

VIEWS OF ONLINE EDUCATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES.

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of the study were to study the opinions on learning English from online sources, and to improve learning methods for English through the use of the internet, to create a guideline for policy development. The research sample, selected by volunteer sampling technique, comprised of 7 internship students English education major, Faculty of Education, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. They were selected regarding their status as five-year curriculum student teachers with the knowledge of five year curriculum and their maturity. The data collection used a semi-structured interview which cover four main questions: First, have you ever used online courses to learn English?. Second, what level would you place your ability to use English for communication?. Third, does the online course help develop your skills? (listening, speaking, reading and writing skills) and fourth, does the online course help improve school evaluations? and how? It was found that online education can be beneficial to everyone. It helps students learn independently because student can learn anywhere and anytime they want, without having a need to be in a traditional classroom. With this, guidelines to create policies for online education can be made. Online courses can be made into supplements to traditional courses and can also help those in inconvenient situations learn without having to enter a traditional class.

Keywords: English language, Online education, Rajabhat University

INTRODUCTION

In the present, in the 21st century or Thailand 4.0, students are capable of using advanced technology and have easier access to knowledge, resulting in the application of those technologies to the application and promotion of learning. Therefore, by learning not just in the classroom, students can diligently find knowledge by themselves from all the materials, including print-based and digital media. With a focus on students well-versed in searching for and using information technology, the massive amounts of information, students must have the ability to search and check the accuracy of the information.

In Thailand, of 2018 of the EF English Proficiency Index from Education First (EF) on the 30th of October 2018 stated that Thailand was ranked 64 out of 88 countries that do not use english as their native/first language. They also stated that Thailand received a score of 48.54 out of 100 in English proficiency [1].

From the report we can agree that the problems can be found at various levels of education, including at the level of undergraduate studies. The problems that were encountered included that most students' lack of confidence due to their worries and fears when speaking English, students were unable to fluently continue a conversation, lack of training and interaction with instructors and native speakers. Students were also unable to pronounce vocabulary as well as lacking proficiency in vocabulary and unable to decide on the appropriate vocabulary for communication [2][3][4].

According to what has been said above, the problem of learning English of undergraduates, overall, is their lack of communication practice. Thus, it can be inferred that online education can help build confidence by practicing pronunciation.

Recently it has been discussing about the quality of online education over the past years. Many people believe that online courses are not as good as learning in traditional courses. Rather than learning traditionally through course provided by schools and universities, students who want to learn English will find online courses, take special classes and hire tutors.

Both opponents and proponents have been concerned about online education quality. Proponents believe online education may lack human interaction but it can be substituted by video call or voice call via online messengers. It helps learners to create self-learning processes because they can manage their own methods, contents and time as needed. Learners can also create analytical thinking processes and learning skills extensively, as well as a practice discipline, responsibility and adjust to the situation. Online education is an alternative choice for those who are unable to commute to the university and can help graduates gain important technology skills to improve their value and knowledge. "Moreover, students cannot tell the race, gender, physical characteristics of each other and their teachers, online education presents a bias-free teaching and learning environment for instructors and students." Proponents also argue that online education can encourage non-discriminatory teaching and learning practices since the teachers and students, as well as students and their classmates typically do not meet face-to-face [5].

Opponents view online education as substandard. Some opponents even question the quality of online courses when students do not actually attend college, and have face-to-face interaction with instructors. Moreover, the quality of instructors who teach online courses cannot be guaranteed since anyone can put a course or teach online [6]. Therefore research data will be collected to determine views on online education.

OBJECTIVES

As a result, the researcher would like to conduct the study with the aim to study the opinions of student teachers in learning English from online sources and to improve learning methods for English through the use of the internet, to create a guideline for policy development.

METHODOLOGY

The research sampling, selected by volunteer sampling technique, comprised of 7 English-major teacher students English enrolling in 2015 academic year in the Faculty of Education in Rajabhat University, Bangkok. They were invited and agreed to participate in the study. A Semi-structured interview was employed and asked the teacher students four main questions : First, have you ever used online courses to learn English?. Second, what level would you place your ability to use English for communication?. Third, does the online course helps develop your (listening, speaking, reading and writing) skills? and fourth, does the online course help improve school evaluations? and how? For the participants' convenience, the interviews were conducted via online messengers. This was done due to the limitations of their teaching schedules at schools where they did their practicum, cutting the cost of travel and saving time. The interviews were conducted in Thai as it is their native language and to avoid language barriers. Interview questions were emailed to them five days before the online meeting. The participants were asked to answer the main aforementioned

questions. Further questions were posted to probe in depth for further details depending on each students' responses. The data obtained from semi-structured interviews were analyzed by qualitative content analysis. [7][8]

FINDINGS

Their responses were grouped and summarized according to the four main questions. The findings from semi-structured interviews were presented as follows:

The first question asking students' opinions toward online course. The analysis revealed that three of the four took online courses and the rest did not. According to Chittra, Parichat and Sirilak, who have taken online courses with the reasons as follows; convenience in terms of time and place. Ability to focus on the content better than studying in the classroom as the example of Parichat, English student teacher program

"... I have taken online courses because it's very convenient for me, you can choose the place, time and also get the same knowledge when compared to a traditional classroom but I do feel that online courses are more focused"

(Parichat, English student teacher program)

While Noppadon, Saranyaporn, Karatphet and Wattana, who have not taken online courses with the reason as follows; no motivation, lack of self-discipline and afraid they will not understand the content. as the example of Saranyaporn, student teacher program in English

"... I have never taken online courses because I have no motivation and lack of self-discipline to study within a limited time"

(Saranyaporn, English student teacher program)

The second question asked student teachers about the ability to use English for communication. It was found that the ability to use English for communication at the low to medium level was found for five persons, due to not having the opportunity and time to use the language. For the example of Noppadon, student teacher program in English

"... I think at the medium because I can listen and speak but not fluently due to the fact that I didn't use English on a daily basis and I mostly live with Thai friend not foreigners"

(Parichat, English student teacher program)

While two people were at the high level due to being able to communicate with native speaker English speakers as the example of Saranyaporn, student teacher program in English

"... I think I am at the high level because I can hold a conversation with native English speakers"

(Saranyaporn, English student teacher program)

The third question asking student teachers' opinions toward online course helps develop your (listening, speaking, reading and writing) skills? It was found that three students who have taken online courses have been able to apply the knowledge gained towards improving their skills due to being able to practice pronunciation according to the conversation of the courses as the example of Chittra, student teacher program in English

"... I believe that most of the online course focuses on grammar and comprehension. It only help with writing and reading skills rather than listening and speaking"

(Chittra, English student teacher program)

While those who have not taken the online courses believe that taking online courses should help with their listening skills should you concentrate and understand. as the example of Wattana, student teacher program in English

“ ... I think online course should help a lot in listening skills as we have to listen carefully to in order to understand the content”

(Wattana, English student teacher program)

The fourth question asking student teachers' opinion online course toward school evaluations. It was found that three of four students who have taken online courses were able to improve academic performance as the example of Sililak, student teacher program in English

“... For me, it helps a lot. In my opinion I think if we enjoy the course, it will help you to understand the content of the lesson including retention of the vocabulary which is useful for taking the examinations and taking online courses anytime and anywhere helps to improve my skills”

While those who have not taken the online courses believe that taking online courses, should help with their academic performance because at least we have experienced the language and taking online courses anytime and anywhere helps to improve their skills.

“ ... I believe that it might make me better because we already have the basic knowledge gained from online learning as well even at the cost of decrease interactions with others”

(Saranyaporn, English student teacher program)

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Online education can be beneficial to everyone even at the cost of decreased interactions with others. However, the purpose of the study were to study the opinions on learning English from online sources, and to improve learning methods for English through the use of the internet, to create a guideline for policy development. According to the interviews, results can be discussed as follows; online education can be beneficial to everyone because of convenience in terms of time and place. Ability to focus on the content better than studying in the classroom and while those who have not taken online courses with the reason as follows; no motivation, lack of self-discipline and afraid they will not understand the content. It helps students learn independently because students can learn anywhere and anytime they want, without having a need to be in a traditional classroom. They can also practice good discipline, responsibility and improve their skills. Students also have a chance to adapt to the world of learning of the future. With this, guidelines to create policies for online education can be made. Online courses can be made into supplements to traditional courses and can also help those in inconvenient situations. Those who have not taken the online courses believe that taking online courses should help with their listening skills because at least they have experienced the language and taking online courses anytime and anywhere helps to improve their skills. [9][10]

Results from the study have led to recommendations for pedagogical implications for future research as follows.

1. For this study, the main purpose of this paper is to study the opinions on learning English from online sources for the improvement of learning methods for English through the

use of the internet, to create a guideline for policy development, the researcher should collect data from all student admission year.

2. It is necessary to study, to develop other types of learning materials to increase the learning efficiency of students to achieve higher results.

3. It is necessary to study, to compare the differences in quality when learning from traditional classes versus online course, in order to create a suitable course to teach students Improved retention of information.

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