%	8.9%	7.8%	0%
a favorable option comparing to the classroom-based courses	30%	38.9%	15.6%	8.8%	6.7%

Table 1 presents students' perspectives on applying e-learning in English teaching. It is clear that high percentage of students' responses showed agreement. Nearly 80% of the students agreed (43.3% strongly agreed and 35.6 % agreed) that e-learning makes English courses more effective. Only 10% of them disagreed while 11.1% of the respondents were in the middle. Besides, 83.3% of students (37.8% strongly agreed and 45.5 % agreed) thought that e-learning made them more comfortable and enjoyable while learning. When we compare this figure with the number of students disagreed and disinterested, we see a huge gap (83.3%, 7.8% and 8.9% respectively). Consequently, most students (62 out of 90 responses) admitted that e-learning platform was a favorable choice for English teaching and learning. However, 15.6% of students didn't take any sides, and totally 15.5% of students disagreed. Based on the percentages above, we can see that the students' responses about applying e-learning are good. Therefore, the researcher believed that the application of e-learning can enhance students' motivation and sense of achievement as well as opportunities to learn.

Furthermore, students were asked to compare e-learning and traditional learning methods in terms of efficiency. The plurality of the students did not think e-learning was not as efficient as long-established learning approaches. It can be seen from the chart that 75.5% of the respondents reacted disagreement with the idea while only 12.3% of students agreed. This indicated that from students' point of view, e-learning brought the certain benefits to most students which impact their learning outcomes positively. Actually, there were 12.2% of students were unbiased.

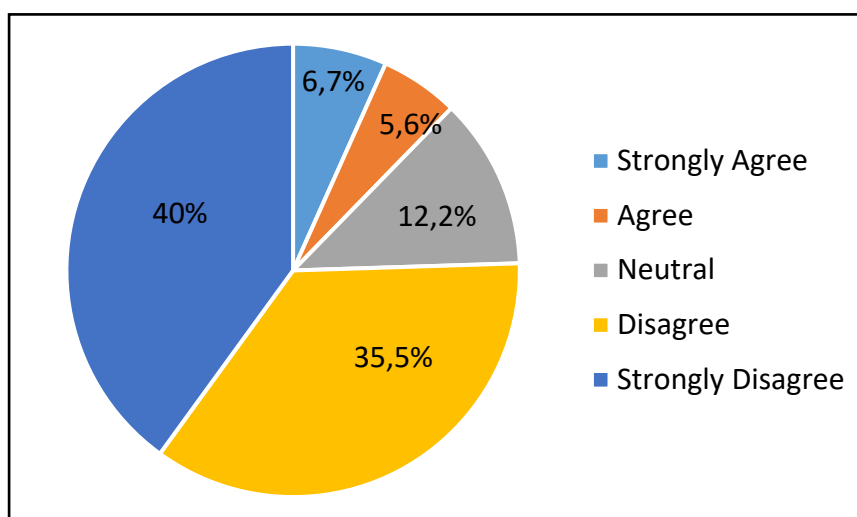


Figure 4. Students' views about e-learning and traditional learning methods

Also, in the final question, students responded to the idea about whether applying e-learning was a waste of time. Generally, most of the students realized how advantageous e-learning were for their learning, it was not surprising that 76.5% of them disagreed that applying e-learning was not a waste of time. In fact, what you see as the advantages will bring your positive attitude. Obviously, if students have a favorable attitude towards e-learning, there will be greater possibility that more students will agree to take this new learning system.

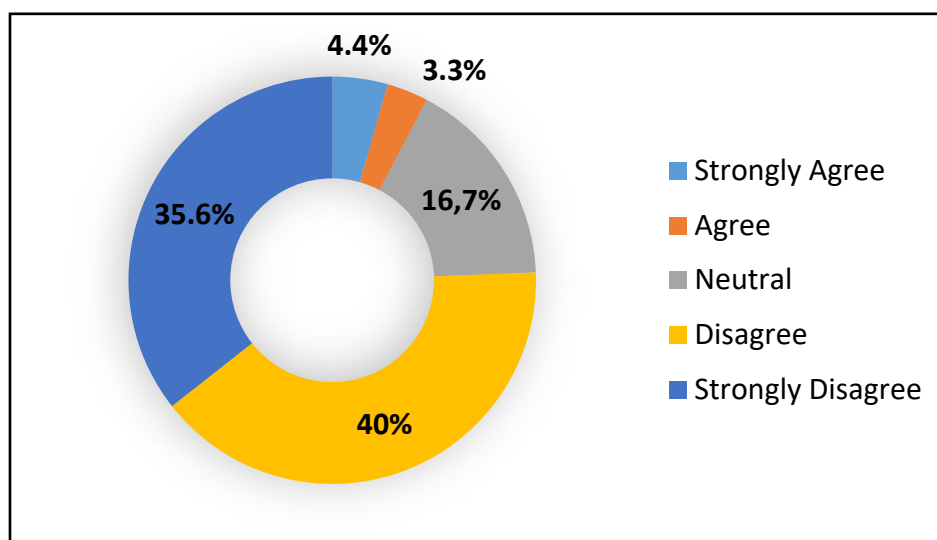


Figure 5. Students' view about e-learning is a waste of time

In a nutshell, integrating e-learning platform in English instruction was found to be a beneficial tool for EFL learners. Its results showed that e-learning can enhance students' inspiration and provide a less stressful educational atmosphere. The use of e-learning from home is strongly recommended. However, it can be difficult to maintain students' engagement to e-learning courses due to the lack of direct interaction between the students and instructors. Thus, teachers need to change pedagogical strategies to keep students motivated. Liu (2015) clarified that the greater students' motivation were, the higher level of autonomy students were able to achieve. Most importantly, instructors should be trained to develop and use e-learning programs more successfully. Besides, the school administrators have to regularly check and evaluate the efficiency of e-learning to promptly detect and resolve the obstacles. In addition, students need to be instructed under the direct supervision of the teachers so that students' ability can be assessed accurately. Simultaneously, teachers can give helpful guidance whenever students need. In short, it emphasizes the important role of teachers in students' progress.

V. CONCLUSION

In 21st century, it is significant to use modern e-learning instruments to improve English language teaching methods. This research has described some essential findings of e-learning in EFL setting at Dong Nai Technology University. From the information obtained, e-learning is a powerful platform for teaching English for it is regarded by EFL learners as effective, comfortable, enjoyable and favorable tackle. However, to manipulate e-learning successfully and to maximize its effectiveness, teachers need better planning, flexibility as well as prompt feedback during teaching procedure.

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