

King Faisal University's Applied College Students' Opinions on Learning English Language via Distance learning

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the opinions of King Faisal University's Applied College students towards distance learning English. Teachers, university administrators, coordinators, and curriculum designers would benefit from this study since it will help them understand the type of English language instruction that students enjoy. Additionally, based on this study, King Faisal University should modify its English language instruction methodology. In order to use a quantitative approach, the researcher randomly selected male and female English 102 students who were enrolled in King Faisal University's Applied College during the second semester of 2025. The findings indicated that while both male and female students favour distance learning, male students are more likely than female students to favour studying English through this method. The study recommended that English language instruction be moved from in-person to online.

Keywords: Distance learning, face to face learning, learning English language.

1.Introduction

The past six years have seen a significant increase in the number of universities and instructors offering distance learning courses in English as well as other topics including maths, physics, history, computer science, social studies, chemistry, marketing, and business. This is because of the enormous technical advancements that have taken place globally. Numerous technological applications have been developed to teach English language proficiency through distance learning. Additionally, all universities and institutions have required their instructors to use distance learning from the start of COVID-19. As we can see, the demand for studying English through remote learning has increased because to COVID-19 and technical advancement.

The biggest threat to the nation's educational systems in history is COVID-19. Many governments have put rules into place that force educational institutions to stop providing in-person instruction to the majority of their students and force them to move to distance learning. Education (Daniel, 2020). Over the past decade, there has been a significant transformation in the online world (Wang et al., 2011).

According to Moore and Diehl (2019), distance learning is a teaching and learning process in which interactions between teachers and students are aided by electronic, mechanical, or other devices. According to Moore and Diehl (2019), remote learning began at the University of Tübingen in the 1960s and has since developed into online learning (Siemens et al., 2015).

Today's version of distance education is online education, which uses computers and the internet as the delivery mechanism with at least 80% of the course content delivered online (Allen & Seaman, 2011; Shelton & Saltsman, 2005). Distance education is defined as a teaching method where the student and teacher are physically separated. It can use a combination of technologies, including correspondence, audio, video, computers, and the internet (Roffe, 2004).

Few colleges and educators have adopted distance learning as a teaching method, despite the fact that it is not a new occurrence. The spread of several diseases and the technological revolution have now altered everything. There are currently several distance learning programs available in Saudi Arabia in general and King Faisal University in particular in a variety of subjects, including marketing, accounting, human resources, business, media, and finance. Many students participate in these programs, particularly those who live far from the university or have special needs.

1.1 Statement of the problem:

Because of the widespread technological advancements, the instructor wants to know if her students prefer in-person or remote English language instruction. The instructor is interested in the reasons why they would rather learn English in person or through distance learning.

1.2 Objective of the study:

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not students believe that distance learning is important for learning English. Also, the goal of this study is to modify teaching strategies in light of the findings.

1.3. Research questions:

- 1.What are students' opinions towards learning English language via distance learning?
- 2.Are there any statistically significant differences between male and female students in their opinions towards learning English language via distance learning?

1.4. Significance of The Study:

The results showed how King Faisal University students at the Applied College felt about attending classes remotely to acquire English. Principals of universities can use this information to help them make judgments and strategies for the future if they want to switch from in-person to online English language instruction.

1.5. Study Terms:

Distance learning: Teachers and students are physically separated in distance learning, which uses a variety of electronic means, such as the internet and online platforms, to give education. It enables learning to take place outside of the conventional classroom.

Face to face learning: Face-to-face learning, sometimes referred to as in-person learning, is a conventional teaching approach in which students and teachers are physically present in the same space, such a classroom. With this method, students and instructors engage directly, communicate in real time, and receive quick feedback.

Learning English Language: Learning English is gaining the abilities and information required to read, write, speak, and comprehend the language. It includes becoming proficient in language skills like discourse, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Fundamentally, it is the process of becoming proficient in English for communication purposes.

2.Review of Related Literature:

The study "student adaptation to distance learning: an analysis of the effectiveness, benefits, and risks of distance education from the perspective of university students" was carried out by Katerina, K., Aneta, B., Josef, S., and Isabella, P. (2024). Finding the variables affecting students' adjustment to

this new learning paradigm was the goal. Content categorization analysis was used to process the results of the mixed (qualitative and quantitative) study, in which students responded to two open-ended questions about the advantages and disadvantages of distant learning through an online survey form. The findings demonstrated that, in addition to instructional strategies and subject matter, students' own adjustment to distance learning is crucial, and that this adaptation varies significantly among students based on their learning preferences, gender, and study program type.

A study on the "impact of distance learning on the English language learning process" was carried out by Hanan, K.A. (2022). This study employs a primary qualitative methodology, using open-ended questions to collect data from primary sources. This study's use of primary research methodologies was crucial since it improved our understanding of how distance education affects English language acquisition, particularly for Arab learners. The qualitative study's findings demonstrated the obstacles that educators encounter while experimenting with online foreign language instruction. These obstacles include, but are not restricted to, problems with internet connection, accessibility, LMS connectivity, and suitable evaluation instruments. More in-service training and preparation courses on the efficient use of innovations and the implementation of distinctive applications in online teaching are desired by teachers, according to the study's findings.

A study on "teaching English through online learning" was carried out by Dwi, S. (2021). Investigating the best teaching method for teaching English through online learning is the goal of this project. The current study is designed as a literature review. The results of this study demonstrate that videoconferencing, instant messaging, and games could be effective methods for teaching English to learners online. It has been determined that videoconferencing is suitable for improving written communication. The game is thought to be suitable for fostering a fun learning environment. It is strongly advised that teachers apply the method according to the situation and learning objective. Teachers could make use of a variety of ICT platforms or programs that facilitate the application of the concepts.

A study on "emotional intelligence in distance learning: a case study of English as a second language via distance learning" was carried out by George, B., T., and Agnes, W., L. (2021). 238 students answered a composite questionnaire in phase one of the study, providing information on their demographics, EI scores, and opinions about the English course. In phase two, interviews were conducted with 18 volunteers who were chosen based on their EI scores in order to get qualitative information to supplement the quantitative findings. A case study of a student named Aini is presented in this essay. It is crucial to instill students' emotional intelligence (EI) to help them manage

their emotions in order to adapt and preserve, not only when learning English through distance learning but also to successfully accomplish one's goals in life. The results showed that Aini's EI helped her manage her emotions, perceptions, and actions, and ultimately help her obtain her required English credits for graduation.

"Students' perceptions on distance education: A multinational study" was the subject of a study by Patricia, F., Joan, T., Jose, A., and Alberto, L. (2020). Undergraduate students in Portugal, the United Arab Emirates, and Ukraine were given a survey. The pilot study's findings demonstrated that time management, motivation, and English language proficiency were the main issues that students in all three nations had with these programs.

3.Distance learning

Learning that doesn't require you to be physically present at a university or other institution is known as distance learning. Lectures and educational resources are accessible online. Students can complete the course from an online university or other institution while remaining in their homes. Although the majority of the material is delivered through online courses, they will typically also have the chance to participate in live workshops, residencies, or other learning activities.

Two types of distance learning

There are two major categories of distance learning: synchronous and asynchronous.

Synchronous

Lectures delivered in real time are referred to as synchronous distant learning. You and your teachers will be able to communicate in real time. Teleconferencing and related technologies are necessary for this learning model.

Face-to-face interaction with teachers and fellow students is made possible through synchronous distant learning. Because you have to meet your lecturers and classmates at the appointed time, it is therefore less flexible than some students might want.

Asynchronous

Asynchronous remote learning allows students to progress through the course material at their own speed. Weekly deadlines will be given to you, allowing you to work at your own pace and convenience.

There isn't a set time to access the course materials. You may converse, do quizzes, and leave comments on videos, though.

Different modes involved in distance learning

You will probably come across various learning styles regardless of the kind of distance education program you engage in. These consist of fixed-time courses, open-schedule courses, hybrid learning, and video conferencing.

Video conferencing

Video conferencing has historically been used to describe online interactions between several people. It can be likened to synchronous correspondence. Teachers and students must use programs like Adobe Connect, Zoom, or Blackboard Collaborate. Interactions can go on at any time and from any location.

One benefit of video conferencing is that it encourages communication between students and teachers. It also aids in giving the course a suitable framework. It is among the key elements of any effective program for distance learning.

Hybrid distance education

A hybrid version is produced when synchronous and asynchronous approaches are combined. Students must complete their assignments and show up for tests by the due dates. However, the ability to study at their own pace is a significant benefit.

Assignments are turned in via online forums as part of this learning strategy. You must stay in touch with your teacher as a student. You will discover new course modules as your studies develop. Hybrid distant learning is frequently preferred by learners who want autonomy.

Online open-schedule courses

The asynchronous category includes the open-schedule commands. Students are given independence while taking the course. Throughout the course, you will be given:

- Bulletin boards
- Books available online
- Emails

Throughout the academic process, you must adhere to the deadlines. You can still study the course at a reasonable pace. This method could relieve your stress.

However, you need self-discipline and motivation to obtain the best results and earn a good grade.

Fixed-time virtual course

The most popular format for distant learning is a fixed-time course. Students visit the learning website when they want to. To succeed and receive the certificate, they must complete preset assignments.

4. Methodology

This section outlines the research methods used to investigate students' opinions towards learning English through distance learning, the study adopted a quantitative research approach to collect and analyze data from students at King Faisal University. A structured questionnaire was used as the main tool for data collection, allowing for the systematic measurement of students' attitudes and experiences, the following subsections describe the population, sampling method data collection procedures and data analysis techniques employed in this study.

4.1. Data Analysis

The study used various statistical methods to ensure the validity and reliability of its findings, Mean and SD were employed to summarize and assess the variability of the data set Frequencies and percentages were calculated for categorical data to provide a clearer distribution, Cronbachs Alpha (α) was used to evaluate the internal consistency of the scale.

4.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study includes students enrolled at King Faisal University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, A total of 218 students participated in the study consisting of 104 male and 114 female students, To ensure diversity and inclusivity a simple random sampling technique was used to select participants from different academic disciplines and study levels, this sampling method helped reduce bias and improved the representativeness and generalizability of the findings to the wider student body.

4.3 Data Collection

The data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire, the questionnaire was administered electronically via Google Forms allowing students to participate conveniently and anonymously, this method ensured wide accessibility and efficient data collection within a limited time frame, Participants were encouraged to respond honestly and thoughtfully.

4.4 Study Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire consisting of 20 items designed to measure students' opinions about learning English through distance education, A 4-point Likert scale was used to capture the participants' level of agreement with each statement, with response options ranging from (Strongly Disagree = (1) to Strongly Agree = (4)).

This scale allowed for the measurement of varying degrees of agreement or disagreement without a neutral option, encouraging participants to make clear choices, the mean scores obtained from the responses were interpreted as follows:

- A low level is represented by a mean score between 1.00 and 1.75,
- A medium level corresponds to a mean score between 1.76 and 2.50,
- A high level is indicated by a mean score between 2.51 and 3.25,
- A very high level reflects a mean score between 3.26 and 4.00.

The class width of 0.75 was calculated using the formula $(4-1)/4$, as recommended by Subedi (2016), This classification system enhanced the clarity and reliability of the interpretation of the responses, the electronic format via Google Forms not only facilitated broader participation but also ensured participant anonymity and convenience, this approach contributed to the accuracy efficiency and validity of the data collection process.

4.5 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis is an essential procedure for evaluating the internal consistency of a measurement instrument ensuring that the scale consistently yields stable results, Cronbach's alpha (α) is one of the most widely recognized indicators for assessing reliability as it reflects the degree of relatedness-inter among items within a scale (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011), According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 is deemed acceptable values above 0.80 indicate good reliability and those above 0.90 reflect excellent internal consistency.

In this study the reliability analysis results presented in the table confirm that the instrument demonstrates excellent internal consistency, Specifically the Cronbach's alpha for the 20 item scale was 0.905 indicating that the scale used to measure students' opinions toward learning.

5. Results

This section presents the results of analyzing the study data using SPSS 28 The first part reviews descriptive statistics related to the demographic characteristics of the participants, while the second part focuses on testing the study hypotheses.

5.1 The Descriptive Statistics for the study items

Q1. What are students' opinions towards learning English by distance learning?

To answer the question, "What are students' opinions towards learning English by distance learning?", descriptive statistics were used, including the mean and standard deviation for each of the 20 items. Results were presented as Mean \pm SD and categorized into four levels: low, medium, high, and very high agreement, providing clear insight into students' perceptions.

Table 1: The mean, Standard Deviation and Importance for study variables

Items		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean \pm SD	Importance
1. I want the English lectures to be turned remotely	f	52	57	70	39	2.44 \pm 1.04	Medium
	%	23.9	26.1	32.1	17.9		
2. Distance learning helps me save time and effort	f	22	44	95	57	2.86 \pm 0.92	High
	%	10.1	20.2	43.6	26.1		
3. I can interact with the lesson through distance learning more than physical lectures	f	37	78	71	32	2.45 \pm 0.94	Medium
	%	17	35.8	32.6	14.7		
4. Distance learning provides me with flexibility in choosing the time and place for education	f	20	40	102	56	2.89 \pm 0.89	High
	%	9.2	18.3	46.8	25.7		
5. I can learn English language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) better remotely.	f	49	64	73	32	2.40 \pm 0.99	Medium
	%	22.5	29.4	33.5	14.7		
6. I don't get embarrassed when making mistakes in distance learning	f	12	32	108	66	3.05 \pm 0.82	High
	%	5.5	14.7	49.5	30.3		
7. Distance learning is cheaper for me than going to university, as I receive information at home without having to pay for transportation.	f	12	40	92	74	3.05 \pm 0.86	High
	%	5.5	18.3	42.2	33.9		
8. Distance learning makes me focus and pay more attention to the teacher's explanation.	f	57	61	68	32	2.34 \pm 1.02	Medium
	%	26.1	28	31.2	14.7		
9. Distance learning gives me technological skills	f	20	39	107	52	2.88 \pm 0.88	High
	%	9.2	17.9	49.1	23.9		
10. Through distance learning, I can communicate with the professor faster and easier.	f	28	55	77	58	2.76 \pm 0.99	High
	%	12.8	25.2	35.3	26.6		
11. Distance learning is better than in-person learning	f	54	67	54	43	2.39 \pm 1.06	Medium
	%	24.8	30.7	24.8	19.7		
12. Distance learning is more fun than face-to-face learning	f	44	58	68	48	2.55 \pm 1.05	High
	%	20.2	26.6	31.2	22		
13. Distance learning is more suitable for my lifestyle	f	35	62	76	45	2.60 \pm 0.99	High
	%	16.1	28.4	34.9	20.6		
14. Distance learning is better than face-to-face learning because I can hear and watch the recorded lecture more than once, anytime, anywhere.	f	13	37	96	72	3.04 \pm 0.86	High
	%	6	17	44	33		
15. I prefer distance learning because I have special circumstances that prevent me from going to university	f	37	70	64	47	2.56 \pm 1.01	High
	%	17	32.1	29.4	21.6		
16. I prefer distance learning because I	f	21	42	79	76	2.96 \pm 0.96	High



can get higher scores in remote tests	%	9.6	19.3	36.2	34.9		
17. I prefer distance learning because some professors punish us if we are late to attend the in-person lecture on time	f	26	56	77	59	2.78 ± 0.98	High
	%	11.9	25.7	35.3	27.1		
18. I prefer distance learning because it keeps us away from communicating or meeting bullying students	f	47	70	62	39	2.43 ± 1.02	Medium
	%	21.6	32.1	28.4	17.9		
19. I prefer distance learning because some teachers cannot control the classroom	f	48	71	68	31	2.38 ± 0.98	Medium
	%	22	32.6	31.2	14.2		
20. I prefer distance learning because it is a modern learning method	f	27	51	78	62	2.80 ± 0.99	High
	%	12.4	23.4	35.8	28.4		
Students' Opinions						2.68 ± 0.71	High

Table 1 displays the results of students' responses regarding their opinions toward learning English through distance learning. The analysis included 20 items measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (4). The total mean score for all items was 2.68 with a standard deviation of 0.71, which indicates a high level of agreement overall, based on the adopted scale classification. This suggests that students generally hold positive attitudes toward learning English remotely. Several statements received high average scores, reflecting strong agreement with the benefits of distance learning. For example, students agreed that distance learning helps save time and effort (mean = 2.86), provides flexibility in choosing the time and place of study (mean = 2.89), and allows them to avoid embarrassment when making mistakes (mean = 3.05). Other highly rated benefits included the perception that distance learning is cheaper (mean = 3.05), provides technological skills (mean = 2.88), and enables easier communication with professors (mean = 2.76). These findings indicate that students appreciate the convenience, cost-efficiency, and technological advantages of remote learning.

Moreover, items such as the ability to watch recorded lectures anytime (mean = 3.04) and the chance to achieve higher grades in remote assessments (mean = 2.96) further highlight students' positive views of the flexibility and perceived academic benefits of distance learning. Many students also agreed that distance learning suits their lifestyle and helps them avoid uncomfortable social situations like bullying or strict classroom discipline, especially from professors who penalize late attendance. On the other hand, several items scored at a medium level, indicating mixed or moderate opinions. These include perceptions about improved interaction during distance learning (mean = 2.45), the effectiveness in learning English language skills such as speaking and writing (mean = 2.40), and whether distance learning enhances focus and attention (mean = 2.34). Similarly, some students did not strongly agree that distance learning is better or more enjoyable than face-to-face education (mean = 2.39 and 2.55, respectively). This reflects that while students acknowledge the benefits of remote education, some still feel that traditional, in-person learning may be more effective in certain areas, particularly in engagement and skill development. In conclusion, the

findings suggest that King Faisal University students generally favor distance learning for English, especially for its convenience, flexibility, and supportive environment. However, there are areas that need improvement, particularly in student engagement, interaction, and language skill development, to make distance learning more effective and comparable to traditional methods.

2.Are there any statistically significant differences between male and female students?

Table 2: Independent Samples t-test Results for Differences in Students' Opinions Toward Distance English Learning by Gender

	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Male	104	2.984	0.625	6.591	0.00
Female	114	2.403	0.672		

***Significant at ≤ 0.05**

To examine whether there are statistically significant differences between male and female students in their opinions toward learning English by distance learning, an independent samples t-test was conducted. The results revealed a significant difference between the two groups ($t = 6.591$, $p = 0.00$), indicating that gender has a statistically significant effect. Male students ($M = 2.984$, $SD = 0.625$) reported higher mean scores compared to female students ($M = 2.403$, $SD = 0.672$), suggesting that male students have a more favorable opinion towards distance learning of English than female students.

6.Discussion:

According to the findings, both male and female students at King Faisal University enjoy learning English remotely, but male students are more interested in doing so than female students.

I believe that female students are more engaged than male students and that they prefer in-person English instruction. In addition, I believe that while male students are free to leave their homes whenever they want, female students may be not due to family restrictions that prevent them from doing so. Therefore, attending classes in person at university is a way for them to break their routine and socialize with other students. Additionally, compared to male students, female students enjoy learning languages more. Additionally, things are becoming simpler for Saudi female. Because Saudi women are able to drive and because there are several transportation options, such as Careem ,Bolt and Uber applications female students can attend university with ease.

7. Conclusion:

For the students at King Faisal University's Applied College, distance learning is crucial since they believe it can save them time and fit with their lifestyle. However, some students continue to believe that in-person instruction is more significant than distance learning because they believe that they can improve their English language proficiency in traditional classroom settings more effectively than with technological aids because they will have more opportunities for interaction and language practice.

8. Recommendations

1. For students who prefer distance learning, King Faisal University should switch from in-person to online English language instruction.
2. Teachers and students should have access to digital training courses.
3. The designers of English language textbooks should provide materials that are appropriate for teaching English language proficiency through distance learning.
4. Even for students who study remotely, exams, particularly the midterm and final exams, should be administered in –person rather than online.
5. In some situations, such as when it's rainy or dusty, King Faisal University should switch from in-person instruction to remote learning. Additionally, the university should switch from in-person to remote learning during Ramadan, the Muslim holy month.
6. In order to motivate students to study English face-to-face, teachers should change their methods for teaching the language and make the lesson enjoyable.
7. More studies should be done on teaching English language proficiency independently through distant learning.

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