The Relationship between Readiness and the Usage of e-Learning among English Lecturers

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, e-learning becomes useful to learning institutions worldwide, and because of that, an assessment of e-learning readiness is essential for the successful implementation of e-learning as a platform for learning. Success in e-learning can be achieved by understanding the level of readiness of e-learning environments. University of Kuala Lumpur already facilitate each campus with e-learning facilities and conducting workshop to the students and lecturers. Still, not all lecturers are ready to use e-learning in their teaching process. This study was carried out to examine UniKL English lecturers' readiness in the usage of e-learning. For this purpose, English lecturers of University of Kuala Lumpur will be given an online questionnaire on the usage of e-learning in their teaching process. For data collection, one set of online questionnaire was designed. The questionnaires were distributed to 51 English lecturers at UniKL but only 30 responded to the online questionnaires. The overall findings of this research shows that English lecturers prefer to use traditional way which is face-to-face medium to teach English, even though they are ready to embrace e-learning in their teaching process due to few constrains. The study revealed a positive relationship between the facilities of e-learning at the University of Kuala Lumpur and English lecturers' acceptance of using e-learning in their teaching process.

Keywords: *blended learning; e-learning*

INTRODUCTION

Since the recent years, the use of e-learning in the teaching and learning process in higher institutions in Malaysia has not been a new approach. It is used especially for private higher institutions because these private colleges/universities serve students who study part time. So, it is flexible for these students to get higher qualifications and at the same time working as they just use blended learning approach.

In most ESL classrooms, the lecturers always face the same problem, that is weak students unable to learn English. It is because of the perceptions of the students' themselves that English is difficult to learn. English lecturers play the main role in changing these perceptions. By using the technology like e-learning, English subject will be something interesting to the students. It is because lecturers can upload interesting videos related to the topic in e-learning and weak students can have a chance to learn English by using online tools personally with the help of the lecturer. Voogt and Knezek (2008) assert that e-learning is of strategic importance and is an effective method that should be blended into schools' learning mix. Besides that, lecturers should also be equipped with e-learning skills to manage e-learning environment. These skills are most effectively gained by learning with technology, rather than about technology (Broadley, 2012). This shows that to learn with technology, lecturers should have the desire to use technology as teaching aids.

Ng (2008) states that technology is not only an add-tool in teaching and learning process, but also to foster peer learning, so that learners may learn through a holistic approach in an experiential environment. It means that by using e-learning, students will develop critical thinking skills among them and at the same time they can also foster online collaborative learning in their learning process.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Like other institutions, UniKL is one that starts to use e-learning in the teaching and learning process. Most of the UniKL campuses have been set up with the e-learning facilities. Besides that, the lecturers have also

attended e-learning courses. In this course, all lecturers have been taught on how to use e-learning and Moodle. However, not all lecturers are ready to implement e-learning in their teaching. This will affect the use of the e-learning if the lecturers are not ready to use it. This paper therefore looks at the relationship on the readiness and the use of e-learning among UniKL English lecturers.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To investigate UniKL English lecturers' perceptions and readiness on the use of e-learning in teaching English subjects.

2. To determine the effectiveness of teaching English through e-learning at UniKL.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study focuses only on English lecturers at University of Kuala Lumpur. Therefore, thefindings of this study may not represent the whole population of UniKL English lecturers as only 30 respondents responded to the online questionnaire.

LITERATURE REVIEW

E-learning in Malaysia

The development of e-learning in Malaysian education system can be divided into two phases namely;

1. e-learning focuses on any form of electronic gadgets that are used as teaching aids to facilitate the teaching and learning process, and

2. phase two is closely linked to the Internet technology (Supyan, 2008).

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According to the statement above, in Phase 1, e-learning is considered as any form of electronic gadgets used as teaching aids to facilitate the teaching and learning process. At this phase, Internet is not part of e-learning. Teachers or lecturers use OHP (overhead projector), direct projector, video, cassette, and CD-ROM as part of e-learning. If the term "e-learning" in Phase 1 is related to the learning gadgets, in Phase 2, e-learning is related to the Internet technology. At this stage, learning through Internet in Malaysia has moved on a tremendous speed. Most of the colleges and universities in Malaysia, for example, UNITAR (Universiti Tun Abdul Razak) and MMU (Multimedia University) have been set up with hi-tech technologies to run online courses at the campus. Now, most of the colleges and universities in Malaysia run e-learning programs to cater for working adult learners. These students have a combination of face-to-face session with the lecturers and e-learning session. It is also known as blended learning. Hence, it will be easier for this group of learners to gain knowledge and certificate without leaving their work or positions.

Marlia (2006) found at that time, there were no policies in Malaysia that serve as a guide to Malaysian universities to integrate e-learning into their education system. However, now most of the public and private universities in Malaysia use e-learning as part of the teaching and learning process. The technology improves day-by-day, and now, the current medium of e-learning is Moodle. By using Moodle, lecturers can upload the video from You Tube or create their own video.

Lecturers' Attitude and Perception

It is very important to know lecturers' attitude towards e-learning because this will give the lecturers effort to teach using e-learning. Paraskeva, Bouta and Papagianna (2008) believe that teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards technologies influenced the effective use of these technologies in teaching and learning. If the lecturers have positive attitude towards e-learning, it will be easier for them to implement e-learning or blended learning in their teaching process.

The Benefits of E-learning in Teaching English

Teachers and students communicate virtually via e-learning and this is the predominant feature of learning process that is different from traditional

classes in which instructors and learners engage in face-to-face interaction (Teyebinik, 2009). It means that distance education using e-learning is a unique significance to the computer education and traditional approach. Having human interaction to online learning like live chat or forum, educators have considered human need for socialization, which in turn will help the process of learning (Sethy, 2008). This is very useful when the lecturers have weak students in the classroom. Instead of asking the weak students to come and see the lecturer after class, the students and the lecturer can have live discussion through e-learning. This is easier, comfortable and it saves time for both the students and lecturer. This is also known as blended learning. It means that students have face-to-face session with the lecturer in traditional setting classroom and having live discussions with the same lecturer through e-learning.

Another benefit of e-learning is students' eagerness for self-expression online. For example, when students produce something of extremely high quality, the lecturer can ask the students to post it in e-learning, so that the other students can do the same thing. It will also motivate the students as they try to produce something that has high impact on them (Bonk et al., 1998). In English subject, lecturers can ask the students to submit their assignment via e-learning. For those who have achieved high marks, the lecturer can publish their work in e-learning, so that the other students from other groups will try to produce good assignment or better than the published assignments.

The other benefit of e-learning in teaching English is the lecturer can use convenient medium of students' online assessments. English is a compulsory subject in all universities and colleges in Malaysia. Hence, the number of students per lecturer is always high. To make the lecturer easier to mark the test, they can conduct online assessment through e-learning. However, this assessment is only suitable for multiple choices, true or false or fills in the blanks in which the system will mark and calculate the students' marks according to the answer scheme in the system.

Framework of Measuring Levels of Readiness

In e-learning implementation, the most important component is human and technology. In this study, English lecturers are the people who will be

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measured in terms of their level of readiness in e-learning implementation. Figure 1 below shows a framework of the interactions between e-learning readiness factors towards e-learning implementation.
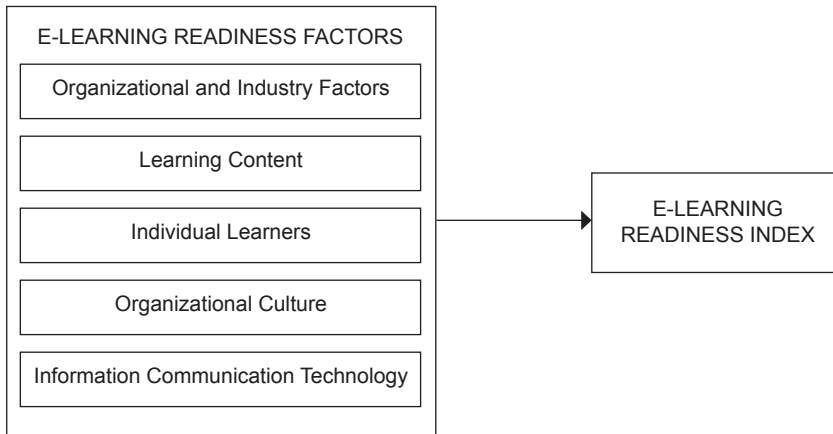
Adapted from Engholm (2001)

Figure 1: Framework on e-learning Readiness Factors (Engholm, 2001)

METHODOLOGY

Sample of the Study

The study was carried out on 51 UniKL English lecturers that have experienced in teaching English using e-learning method. However, only 30 respondents responded to the online questionnaire. Only respondents who had experience teaching English through e-learning in their teaching process were asked to respond to the questionnaire. This is to ensure that they will not be facing any problem when answering the questionnaire.

Research Design

As this research used the survey method, the instrument used was a structured online questionnaire. The design for this online questionnaire was based on research objectives and questions. The questionnaire has been adapted from the research on Students' Perceptions of a Blended Learning Environment: Advantages, Limitations and Suggestions for Improvement (Abdul Wahed et al., 2013).

The data obtained will be analyzed descriptively using simple percentage. The purpose of this questionnaire is to encourage English lecturers of UniKL to use e-learning in their teaching process. The information obtained will be used for research purposes only and all responses will be kept confidential.

Data Collection Procedure

Before the start of the study, all UniKL English lecturers will be informed through email that they have to respond to the online questionnaire. The lecturers will also be informed the purpose of distributing the questionnaire so that the English lecturers will be clear about the purpose of distributing the questionnaire. Then, the researcher will arrange the appropriate day and time to ask the English lecturers to respond to the online questionnaire.

On the arranged date and time, the online questionnaire has been disseminated among all UniKL English lecturers. E-mails have been sent to all UniKL English lecturers that inform them the aim of the study and instructions on how to respond to the online questionnaire given to them. They were given up to 10 days to complete the online questionnaire as most of them were busy preparing coursework marks for the students, so that they could answer the questionnaire freely, sincerely and accurately.

Data Analysis

The data collected will be classified into different sub-headings. The sub-headings consist of the perceptions of UniKL English lecturers about the usage of e-learning in teaching English and limitations on e-learning in ESL classroom.

To investigate the respondents' perceptions and readiness towards the use of e-learning in teaching English, I would like to distinguish the respondents' attitude towards e-learning. The data will be processed manually and presented in the form of percentage.

FINDINGS

Overall Findings

From the responses of the respondents to the online questionnaire, it was found that most of the respondents prefer to use traditional approach which is face-to-face to teach English rather than e-learning in their ESL classroom. Analysis of data revealed two main categories:

1. UniKL English lecturers' perceptions and readiness of using e-learning in ESL classroom.

2. Limitations on the use of e-learning in ESL classroom.

UniKL English Lecturers' Perceptions and Readiness of using e-Learning in ESLClassroom

The perceptions of UniKL English lecturers' usage of e-learning in teaching English were reported based on the completed online questionnaire. Table 1 shown about the responses to the items on English lecturers' perceptions.

Table 1: Responses to Items on UniKL English Lecturers' Perceptions

Questions	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
E-learning is more convenient for me than face-to-face learning.	3.3	46.7	30	13.3	6.7
E-learning improves communication between students and lecturers.	3.3	46.7	30	16.7	3.3
E-learning makes teaching and learning more effective; because it integrates all forms of media, print, audio, video and animation.	3.3	10	23.3	40	23.3
E-learning helps me to use time effectively.	6.7	13.3	43.3	23.3	13.3

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I think socially isolated when I use e-learning.	6.7	30	40	10	13.3
E-learning is difficult to handle and therefore frustrating to use.	6.7	16.7	16.7	6.7	53.3
I prefer to teach English using traditional way which is face-to-face rather than using e-learning.	3.3	6.7	26.7	36.7	26.7

The results above provide yet further evidence of the UniKL English lecturers' perceptions towards the usage of e-learning in teaching English subjects. These results provide some strong indications that most of the English lecturers at UniKL prefer to use traditional method which is face-to-face in their teaching process rather than using e-learning.

There is evidence that English could be more interesting if the lecturer use e-learning in the teaching process (23.3%) as e-learning makes teaching and learning more effective. Most of the English lecturers also feel that e-learning is difficult to handle and therefore frustrating to use as they think the university should equip more labs to cater with the number of students and face the technical problems first (53.3%). A total of 26.7% of UniKL English lecturers agree that teaching English using traditional way which is face-to-face is easier than using e-learning as lecturers just bring the textbook or notes to the class instead of waiting for the technician to come and fix the problem, such as technical problem or waiting for slow Internet connectivity when using e-learning.

Limitations on the Use of E-Learning in ESL Classroom

Table 2 shown responses to the items on limitations on the use of e-learning in ESL classroom.

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**Table 2: Responses to Items on Limitations
on the Use of E-Learning in ESL Classroom**

Questions	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
The number of Internet labs should be increased.	0.0	0.0	20.0	23.3	56.7
All technical problems should be solved.	0.0	3.3	10.0	33.3	53.3
E-learning facilitates cheating and plagiarism.	3.3	16.7	40.0	23.3	16.7

According to the UniKL English lecturers, 56.7% agree that the number of Internet labs should be increased. This is due to the current number of students in UniKL that is increasing year by year. Meanwhile, 53.3% of the respondents agree that all technical problems and slow Internet connectivity should be solved in order for them to teach English using e-learning.

Lastly, based on the questionnaire, it is agreed that e-learning facilitates cheating and plagiarism (16.7%). It is because students can refer to the notes from the Internet or refer from the textbook when the lecturers use e-learning for online assessment. Other than that, students can also plagiarize when the lecturers ask them to submit the assignments through e-learning.

All in all, learning English using e-learning will be more interesting and fun because it will be more interactive, students-centered and it develop students' critical thinking skills. Nonetheless, the university should improve on the technical problems first to encourage more English lecturers to use e-learning in their teaching process. Otherwise, the use of e-learning will become a burden to the English lecturers as they have to face the technical problem and slow Internet connectivity in the campus.

CONCLUSION

E-learning is an active approach when it is used effectively. As a teaching approach, it is beneficial to the lecturers, especially when they are not around

the campus. Besides that, e-learning can also develop critical thinking skills, and also cooperative online learning between the students. However, not all English lecturers at UniKL prefer to use e-learning, as they think it is difficult to handle and at the same time the lecturers have to face technical problem such as slow Internet connectivity in the campus. Reluctant users are late adopters who are "suspicious of innovations and of change agents" (Rogers, 2003: 284). To achieve the benefit of using e-learning in ESL classroom, English lecturers need to change the perceptions of using traditional way together with e-learning approach. Administrators must ensure that English lecturers understand the principles behind the use of e-learning and recognize that they are participating in an effective teaching process, even if it is unfamiliar to some of them. English lecturers need to familiarize with the concept of e-learning to ensure the teaching through e-learning will be successful. Finally, administrators and the lecturers must consider the role that e-learning will play in their programme. Will it constitute the primary philosophical and pedagogical thrust of the programme, or will it serve as an alternative activity for lecturers to use in their classrooms? Careful consideration of these issues will increase the likelihood that e-learning will be successfully incorporated into an ESL programme with positive outcomes.

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