Measuring EFL Learners' Satisfaction with Online Foreign Language Courses: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

This research aimed at measuring EFL learners' satisfaction with online foreign language courses during the global crisis of COVID-19. Five hundred and sixty-two university students participated in the experiment. They were students enrolled in the departments of English in three faculties affiliated with Kafr El-Sheikh University; namely: the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Alsun. Satisfaction was studied on five dimensions: learner-content, learner-instructor, learner-technology, methods of delivery and general satisfaction. A scale, based on the survey tools developed by both Strachota (2006) and Bozavli (2021), was modified by the current researchers to achieve the research aim. Descriptive statistical techniques such as the mean, the standard deviation and the percentage were employed. Furthermore, the t-Test, the sample direction and the item rank for each scale item were calculated and analyzed. Findings revealed that EFL learners were satisfied with online foreign language courses on all dimensions. Minor undecidedness was detected about certain aspects of such courses.

Keywords: Learners' Satisfaction, Online Courses, Foreign Language Learning.

قياس رضا المتعلمين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية عن المقررات اللغوية عبر الإنترنت: دراسة إمبريقية

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أستاذ مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية وطرق تدريسها

مدرس مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية و طرق تدريسها

كلية التربية – جامعة كفر الشيخ

كلية التربية – جامعة كفر الشيخ

المُستخلَص

هدف هذا البحث إلى قياس رضا متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية عن المقررات اللغوية عبر الإنترنت خلال أزمة كوفيد–١٩ العالمية. شارك ٥٦٢ طالبًا جامعيًا في التجربة. حيث كان هؤلاء المشاركون مسجلين في أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية في ثلاث كليات تابعة لجامعة كفر الشيخ؛ وهي: كلية التربية، وكلية الآداب، وكلية الألسن. تمت دراسة رضا المتعلم على خمسة أبعاد: بعد التفاعل بين المحتوى و المتعلم، بعد التفاعل بين المحاضر و المتعلم، بعد التفاعل بين التكنولوجيا و المتعلم، بعد طرق التسليم، و بعدالرضا العام. تم تعديل مقياس، استنادًا إلى أدوات المسح التي وضعها كلا من Strachota (٢٠٠٦) و Bozavli (٢٠٢١)، من قبل الباحثين الحاليين لتحقيق هدف البحث. تم استخدام أساليب الإحصاء الوصفي مثل المتوسط، والانحراف المعياري، والنسبة المئوية. علاوة على ذلك، تم حساب وتحليل اختبار ت، واتجاه العينة، و الرتبة لكل بند من بنود المقياس. و قد كشفت النتائج عن رضا متعلمى اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية عن المقررات اللغوية عبر الإنترنت في جميع الأبعاد. تم اكتشاف قليل من التردد بشأن بعض جوانب مثل هذه المقررات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: رضا المتعلمين، المقررات الدراسية عبر الإنترنت، تعلم لغة أجنبية.

Measuring EFL Learners' Satisfaction with Online Foreign Language Courses: An Empirical Study (*)

Introduction

The use of online university courses has dramatically increased worldwide in a large number of educational establishments. The recent demand for specific programs and courses has become a necessity for a highly competitive marketplace. In other words, getting jobs nowadays requires a good CV that is loaded with formal certificates. The increase in using online courses is a result of several motivating forces such as program marketability, learners' adaptability, convenience and the unimaginable development in multimedia technology and educational online platforms.

Green (2010) made it clear that the majority of educational institutions today are ready to develop their online teaching and learning programs because they can attract more learners at a lower cost. Green (2010) also added that learners themselves demand more online courses because they claimed they economize money and time when they do not travel or drive to campus, and they are still able to keep their work schedule while completing their educational objectives.

Educators in the United States pointed out that online teaching and learning are significant to the long-term development of their educational institutions, colleges and universities, clarifying that the increasing demand for online courses and programs Surpassed that for face-to-face courses. Approximately, more than one-third of higher education learners are enrolled in at least one online course (Allen & Seaman, 2010). In addition, Elgaz and Gulbahar (2015) put it clear that the number of online programs and courses that educational establishments worldwide deliver is dramatically growing and that most of these courses and programs address adult learners who need higher education degrees and

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(*) This research work is written according to the American Psychological Association (APA), Seventh Edition Publication Manual.

looking for a chance to be admitted and enrolled to traditional education.

Learners are the most significant product of educational institutions, colleges and universities, and it is very important to understand what is significant to them. In this concern, Rahmatpour, Nia, and Peyrovi (2019) made it clear that it is very imperative to improve the quality of academic services and employ suitable educational policies for students. They also added that it is very significant to continuously monitor learners' satisfaction since the results of learners' satisfaction help higher education establishments colleges and universities to remain competitive institutions.

In this regard, Ilgaz and Gülbahar (2015) added that learners' satisfaction levels are very significant for educators, instructional designers and other stakeholders. The aim behind satisfaction is to change, adapt or revise both the academic and administrative conditions of online teaching and learning programs to enhance and improve the quality of the learning environment.

Moreover, Coats, Wen and Shi (2020) pointed out that with the coming of information technology and the internet, the scene of education has experienced dramatic and gigantic transformations on a universal basis in recent years. They added that online learning and teaching have developed beyond the smart acronyms and are popularly a mainstream education.

Furthermore, Chung, Noor and Matthew (2020) put it clearly that online teaching and learning are today the hot topic that is taken into consideration among educators and learners alike because of the coronavirus crisis. They added that online learning and teaching have become the preferred teaching and learning method worldwide and the hero of the day since they can transcend the boundaries of time, space, pace and medium.

To clarify, the gigantic spread of online teaching and learning programs and courses has paved the way for new opportunities for learners worldwide. Thus, this spread has enhanced competition among online programs which set aside almost all geographical barriers this situation necessitates paying too much attention to

learners' satisfaction which has become more significant and critical than ever.

In this concern, the researchers would like to cite Foerderer, Hoffman, Schneider and Prichard (2021) who made it clear that the 2020-2021 academic year has presented challenges to students and instructors alike, but what is learning like amid the coronavirus pandemic and universal problems? How do students feel about learning online? What makes them feel satisfied with a course? Therefore, one may say that the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has tremendously shocked the whole world, which started in Wuhan, China has swiftly disseminated across the whole universe. Approximately, all educational institutions, colleges and universities worldwide were highly astounded and extremely shocked as to how to manage this unanticipated shocking situation. To add, Huidrom (2021) indicated that the COVID-19 crisis has changed educational programs, courses, and teaching methods. Now, all educators all over the world at every stage of education have been bewildered by the challenge of quality education delivery to learners. As education cannot be stopped even during the pandemic, teaching has shifted online suddenly.

The identifiable goal in students' satisfaction is based on how pleased students are with online learning and teaching (Anderson, 2013). He also indicated that educational institutions, colleges and universities that achieved the goal of meeting students' needs, improved the quality of their programs and courses and were able to assess their students' satisfaction levels with their learning and teaching experiences occupied a top place among high education institutions.

Moreover, Anderson (2013) pointed out that there is an increasing demand for institutions of higher education to become more accountable to students' needs which requires educational institutions to research online students' satisfaction levels. In this concern, Sampson, Leonard, Ballenger and Coleman (2010) indicated that staff members entitled to the design and the development of online learning programs and courses should take

into consideration student satisfaction, which could lead to increased quality of online learning programs and courses.

In Egypt, the Ministry of Higher Education took many decisions to curb the tremendous and swift spread of the fatal coronavirus in the country. The Supreme Council of Universities recommended the use of online teaching and learning to decrease the massive gathering of learners. The Supreme Council also recommended utilizing online teaching and learning coupled with some face-to-face instruction. In other words, blended teaching and learning were also suggested to prevent the rapid spread of the deadly coronavirus. Consequently, all instructors immediately resorted to teaching all courses administering quizzes, receiving all home assignments and holding the final exams online. Hence, owing to the gigantic outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the decrees of the Higher Supreme Council of Universities which restricted the utilization of face-to-face instructions, it is quite clear that implementing online teaching and learning is a must in Egyptian educational institutions, colleges and universities. However, as much as the instructors are ready to utilize online teaching, there is not enough information to clarify that learners are fully satisfied with online teaching and learning. To execute it, instructors and officials must study whether these learners are satisfied or not with their online course teaching and learning. Hence, despite the prevalence of online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 crisis (March 2020 - to present), learners' satisfaction with online teaching stays one of the most critical landmarks of the quality of online experiences (Ilgaz & Gülbahar, 2015). For higher education establishments, colleges and universities all over the entire world regarded learners' satisfaction as one of the chief factors in ascertaining the quality of their online teaching and learning programs (Parahoo, Santally, Rajabalee & Harvey, 2016).

In addition, learners' satisfaction with online teaching and learning can be associated with numerous elements such as online interactions (i.e; learner-content; learner-instructor; learner-learner; and learner-technology), course quality, assessment, computer/ Internet, self-efficacy and perceived learning. Learning can be

influenced by learners' satisfaction with educational experiences (Strachota, 2006; Harsasi & Sutawijaya, 2018; Kirtman, 2009; Erenler, 2019; Uusiautti, Määttä & Joe, 2017; Leskisenoja, 2017).

Furthermore, recognizing the elements that affect learners' satisfaction with online teaching and learning can assist in developing and enhancing such online course teaching and learning (Kaufmann, 2015; Kurucay & Inan, 2017; Martin-Rodriguez, Fernandez- Molina, Montero-Alonso & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2014). Consequently, it is very critical for faculty members and whoever is responsible for designing, developing, evaluating and teaching online courses to take into consideration learners' viewpoints and beliefs about their successful learning experiences and exchange learners' viewpoints with experts in this respect to enhance and improve the information associated with online teaching and learning (Bayrak, Tibi & Altun, 2020).

To conclude, students' satisfaction in higher educational institutions, colleges and universities has become a critical assessment issue for all educators and educational establishments worldwide. Most research works have revealed a positive correlation between students' overall satisfaction and retention. Many pieces of research investigating student satisfaction proved the positive impact of student satisfaction with the university and its long-term effects on the quality enhancement of the university (Mahmood, Mahmood & Malik, 2012; Dimas, Goula & Pierakos, 2011). Solinas' (2012) study added clarification to this point since he made it clear that assessing students' perspectives can assist educational institutions, colleges and universities to employ proper procedures to enhance and develop their academic practices.

Several research works were conducted to investigate learners' satisfaction based on face-to-face versus online courses and programs. In a study conducted by Young and Bruce (2020) to examine higher education undergraduate, and graduate students and instructors' performances and satisfaction with various modes of course delivery. Instructors and students in a College of Education who took part in a course using face-to-face, videoconferencing and hybrid deliveries were requested to complete an online survey. Face-

to-face and online courses were the most favored delivery methods. Young and Bruce (2020) pointed out that it is not surprising that participants indicated the most satisfaction with face-to-face courses; but concerning the distance or online delivery methods, participants were least satisfied with online courses.

To one's astonishment too, some researchers indicated clearly that students learning results for online education were not significantly different from those of face-to-face (Chingos et al., 2017 and Furlonger & Gencic, 2014) maintained that the overall learning results for online courses were found consistently to equal or exceed those of conventional face-to-face classrooms. In a meta-analysis of 45 research works, Means et al. (2013) reported that online students performed identically compared to those in conventional classrooms. On the same track, Charissi, Tympa and Karavida (2020) reported that 70.1% of Greek university students articulated preferences and partiality for conventional face-to-face teaching. Al-Nofaie (2020) indicated that Saudi university students who were investigated about their perceptions toward distance / online learning reported that they preferred conventional in-class learning. On the same line, some research works were carried out by Maican and Cocoradă (2020) whose study on Romanian language learners also indicated that learners believe that going to school to learn a foreign language is the best method and that the school will still maintain its significance after the pandemic outbreak in 2020.

To conclude, Bozavli (2021) aimed at determining the learning experiences of foreign language students participating in online distance education during the pandemic and their perceptions about whether it is possible to learn a foreign language without school. The sample of the study was composed of students of the Department of foreign languages at Ataturk University in Turkey. A questionnaire that consisted of thirteen closed-ended questions developed with a five-point Likert type was utilized. The findings indicated that learners perceived that they cannot learn a foreign language without going to school and that the two basic skills in the English language: listening and speaking cannot be developed or enhanced online. Moreover, learners believe that online foreign

language learning is not fruitful. The results also revealed that distance / online foreign language learning reduced the students' motivation. Furthermore, the participants put it clear that they did not like distance / online foreign language learning because the model spoils their socialization. In other words, this implies that these students prefer face-to-face foreign language teaching and learning to online learning and teaching.

Anderson (2013) made it clear that there is an increasing demand for institutions of higher education to become more accountable to students' needs which requires educational institutions to conduct research into online student satisfaction levels. In this concern, Sampson, Leonard, Ballenger and Coleman (2010) indicated that staff members authorized entitled in the design and development of online learning programs and courses should take into consideration students' satisfaction, which could lead to increased quality of online learning programs and courses. Noel- Levitz Inc. (2009) clarified that online students need educational institutions, colleges and universities worldwide to possess and process full knowledge of online learners' satisfaction with their educational programs and courses.

The identifiable goal in students' satisfaction is based on how pleased the students are with online learning and teaching. Anderson (2013: 13) also indicated that "*educational institutions, colleges and universities that achieve the goal of meeting student's needs, improving the quality of their programs and courses and can assess their students' satisfaction levels with their learning and teaching experiences occupy a top place among higher education institutions*".

Rothman et al. (2011) made it clear that online teaching and learning are increasingly becoming more common across institutions of higher education, while the evaluation of online courses and programs lags. Universities utilize students' evaluation of teaching as an indicator of teaching effectiveness and college evaluations play a great role in tenure and promotion decisions.

Hence, it is quite clear that face-to-face and online teaching and learning – not to mention EFL students' satisfaction – to learners in

general and FL learners, in particular, present a controversial issue that requires too much attention on the part of researchers to reach a decisive conclusion about this significant educational issue to EFL learners.

Study Problem

There has been a clear-cut paucity of literature and research works (as far as the authors are acquainted) in the Egyptian context concerned with investigating EFL learners' satisfaction with online course teaching and learning. Hence, the main objective of the current study was to study EFL learners' satisfaction that may offer insights to EFL faculty members, officials, university administrators, multimedia technologists and researchers to help assist and enhance faculty members' capacities in teaching online courses, implementations of appropriate technical systems, learning activities and creating better learning environments not to mention guiding faculty members to use appropriate technologies pertinent to teaching online EFL courses.

Therefore, there continues to be a need to investigate students' satisfaction with online courses and programs both in the present time as well as on a longitudinal basis. To study EFL students' satisfaction with online English language courses at the undergraduate level, the following questions were raised to be answered:

Study Questions

In a nutshell, the main objective behind conducting the current research project is to investigate FL learners' satisfaction with utilizing online teaching of English language courses. This study attempted to find answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent are EFL students satisfied with online English language courses on learner-content interaction construct?
2. To what extent are EFL students satisfied with online English language courses on the learner-instructor interaction construct?
3. To what extent are EFL students satisfied with online English language courses on the learner-technology interaction construct?
4. To what extent are EFL students satisfied with the methods of course delivery of online English language courses?

5. To what extent are EFL students satisfied with the construct of general satisfaction with online English language courses?

The following directed hypotheses were formulated to be tested:

1. EFL students are satisfied with online English language courses on the learner-content interaction level.
2. EFL students are satisfied with online English language courses on the learner-instructor interaction level.
3. EFL students are satisfied with online English language courses on the learner-technology interaction level.
4. EFL students are satisfied with the methods of course delivery of online English language courses.
5. EFL students are satisfied with the general aspects of online English language courses.

Instruments

The survey tool employed to collect data on EFL learners' satisfaction with online English language courses teaching and learning was based on survey tools developed by both Strachota (2006) and Bozavli (2021), (See Appendices A & B). The researchers modified and adapted the scale used to be appropriate to the nature of the current research work. To clarify, Strachota's (2006) survey tool included five constructs as follows: 1. learner-content, 2. learner-instructor, 3. learner-learner; 4. learner-technology and 5. general satisfaction. However, the learner-learner construct was omitted by the researchers since it was found to be insignificant in predicting learners' online satisfaction which is why it was excluded from the authors' modified and adapted version. To add, Strachota's (2006) student satisfaction survey included a four-point Likert scale of (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree and (4) strongly disagree. Furthermore, the researchers exercised great care in reorganizing the order of scale items in some constructs to be sequenced in a logical order. This act was carried out in the first construct (learner-content interaction construct) and the fifth one (learner-technology interaction). Moreover, the modified and adopted scale: EFL Students' Satisfaction Scale with Online English Language Courses based on a five-point Likert scale of (1) strongly

agree, (2) agree, (3) undecided, (4) disagree and (5) strongly disagree (See Appendix C).

As for the reliability and validity of the tool, Strachota (2003) tested the instrument for reliability and validity through the utilization of field experts and a pilot test. The modified and adapted version was submitted to educational technologists, psychological measurement experts and university professors in the field to ensure the clarity of the tool items. All necessary modifications and adaptations were carefully and thoroughly made based on experts' opinions and recommendations. The final form of the modified version of the scale used in this study included six demographic items, 11 items to measure learner-content interaction, 7 items to measure learner-instructor interaction, 9 items to measure learner-technology interaction, 3 items to measure methods of course delivery interaction, 6 items to measure general satisfaction. In a nutshell, the scale consisted of 36 items. As for the scale's reliability, the authors would like to cite Ary et al. (2010: 212) who clarified that "*to ensure reliability is to make sure that the scale is long enough – that it includes enough items to provide a representative sampling of the whole domain of opinions about the attitudinal object*". Research shows, however, that if the items are well constructed, scales of as few as 20 to 22 items will have satisfactory reliability (Often above 80). To ascertain the reliability of the scale an index of reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, and it was found that the scale's reliability is about 89.

The modified final version of the scale was presented to participants of the current study on Google Forms. It was electronically uploaded and collected data about EFL student satisfaction with online English language courses since it was found that conducting a survey online saves time and does not cost too much compared to conventional phone or mail-delivered survey methods not to mention the outbreak of COVID-19 and its variants at present (Schmidt, Strachota & Conceição, 2005).

Sample

Participants of the current research work consisted of (n= 562) undergraduate EFL students enrolled in the departments of English in three faculties affiliated with Kafr El-Sheikh University: the Faculty of Education (n= 372), the Faculty of Arts (n= 142) and the Faculty of Alsun (n= 48) in the first term of the academic year 2021 - 2022. Concerning gender, 485 (86.3%) participants were females and 77 (13.7%) were males. On another track, 312 (55.5%) of participants lived in the countryside, whereas 250 (44.5%) were city dwellers. Participants' academic levels were diverse as well: Freshmen were 79 (14.1%), sophomores represented 212 (37.7%), juniors formulated 103 (18.3%), seniors were 162 (28.8%), whereas postgraduates represented six (1.1%). As was mentioned before, the scale was electronically uploaded on Google Forms and participants were requested to respond to the different scale items through the assistance of EFL instructors in the three aforementioned faculties who teach English language courses to the participants (a link to the respondents was provided). To end, participants voluntarily responded to the scale, and their identity was kept top confidential. The scale was made available for the respondents for 15 days, with a total number of responses (n= 562).

Results

To analyze the data collected from the online administration of Strachota's (2006) student satisfaction modified survey, the researchers manually calculated such statistical quantitative values as the mean, the standard deviation, the percentage, the *t*-Test, the sample direction and the item rank for each item. The obtained results of this quantitative analysis are summed up in the following table:

Table (1) Quantitative Analysis of the Student Satisfaction Modified Survey

Dimension	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	STDEV	%	t-Test	Sample Direction	Item Rank
Learner-content	1	17	59	84	322	80	3.84	0.49	76.8	40.96	Agree	32
	2	13	67	85	315	82	3.84	0.50	76.8	39.41	Agree	31
	3	15	52	99	318	78	3.87	0.71	77.5	29.25	Agree	34
	4	10	74	102	309	67	3.80	0.71	76.0	26.83	Agree	27
	5	19	78	75	301	89	3.78	0.19	75.6	98.77	Agree	25
	6	11	76	93	308	74	3.80	0.59	76.0	32.18	Agree	28
	7	22	110	88	249	93	3.66	0.30	73.1	52.75	Agree	15
	8	19	96	98	267	82	3.70	0.42	74.1	39.76	Agree	19
	9	18	78	92	281	93	3.79	0.43	75.8	44.16	Agree	26
	10	20	97	99	285	61	3.66	0.48	73.1	32.28	Agree	16
	11	45	158	90	225	44	3.28	0.53	65.5	12.38	Undecided	5
Learner-instructor	12	15	55	82	343	67	3.84	0.54	76.9	36.74	Agree	33
	13	17	116	108	287	34	3.56	0.62	71.1	21.32	Agree	9
	14	28	130	123	249	32	3.44	0.64	68.9	16.47	Agree	7
	15	15	70	108	313	56	3.77	0.75	75.4	24.38	Agree	24
	16	14	59	90	335	64	3.83	0.63	76.6	31.34	Agree	30
	17	15	75	98	309	65	3.77	0.62	75.4	29.38	Agree	23
	18	57	167	92	199	47	3.19	0.61	63.7	7.155	Undecided	3
Learner-technology	19	42	96	92	240	92	3.60	0.46	72.0	30.74	Agree	11
	20	33	112	104	225	88	3.58	0.11	71.6	126.5	Agree	10
	21	30	111	95	238	88	3.60	0.29	72.0	48.81	Agree	12
	22	26	105	108	224	99	3.66	0.35	73.3	45.59	Agree	17
	23	25	79	83	277	98	3.76	0.21	75.2	84.14	Agree	22
	24	16	83	91	299	73	3.75	0.47	75.0	37.94	Agree	21
	25	19	65	74	286	118	3.88	0.2	77.5	104	Agree	35
	26	10	71	116	293	72	3.82	0.83	76.4	23.56	Agree	29
	27	36	148	106	232	40	3.35	0.20	67.0	42.38	Undecided	6
Methods of Delivery	28	30	149	83	214	86	3.46	0.61	69.3	18	Agree	8
	29	62	243	97	136	24	2.85	0.48	56.9	7.603	Undecided	1
	30	16	27	46	280	193	4.16	0.44	83.2	62.73	Strongly Agree	36
	31	20	90	112	290	48	3.64	0.65	72.9	23.59	Agree	14
	32	14	111	92	285	60	3.64	0.40	72.7	38.12	Agree	13
	33	32	205	111	186	28	3.15	0.29	63.0	12.13	Undecided	2
	34	18	91	94	299	60	3.69	0.48	73.7	34.2	Agree	18
	35	12	88	93	300	69	3.75	0.53	74.9	33.28	Agree	20
	36	38	178	94	212	40	3.23	0.44	64.7	12.74	Undecided	4

− Sample Size (n = 562).

− Critical t = 2.586 at the (0.01) level of significance.

Hypothesis One

Hypothesis One was directed; it read "*EFL students are satisfied with online English language courses on the learner-content interaction level*". To test this hypothesis, eleven items were given to participants and their rendered responses were statistically analyzed.

The first item read *the course documents, lessons, or lecture notes used in this online class facilitated my foreign language learning.* Statistical analysis of this item illustrated that 76.8% of the participants agreed with it. However, the calculated t-value was (40.96). It is greater than the critical t which equals (2.586) at the (0.01) level of significance when the degree of freedom is 561 and the test is two-tailed. This means that there was a great variation in participants' responses. The item rank − according to the arithmetic mean − was 32.

As for the second item, the same percentage of the participants − 76.8% − also agreed that *the assignments and/or activities in online courses facilitated their foreign language learning*. The analysis found that there was a large amount of variation in their responses, as the calculated t value was (39.41), far greater than the critical t score of (2.586). The item ranked 31 according to the arithmetic mean.

Concerning item three, which reading *the websites that were linked to my online courses facilitated my foreign language learning,* was agreed upon by 77.5% of participants. Moreover, the calculated t referred to a large variation in responses, as it is greater than the critical t of (2.586). According to its arithmetic mean, the third item rank was 34.

The statistical analysis of item four revealed that 76% of participants agreed that *the learning activities in online courses required the application of problem-solving skills which facilitated their foreign language learning*. The calculated t value of (26.83) exceeded the critical t (2.586) at the 0.01 level of significance when the degree of freedom was 561 and the test was two-sided. This

indicated that the responses by the participants were significantly varied. The item rank, based on the arithmetic mean, was 27.

There were 75.6% of participants agreed with item five, which stated that *preparation for quizzes/exams in online courses facilitated their foreign language learning*. The calculated *t* (98.77) had a higher value than the critical one (2.586). Consequently, participants' responses had great variation. In light of its arithmetic mean, the fifth item carried the rank of 25.

In item six, 76% of the participants agreed that *the learning activities in online courses required critical thinking which facilitated their foreign language learning*. The obtained *t* value (32.18) for their responses was higher than the critical *t* (2.586), indicating a significant level of variation in the responses. Based on its mean, the sixth item ranked 28th.

Item seven which read: *I feel this online course experience helped improve my written communication and foreign language skills*, was agreed on by 73.1% of participants. The calculated *t* was (52.75) while the critical one equaled (2.586). This result referred to a great variation in participants' responses to the item. The rank of item seven was 15 according to the arithmetic mean.

Ranked 19, item eight, which stated that *a foreign language can be easily learned through online courses*, was agreed on by 74.1% of participants. A calculated *t* of (39.76) indicated a great variation in responses as the critical value of *t* was (2.586).

Item nine, which stated that *My listening and speaking skills in a foreign language improved through online courses*, received agreement from 75.8% of participants. The calculated *t* value (44.16) was higher than the critical *t* value (2.586), indicating that participants' responses were widely varied. The ninth item had a rank of 26 based on its arithmetic mean.

Item ten, which stated that *I understand and easily learn the lessons given in foreign language online courses*, was agreed upon by 73.1% of the participants. Furthermore, the calculated value of *t* (32.28) was larger than the critical one (2.586). The indication of this result was the existence of a significant variation in responses. The tenth item had a rank of 16 based on its arithmetic mean.

Unlike all the items of the learner-content dimension, item eleven rendered a different result. The direction of the sample was *undecided* as 65.5% of participants were not sure about whether *Online courses decrease their capacity to learn a foreign language* or not. An obtained *t* of (12.38) was larger than the tabulated one (2.586). The significance was that there was a large variation in the responses to the item. Based on the arithmetic mean, item eleven carried the fifth rank.

The above-mentioned results revealed that Hypothesis One was accepted. Consequently, it is concluded that *EFL students are satisfied with online English language courses on the learner-content interaction level*.

Hypothesis Two

Like the first hypothesis, Hypothesis Two was also directed; it supposed that *EFL students are satisfied with online English language courses on the learner-instructor interaction level*. To test this hypothesis, seven items were formulated to elicit participants' responses and statistically analyze them.

Seventy-six point nine percent of participants concurred that *in this online foreign language course, the instructor was an active member of the discussion group offering direction to posted comments*. The obtained *t* value for item twelve was (36.74), whereas the critical *t* value was (2.586). This divergence in responses to the item revealed a significant difference. By its arithmetic mean, item twelve ranked 33.

Concerning item thirteen, the majority of the participants (71.1%) agreed that *they received timely feedback (within 24-48 hours) from my instructor*. The calculated value of *t* (21.32) was greater than the critical value of (2.586). This result suggested the presence of a significant difference in the responses. This item attained the ninth rank based on its arithmetic mean.

The fourteenth item, referring to participants' *feeling of frustration by the lack of feedback in online courses from their foreign language instructor*, got consent from 68.9% of survey participants. The calculated *t* value (16.47) exceeded the critical *t* value (2.586), demonstrating that participants' answers were quite

divergent. The fourteenth item was ranked 7 based on its arithmetic mean.

Responding to whether they could *get individualized attention from their, foreign language instructor when needed*, 75.4% of the participants agreed that they had already got such individualized attention. Moreover, in item fifteen, the attained *t* equaled (24.38). This attained value was much greater than the critical *t* of (2.586). This means that there was a variety of participants' responses. As for its rank based on the arithmetic mean, item fifteen was ranked 24.

Item sixteen read *in online foreign language courses, the instructor functioned as the facilitator of the course by continuously encouraging communication*. Statistical analysis of this item illustrated that 76.6% of the participants agreed with it. However, the calculated *t*-value was (31.34). It is greater than the critical *t* which equals (2.586) at the (0.01) level of significance when the degree of freedom is 561 and the test is two-tailed. This means that there was a great variation in participants' responses. The item rank – according to the arithmetic mean – was 30.

As for the seventeenth item, 75.4% of the participants agreed that *although they could not see the instructor in online foreign language courses, they felt his/her presence*. The analysis found that there was a large amount of variation in their responses, as the calculated *t* value was (29.36), far greater than the critical *t* score of (2.586). The item ranked 23 according to the arithmetic mean.

The majority of the participants 63.7%, regarding item eighteen, were undecided about whether *online teaching of foreign language courses reduces their motivation to learn*. The calculated value of *t* (7.155) was higher than the critical value (2.586), indicating a significant variation in responses. This item had a third-place ranking based on its arithmetic mean.

Based on the above results, it is pointed out that Hypothesis Two was confirmed. Therefore, it can be deduced that *EFL students are satisfied with online English language courses on the learner-instructor interaction level*.

Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis Three was directed as well; it proposed that *EFL students are satisfied with online English language courses on the learner-technology interaction level*. To test this hypothesis, nine items were formulated to elicit participants' responses and statistically analyze them.

Item nineteen, which read *I enjoy working with computers*, received agreement from 72% of participants. The calculated *t* value (30.74) was higher than the critical *t* value (2.586), indicating that participants' responses were widely varied. The nineteenth item had a rank of 11 based on its arithmetic mean.

The statement: *I find working with computers very easy* represented item twenty and received approval from 71.6% of those surveyed. The calculated *t* value of (126.5) greatly surpassed the critical *t* value of (2.586). Thus, it was revealed that there were significant variations in participants' answers. The mean calculation ranked item twenty as tenth.

The twenty-first item stated that computers made participants much more productive. Analysis showed that 72 % of participants agreed on this item. The *t* value calculated was (48.81), which is higher than the critical *t* value of (2.586) at a significance level of 0.01 with 561 degrees of freedom and a two-tailed test. This indicates a significant variation in participants' responses. According to the arithmetic mean, the item was ranked 12th.

Regarding the twenty-second item, 73.3% of those surveyed concurred that they were very confident in their abilities to use computers. The results showed significant variation, as indicated by a *t* value of (45.59), well above the critical *t* of (2.586). The item ranked 17th based on its arithmetic mean.

Seventy-five point two percent of participants agreed that using computers made online foreign language learning more interesting. The calculated *t* value for item 23 was (84.14), while the critical *t* value was (2.586). This difference in responses to item 23 showed a marked variation. The item ranked 22 based on calculating the arithmetic mean.

Almost three-thirds of participants agreed that some computer software packages made online foreign language easier. The *t* value calculated was (37.94) and the critical *t* value was (2.586), indicating a significant variation in the responses to this item. Item twenty-four ranked 21st based on the arithmetic mean.

Ranked 35, item twenty-five, which stated that *computers are good aids to online foreign language learning*, was agreed on by 77.5% of participants. A calculated *t* of (104) indicated a great variation in responses as the critical value of *t* was (2.586).

The twenty-sixth item that read: *I know how to use foreign language online classroom applications*, gained 76.4% of participants' agreement. The obtained *t* value (23.56) was higher than the critical *t* value of (2.586) at a significance level of 0.01 with 561 degrees of freedom and a two-tailed test, which implies a noteworthy difference in participants' answers. The rank of this item was 29.

On the contrary, item twenty-seven differed from all the items of the learner-technology dimension. The direction of the sample was *undecided* as 67% of participants were not sure about whether *they suffer technical problems in foreign language online classroom applications* or not. An obtained *t* of (٤٢.٦٨) was larger than the tabulated one (2.586). The significance was that there was a large variation in the responses to the item. Based on the arithmetic mean, item twenty-seven carried the sixth rank.

The analysis of the items related to Hypothesis Three revealed that the directed hypothesis: *EFL students are satisfied with online English language courses on the learner-technology interaction level* was accepted.

Hypothesis Four

Delving into participants' satisfaction with the methods of course delivery, Hypothesis Four was a directed one that read *EFL students are satisfied with the methods of course delivery of online English language courses*. Nine items were devoted to providing data based on their analysis the hypothesis could be tested.

Sixty-nine point three percent of participants agreed with the twenty-eighth item, which stated that they recommended learning

foreign language courses only face-to-face. The attained t value of (18) was greater than the critical one of (2.586), showing that the responses were quite varied. Based on its arithmetic mean, the rank of item twenty-eight was 8.

Concerning item twenty-nine, the majority of participants (56.9%) were undecided about whether they recommended learning foreign language courses only online or not. The analysis revealed a wide range of responses, as the calculated t was (7.60), higher than the critical t of (2.586). This item carried the first rank according to its arithmetic mean.

A unique direction of responses was represented by item thirty in which 83.2% of participants strongly agreed on the recommendation of learning foreign language courses using blended learning (face-to-face + online). An obtained t of (62.73) was larger than the tabulated one (2.586). The significance was that there was a large variation in the responses to the item. Based on the arithmetic mean, item twenty-seven carried the thirty-sixth rank.

The examination of the elements associated with Hypothesis Four showed that the proposed hypothesis: EFL students are satisfied with the methods of course delivery of online English language courses in terms of methods of delivery was not confirmed.

Hypothesis Five

To determine EFL learners' satisfaction with the general aspects of online English language courses, the fifth directed hypothesis was formulated. Testing this hypothesis was carried out by analyzing the data collected by answering six items.

Out of the 562 participants surveyed, 72.9% agreed with the statement that they were very satisfied with their online foreign language courses. This statement was the 31st item on the survey. When the obtained t-value of (23.59) was compared to the critical t-value of (2.586) at a significance level of 0.01 with 561 degrees of freedom and a two-tailed test, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the participants' answers. This item was ranked 14th.

Item thirty-two received a response of 72.7% from the participants who agreed on the notion that they would like to take another online foreign language course. The analysis of the responses revealed a wide range, as the obtained t-value of (38.12) was higher than the critical t-value of (2.586). This item carried the thirteenth rank according to its arithmetic mean.

Out of the surveyed participants, 63% were undecided about whether Online foreign language courses did not meet their learning needs. However, item 33 showed a statistically significant difference at the 0.01 level of significance with an obtained t of (12.13) that exceeded the critical t of (2.586) when the degrees of freedom are 561 in a two-tailed test. This item ranked 2nd.

Seventy-three point seven percent of participants agreed that they would recommend online foreign language courses to others. The calculated t value of (34.19) for item 34 significantly differed from the critical t value of (2.586). This large discrepancy in responses to item 34 indicated a marked variation. Item 34 ranked 18th based on the arithmetic mean.

The majority of the respondents 74.9% agreed that they could manage time effectively in online foreign language courses. The results of analyzing item 35 rendered a calculated t-value that equaled (33.28). This calculated value was higher than the critical t (2.586), suggesting a marked difference in the collected responses. According to the arithmetic mean, this item was given the twentieth rank.

The last item, item 36, witnessed an undecidedness of 64.7% about whether online foreign language teaching negatively affects participants' socialization. Analysis of data rendered an obtained t of (12.74) that was greater than the tabulated t of (2.586). This means that there was a great variation in participants' responses. The item rank – according to the arithmetic mean – was 4.

The findings demonstrated that Hypothesis Five was accepted, leading to the conclusion that EFL students are satisfied with the general aspects of online English language courses.

Discussion

Although teaching online during COVID-19 Pandemic was inevitable, hasty, obligatory, and trainless for both educators and learners, it affected both teaching and learning positively. The compulsory transformation into technological solutions was a blessing in disguise. The experiment enriched educators' and learners' experiences alike.

On the learner-content interaction level, learners found course documents, assignments, websites, activities, lessons, or lecture notes used in the online class facilitating foreign language learning. They observed an improvement in their written communication and foreign language skills due to the online courses they had. Moreover, they attributed a similar improvement in their oral mode skills to the same reason. This result contradicts Hamdan et al.'s (2021) who concluded that online education was not well-established in developing countries and that university students had not been prepared to receive it yet. The researchers may explain this contradiction in terms of the difference between Egyptian and Jordanian students in educational culture, infrastructure and the popularity of technology usage in society. However, there is an accordance between the results obtained by the current researchers and those obtained by Lim et al. (2021) who highlighted the benefit of unstructured content in online courses.

As for learner-instructor interaction, learners found that the instructor was an active member of the discussion group offering direction to posted comments. Furthermore, they were pleased with receiving timely feedback from their instructor within two days at most. Getting individualized attention from the foreign language instructor when needed was also praised. In online foreign language courses, the instructor functions as the facilitator of the course by continuously encouraging communication. Although learners could not see the instructor in online foreign language courses, they said they still felt his/her presence. However, learners were not sure whether online teaching of foreign language courses reduced their motivation to learn or not. In general, the attained results on learner-instructor interaction coincide with what Lim et al. (2021)

highlighted: in such cases of presenting unstructured content online, an instructor's presence is greatly beneficial. Nonetheless, Alharbi, Wright, and Borthwick (2021) came up with the conservative result that only non-traditional learners who had to work or manage other life responsibilities were satisfied with the less instructor-dominated online learning. EFL beginners – on the contrary – had

a negative response to online foreign language courses as they felt they could not develop their language skills in such a learning environment.

Interaction with technology was satisfactory for the majority of learners. They expressed their enjoyment of working with computers and found working with computers very easy. It was believed that computers made learners much more productive. In addition, many learners stated that they were very confident in their abilities to use computers. For them, using computers made online foreign language learning more interesting. However, there were some minor technical problems with foreign language online classroom applications. Besalti and Satici (2022) explained learners' satisfaction with online courses in relationship to Internet addiction. They argued that Internet-nonaddict students had higher learning satisfaction in online learning environments and vice versa. Consequently, it was recommended that educational institutions should provide psychological coping tools and behavioral support to reduce internet addiction and minimize its negative effects on online learning environments.

There was much uncertainty and variety in viewpoints about the methods of course delivery online. While the majority of learners recommended learning foreign language courses only face-to-face, there was undecidedness about recommending learning foreign language courses only online. The blended delivery methods gained great recommendations. This finding accords with Swanson and Swanson (2019) who concluded that there was no agreement on the best way to deliver learning courses. They asserted that there are many factors such as the educational environment, students' differences and preferences, and the nature of the content. However,

they supported what they called the "hybrid" method that combines both face-to-face and online delivery methods.

In general, learners' satisfaction with online foreign language courses was assured. However, minor aspects of these courses were not completely agreed upon. Learners were very satisfied with their online foreign language courses. They recommended taking another online foreign language course. Nonetheless, learners were not sure whether online foreign language courses met their learning needs or not. They recommended online foreign language courses to others and were sure about their ability to manage time effectively in online foreign language courses. Finally, they were undecided about the negative effect of online foreign languages on their socialization. In this context, Iluzada and Talbert (2022) pointed out that although most learners found their in-person courses enjoyable and informative, they expressed a longing for the camaraderie and collaborative learning that was absent when classes were moved online due to COVID-19 protocols. It was important to incorporate ongoing interactive community-building activities into online courses. Moreover, universities were urged to provide training to instructors on how to effectively prepare and execute this crucial aspect of course delivery. The same result coincided with that of Al Thnayan and Husain's (2021) study. According to Al Thnayan and Husain (2021), the quality of E-learning systems and services had a positive effect on student satisfaction, which in turn had a significant and positive impact on their academic performance. Additionally, gender was found to moderate the relationship between E-learning system quality, E-learning service quality, and student satisfaction. Lastly, it was discovered that the relationships between all variables were stronger during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to before.

In the light of their observation as university staff members, the researchers may attribute learners' satisfaction with online language courses to some reasons. The stressful economic conditions for most students urged them to work during their studies at college. Since online foreign language courses set them free from such red tape restrictions as attendance and handing hard copies of their assignments, more time was devoted to work without affecting their

study progress. Furthermore, the transport expenses of going to college along with side personal spending were reduced.

The new generations' familiarity with technology as well as its availability for most university students was another reason why online courses were so much welcomed. Almost all university students had smartphones through which they can get the content and do the required tasks of their online foreign language courses.

Conclusion

Although teaching online foreign language courses during the COVID-19 crisis was compulsory and impromptu due to the international due crisis, it was welcomed and preferred by university students. University students were satisfied with the content presented in such courses. Moreover, they were content with the instructor's performance. However, minor undecidedness was detected in learners' satisfaction with the methods of delivering foreign language courses online.

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