

# ENGLISH ONLINE LEARNING FOR NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS AT VAN LANG UNIVERSITY

● NGUYEN THI TRIEU THAO

## ABSTRACT:

Online teaching has become a very popular means, and it is a suitable learning method during the on-going Covid-19 pandemic. Although many studies about online teaching and learning which have been conducted recently propose solutions to make online learning more attractive to students, the implementation of these solutions finds a little success. This study used questionnaire to discover how online education has been applied at Van Lang University. This study's results are expected to help Van Lang University and other educational institutions to improve the online learning and teaching practices.

**Keywords:** online teaching and learning, practice.

## 1. Introduction

Not all of the students are interested in learning English although it is a compulsory subject taught at schools in Vietnam. Online learning means that the learners have to be in front of the screen for hours with a little interaction with their friends. In addition, they have to try to listen to their teachers explanation impatiently. As a result, the renovation of online teaching methods and creating interesting lessons need to be considered as the most necessary thing. In this article, questionnaire is employed to investigate how online lessons have been learnt and what the students attitudes are towards online English learning in that regard helps improve online teaching more attractive in the future. This study is an attempt to seek for appropriate answers to the questions as follows:

1. What are the students attitudes towards to online English learning?
2. How have the students been taught online?

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. Definitions of online learning

As defined in the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, online learning is a system of learning using electronic media, done typically over the internet. According to Makewa (2019), it is an emerging approach for the students to learn through advanced technologies about information and communication including virtual reality, Moodle, board, etc. Inoue-Smith (2020), it is a strategy of learning which the learners are able to takes classes, gaining knowledge for certificates and diplomas on web-based basis. Thornburg, Ceglie & Abernathy (2021) found it as a form of learning where the students are able to interact with one another and with their teacher through "either asynchronous or synchronous" learning forms. It is often considered as e-learning among other modes, but online learning is just a type of distance learning - a form of educating including physical separation

of teachers and learners during instruction and the use of various technologies to learner-teacher and learner-learner communicating.

### **2.2. Factors affecting online learning**

According to Maheshwari (2021), the main elements which are influential on online learning are (1) learning environment; (2) teachers support; and (3) ease of using the learning.

#### **2.2.1. Learning environment**

Learning environment refers to a variety of physical places, contexts, and cultures where the students are studying, (Bates, 2014). Since the barrier of the location in favor of getting educated, the distance of learning need has become essential. The learners need a safe and quiet place where there is the Internet and suitable technologies for learning such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets. The space should be comfortable, clean and fresh so that there could be good interactions and the concord between a teacher and the learners. Therefore, they feel comfortable and confident asking questions, making mistakes and taking risks in order to learn something new.

#### **2.2.2. Teachers support and ease of using the learning**

Clark (2019) defined teachers support as a teacher giving support of information, instruments, emotion, appraisal to learners, in any environment. The students will learn better if classrooms are guided by enthusiastic, inspired and well-trained teachers. Besides, the teachers have to create very interesting lesson plans with a very condensed contents in a certain time. The teacher has worked so hard in advance, and it helps the learning more effective.

Ease of using the learning determines the students attitudes towards using online tools, and intending behavior of using an online tool in turn decides the actual system use, (Juhary, 2014). It concludes using technologies - the use of scientific knowledge for practical purposes whether in industry or in daily lives and electronic learning resources - digital learning content, materials and tools available online to learners, (Keengwe & Onchwari, 2016). In addition, ease of using the learning could include various social media; however, the ultimate need is connecting with the

Internet to get access to more resources for online learning. It provides the learners with the need of applying critical thinking skill developed in a classroom.

### **2.3. Principles of online teaching**

According to Brown (2014), teaching should be defined within learning. Teaching is instructing and facilitating learning, fostering the students to learn, creating the condition for studying (p. 7). The students ways of learning are decided by (1) the philosophy of education- examining the beliefs, values and understandings of learners with respect; (2) teaching methods and strategies- being either teacher-centered or student-centered; and (3) classroom techniques- the ways to manage the classroom.

### **2.4. Methods of online teaching**

There are two types of online teaching methods such as (1) synchronous instruction, and (2) asynchronous instruction. Synchronous learning means that the teacher and the students in the online class participate in the course content and each other at the same time, but they are from different locations, (Lawless, 2020). The teacher interacts with students in real time by means of tools such as Microsoft Stream, Classroom, Google Meet or Zoom to hold live classes. Although learning takes place at the same time, learners do not have to be there in person and in the same location. Synchronous learning enables learners to ask questions and receive answers on the spot. In addition, they can collaborate freely with their friends. A synchronous instruction means that the teacher and the students in the online class take part in the lesson content at different times and from different locations. It is more learner-centered, (Lawless, 2020). It allows the learners to view the lectures, access the materials, and collaborate with their teachers and friends on their own schedule.

## **3. Research design**

### **3.1. Research methods**

In order to collect the data, the researcher distributed questionnaire about students attitudes towards to online learning to thirty-five first-year English non-majors. The questionnaire includes (1) the students perceptions about online learning; (2) the effective ways of online learning, (3) how to

teach online English, and (4) attitudes towards online English learning. Based on it, the researcher can find out the answer for the questions mentioned in introduction part.

**3.2. Participants**

The participants in the study were thirty-five first-year English non-majors consisting of fourteen males and twenty-one females. Based on the lists of taking roll-call everyday among four first-year English non-majors classes that the researcher has taught, thirty-five English first-year non-majors of class K26-A-44 were not absent from online English class chosen as good sample to investigate their attitudes towards to online learning for this study as showed in the following table. Table 1 showed that fifteen students got from 6.5 to 7.0 marks with the ratio 37.5% and twenty-five students getting from 8.0 to 9.0 gained 62.5%.

**3.3. Data collection**

In order to gain the results, the research data were collected from questionnaire having directly delivered to thirty-five first-year English non-majors about the opinions on online English learning. The mean was used as the main measure including all the values in the data set for its calculation. Based on the students answers, the researcher used Excel to calculate mean in statistics analyzed and explained in Part 4.

**4. Discussion and implications**

The study investigated the students attitudes towards to English online learning of a class with thirty-five English non-majors at Van Lang university. The collected data from questionnaire was analyzed and interpreted.

**4.1. The students attitudes towards to online classes**

The Table 1 highlights the mean of the students opinions on attitudes towards to English online learning with the mean (M= 1.8; M=1.6; M=1.5) about the issues are that the classes were interesting; they are new; they were fun and knowledgeable. They also agreed with the item the lasses helped the learners motivate with the mean (M=2.0). However, the majority of the students strongly expressed their disagreement on the items as they felt pressured to try to finish all of their assignments on time in online learning, there was no interaction between teacher and the students, the classes were boring, they did not like being on a screen all day with the mean (M=4.0; M=4.1; M=4.2; M=4.2).

In summary, the items on the students attitudes towards to online classes showed that they liked online learning because the classes are interesting, fun and new. They also agreed that English online learning helped them motivate themselves.

**Table 1. The students attitudes towards to online classes**

Themes What are the online classes like?	The choices of the students					Mean
	SA(1)	A(2)	N(3)	D(4)	SD(5)	
1. They are interesting.	7	28	0	0	0	1.8
2. They are new.	15	20	0	0	0	1.6
3. They are boring.	0	0	2	25	8	4.2
4. They are fun and knowledgeable in my comfortable zone.	17	17	1	0	0	1.5
5. They help me motivate myself.	4	28	3	0	0	2.0
6. There is no interaction between teacher and the students	0	0	1	30	4	4.1
7. I feel pressured to try to finish all of my assignments on time in online learning.	0	2	4	22	7	4.0
8. I do not like being on a screen all day.	0	3	1	11	20	4.2

Source: Author (2021)

**4.2. Factors affecting online learning**

As presented in the part 2 about the factors affecting English online learning, there have been online learning environment, the teachers supports, and ease of using the learning.

**4.2.1. Online learning environment**

The Table 2 indicates that the majority of the students expressed an agreement and strong agreement with the items of this statement, namely they did not feel shy to answer the questions and share the ideas (M=1.5); it was a safe and quiet place to learn (M=1.6); the space was comfortable, clean and convenient for the learners to join the class (M=1.7); they often took risks to learn something new (M=1.7). The good thing is that they felt confident asking the teacher questions with the mean (M=1.9)

agreed and strongly agreed on all items of this part. They were happy that they were guided by an enthusiastic, inspired and well-trained teacher (M=1.5); they were praised and marked as spiritual engagement (M=1.5). In addition, they realized that the lesson plans they learned with their teacher were well-prepared with fully necessary contents (M=1.5). The joyful things are that they could contact with their teacher individually; they were encouraged to be self-disciplined and able to work well on their own; and they were always encouraged to build confidence in online learning environment with the mean (M=1.7; M=1.7; M=1.9).

It can be concluded that in this statement the students had good chances to contact with the teacher individually, and they are very happy to be

**Table 2. Online learning environment**

Themes How is online learning environment?	The choices of the students					Mean
	SA(1)	A(2)	N(3)	D(4)	SD(5)	
1. It is a safe and quiet place for me to learn.	9	26	0	0	0	1.6
2. The space is comfortable, clean, and convenient for the learners to join the class.	10	24	1	0	0	1.7
3. There are good interactions between the teacher and the learners.	13	22	0	0	0	1.6
4. I feel confident asking the teacher questions.	6	27	2	0	0	1.9
5. I do not feel shy to answer the questions and share the ideas.	19	13	1	1	0	1.5
6. I usually take risks to learn something new.	14	19	2	0	0	1.7

Source: Author (2021)

In sum, online English learning environment is very important for the learners to participate in learning. The students evaluation for the statement mentioned above was positive. Many of them were aware of the fact that they should be confident; take risks to learn something new, especially they found online learning environment good interactions between the teacher and the learners.

**4.2.2. The teachers supports**

Theoretically, the teacher has ever worked on the lesson plans in advance, and it helped online teaching and learning more effectively. Table 3 on page 6 showed a remarkable result that the student

in the online class where they are encouraged to learn and are praised when answering the questions and sharing opinions.

**4.2.3. Ease of using the learning**

The Table 4 shows the mean of the students opinions on ease of using the learning. The mean of the students who strongly agreed with all items in this part was that they were in their private place, and they had more opportunities to concentrate on the lessons (M=1,4; M=1,4). Online learning helped them to communicate with the teacher easily (M=1.6). In addition, they recognized that they spend less time than an in-person classroom

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Table 5. Ways of online teaching

Themes How have you ever learned your lessons from online class?	The choices of the students					Mean
	SA (1)	A (2)	N (3)	D (4)	SD (5)	
1. I am learned how to build rapport.	12	21	2	0	0	1.7
2. I learned with the teacher who always shows her face in online class	24	11	0	0	0	1.3
3. There are more opportunities for individualization.	18	16	1	0	0	1.5
4. The teacher always gives clear instruction.	28	7	0	0	0	1.2
5. I am provided interactive activities: teacher-student activities, student-student activities.	18	17	0	0	0	1.5
6. I am encouraged to be confident and proficient in a virtual learning environment as in a traditional classroom.	19	16	0	0	0	1.5
7. Communication is encouraged to be fluent.	16	17	1	1	0	1.6

Source: Author (2021)

teaching activities and create more opportunities for the learners to present their ideas as well as foster their effective learning.

### 5. Conclusion and recommendations

The research showed online learning among English non-majors at Van Lang university. Although the topic is not new, it has been prompted

that online learning is very necessary and significant for this time when the demand of learning is continuously improving. It is sure that this research will help online learning more appropriately. From the results of this study, it is advised that English non-majors who are taking part in online learning should find it more useful ■

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**Receiving date: May 2, 2021**

**Reviewing date: May 12, 2021**

**Accepting date: May 28, 2021**

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## **DAY HỌC TIẾNG ANH TRỰC TUYẾN CHO SINH VIÊN KHÔNG PHẢI CHUYÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG ANH TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC VĂN LANG**

**● NGUYỄN THỊ TRIỀU THẢO**

Trường Đại học Văn Lang

### **TÓM TẮT:**

Day học trực tuyến đã trở thành một phương thức giáo dục phổ biến và phù hợp trong bối cảnh đại dịch Covid-19 đang diễn ra. Nhiều nghiên cứu về dạy và học trực tuyến vốn được thực hiện gần đây đã đưa ra các giải pháp để giúp việc học trực tuyến trở nên hấp dẫn hơn đối với sinh viên. Tuy nhiên, việc thực hiện các giải pháp này chưa thực sự thành công. Nghiên cứu này sử dụng bảng câu hỏi để tìm hiểu việc giáo dục trực tuyến đang được áp dụng như thế nào tại trường Đại học Văn Lang. Kết quả nghiên cứu này được kỳ vọng sẽ giúp trường Đại học Văn Lang và các cơ sở giáo dục khác cải thiện phương pháp giảng dạy và học tập trực tuyến.

**Từ khoá:** dạy và học trực tuyến, thực hành.