

UDC 372.8 ; IRSTI 14.35.09

<https://doi.org/10.47526/2022-2/2664-0686.19>**M. SEITOVA¹✉, Z. ZHUMATAYEVA²**

¹PhD, Acting Associate Professor of Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University (Kazakhstan, Turkistan), e-mail: meruyert.seitova@ayu.edu.kz
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0735-2469>

²Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Acting Associate Professor of Nazarbayev University (Kazakhstan, Nur-Sultan), e-mail: zzhumatayeva@nu.edu.kz
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4666-4868>

TEACHING ENGLISH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Abstract. On account of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, the move online learning amid the quarantine has different negative impacts on teachers and learners. On the point of the failure to adjust bodily instruction strategies to remove instruction, and the incapacity to plan modern teaching forms has led to pressure and tension being exerted on learning experience; this rings true for students. The present research focuses on exploring the challenges and opportunities of online education while learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In consequence, historical process of online education and importance of online education while learning EFL are briefly summarized, and challenges and opportunities of online education, possible security problems faced by online learners and purposes of learners' use of social media are discussed in this research. A questionnaire adapted from Becker (2019), titled 'E-learning Questionnaire' was used in the study. 87 students studying at Foreign Languages Teaching department at Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University in Kazakhstan participated in the study. The results of this study show that all participants have been using the Internet for years. Most of the participants improve their English language skills through the Internet, and they mostly prefer portable digital technologies to access the Internet. Easy access to updated English resources, learning at one's personal space, flexibility, and eliminating travel and accommodation costs are among the opportunities of e-learning mostly agreed by the participants. The main challenges of online education are social isolation, not getting instant feedback, negative attitudes towards online education, planning difficulties as a result of lack of self-study habits, and fear of using digital technologies resulting from lack of technical training and support.

Keywords: Online education, challenges and opportunities of online education, isolation, instant feedback, misinformation.

М. Сейтова, З. Жұматаева

¹PhD, Қожа Ахмет Яссауи атындағы Халықаралық қазақ-түрік университетінің қауымдастырылған профессор м.а.

(Қазақстан, Түркістан қ.), e-mail: meruyert.seitova@ayu.edu.kz

²педагогика ғылымдарының кандидаты,

Назарбаев Университетінің қауымдастырылған профессор м.а.

(Қазақстан, Нұр-Сұлтан қ.), e-mail: zzhumatayeva@nu.edu.kz

* Бізге дұрыс сілтеме жасаңыз:

Seitova M., Zhumatayeva Z. Teaching English during the Covid-19 Pandemic // Ясауи университетінің хабаршысы. – 2022. – №2 (124). – Б. 233–242. <https://doi.org/10.47526/2022-2/2664-0686.19>

*Cite us correctly:

Seitova M., Zhumatayeva Z. Teaching English during the Covid-19 Pandemic // Iasau universitetinin habarshysy. – 2022. – №2 (124). – Б. 233–242. <https://doi.org/10.47526/2022-2/2664-0686.19>

Ковид-19 пандемиясы кезінде ағылшын тілін оқыту

Аңдатпа. Дүниежүзілік Covid-19 пандемиясына байланысты карантин кезінде онлайн оқытуға көшу оқытушылар мен студенттерге әртүрлі теріс әсер етті. Қазіргі заманғы оқыту формаларын жоспарлау қабілетсіздігі оқу тәжірибесіне қысым мен шиеленіс туғызды, бұл студенттерге де қатысты. Бұл зерттеу ағылшын тілін шет тілі (EFL) ретінде үйрену кезінде онлайн білім берудің қиындықтары мен мүмкіндіктерін зерттеуге бағытталған. Нәтижесінде, бұл зерттеуде онлайн білім берудің тарихи процесі және EFL оқу кезінде онлайн білім берудің маңыздылығы қысқаша қорытындыланады, сонымен қатар, онлайн білім берудің қиындықтары мен мүмкіндіктері, онлайн білім алушылар кездесетін ықтимал қауіпсіздік мәселелері және студенттердің әлеуметтік медианы пайдалану мақсаттары талқыланады. Зерттеуде Беккердің (2019) қысқартылған «Электрондық оқыту сауалнамасы» атты сауалнамасы пайдаланылды. Зерттеуге Қазақстандағы Қожа Ахмет Яссауи атындағы Халықаралық қазақ-түрік университетінің педагогикалық шетел тілдері кафедрасында оқитын 87 студент қатысты. Бұл зерттеу нәтижелері көрсеткендей, барлық қатысушылар интернетті жылдар бойы пайдаланады. Қатысушылардың көпшілігі ағылшын тілін интернет арқылы жетілдіреді және интернетке кіру үшін көбінесе портативті цифрлық технологияларды қолданады. Жаңартылған ағылшын ресурстарына оңай қол жеткізу, жеке кеңістікте үйрену, икемділік, жол жүру және тұру шығындарын жою – қатысушылар негізінен келісетін электрондық оқыту мүмкіндіктерінің түрлері болып табылды. Онлайн білім берудің негізгі қиындықтары – әлеуметтік оқшаулану, бірден кері байланыс алмау, онлайн білім беруге теріс көзқарас, өздігінен оқу әдеттерінің болмауынан жоспарлау қиындықтары және техникалық дайындық пен қолдаудың жоқтығынан цифрлық технологияларды пайдаланудан қорқу.

Кілт сөздер: онлайн білім беру, онлайн білім берудің қиындықтары мен мүмкіндіктері, оқшаулану, кері байланыс, жалған ақпарат.

М. Сейтова¹, З. Жуматаева²

¹PhD, и.о. ассоциированного профессора

*Международного казахско-турецкого университета имени Ходжи Ахмеда Ясави
(Казахстан, г. Туркестан), e-mail: meruyert.seitova@ayu.edu.kz*

*²кандидат педагогических наук, и.о. ассоциированного профессора Назарбаев Университета
(Казахстан, г. Нур-Султан), e-mail: zzhumatayeva@nu.edu.kz*

Преподавание английского языка во время пандемии Covid-19

Аннотация. Из-за всемирной пандемии Covid-19 переход в онлайн-обучение в условиях карантина имеет различные негативные последствия для учителей и учащихся. Что касается неспособности скорректировать стратегии телесного обучения, чтобы исключить обучение, и неспособности планировать современные формы обучения привели к давлению и напряжению, оказываемым на учебный опыт; это звучит верно для студентов. Настоящее исследование посвящено изучению проблем и возможностей онлайн-образования при изучении английского языка как иностранного (EFL). Следовательно, исторический процесс онлайн-обучения и важность онлайн-обучения при изучении иностранного языка кратко суммируются, а в этом исследовании обсуждаются проблемы и возможности онлайн-обучения, возможные проблемы безопасности, с которыми сталкиваются онлайн-учащиеся, и цели использования учащимися социальных сетей. В исследовании использовалась адаптированная анкета Becker (2019) под названием «Опросник электронного обучения». В исследовании приняли участие 87 студентов, обучающихся на кафедре педагогических иностранных языков Международного казахско-турецкого университета имени Ходжи

Ахмета Ясави в Казахстане. Результаты этого исследования показывают, что все участники пользуются Интернетом в течение многих лет. Большинство участников совершенствуют свои знания английского языка через Интернет, и для выхода в Интернет они в основном предпочитают портативные цифровые технологии. Легкий доступ к обновленным англоязычным ресурсам, обучение в личном пространстве, гибкость и устранение затрат на проезд и проживание — вот те возможности электронного обучения, которые в основном согласовали участники. Основными проблемами онлайн-образования являются социальная изоляция, отсутствие мгновенной обратной связи, негативное отношение к онлайн-образованию, трудности с планированием из-за отсутствия привычки к самостоятельному обучению и боязнь использования цифровых технологий из-за отсутствия технической подготовки и поддержки.

Ключевые слова: онлайн-образование, вызовы и возможности онлайн-образования, изоляция, мгновенная обратная связь, дезинформация.

Introduction

In late 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic hit our world, and cleared out an permanent impression. In Kazakhstan, the primary cases were recognized in March 2020, this was at that point taken after by a basic isolation period in which everybody was set beneath strict isolate rules. All academic establishments round the world are closed and that they have switched to online education. As a result, the construct of e-learning or online education has gained importance. Due to the variety of the technologies, online education has unfold on a bigger space.

This study aims to determine challenges and opportunities of online education from the perspectives of the university students studying English Language Teaching at Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazak-Turkish University in Kazakhstan and make some recommendations to raise awareness of these students of how to overcome the challenges of online education on the basis of the findings of the questionnaire. The questionnaire of this study is based on that of Becker, titled 'E-learning questionnaire'. In the context of the purpose, the following research question need to be answered by the end of the study:

What are the challenges and opportunities of online education while learning EFL?

In February 1922, New Zealand created a historical move towards the accessibility of education by declaring that they had opened correspondence categories for 107 children formally under an institute, the New Zealand correspondence school (Bewly and North, 1996) [1]. One of the first steps they took enclosed lectures on records to distance learners. In the same year, Pennsylvania State University was the pioneer university to broadcast courses over the radio. So far, long before that amount, the primary encounter with distance learning is accepted to be the efforts of Charles Toussaint and Gustav Langenscheidt, to teach language by correspondence in 1856. This effort was made on the other continents of the world. Through those years, the distance education system was generally supported one way communication, from supply to the receiver, as an information transference. From the early 2000's, computers with internet connections began to make their way to people's homes. And this was not only the case for businesses and adults, but for learners and the academic sector too. A few academic establishments trialed in person education with online modules through "blended learning".

Online education can be asynchronous and synchronous. Asynchronous learning is commonly offered on a CD-ROM, and/or it is web-based version of computer-based training. Course content is open access twenty-four hours per day and all the week, and accessible from any computer or device connected to the Internet or to Intranet of the organisation (Fallon & Brown, 2016) [2] basically explained it as "an interactive learning community that is not restricted by place, time or the constraints of a classroom". And, Synchronous learning, usually supported by the mediums like videoconferencing, teleconferencing and/or chat. The method can be effective on the teams that

wish to support information progress. The communication can be handled healthies with synchronous e-learning as the feedback is less effective if it is not real time and delayed. With the increasing trend of synchronous online learning with Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), the majority have access to the web currently ready to learn a range of skills with none dependence on any establishments. Following distance education methods, with new opportunities provided through digitalization, MOOC and LMS systems are evaluated through studies that concentrate on global and local examples.

Apart from, MOOCs are an alternate learning medium to in personal learning with the supply of reaching the content asynchronously, for not solely in universities but for companies that care for their staff development. The MOOC suppliers like LinkedIn Learning, Coursera and Udacity have additionally complete the demand therein space, and developed enterprise choices and corporate LMS alternatives for companies that want to produce training to their staff in a scalable and manageable way. Studying a foreign language is a long term process. It requires time and effort.

Shishkovskaya, Bakalo and Grigoryev (2015) [3] made an experimental study of the pedagogical integration of Internet technologies into the EFL teaching process in the e-learning environment. The results of this study indicated that whether the Web 2.0 tools worked or not in the e-learning process, they increase EFL learners' motivation and the level of their foreign language proficiency. Soliman (2014) [4] claimed that e-learning should be used to support the EFL classroom activities and to encourage the students to improve language skills outside the classroom. She indicated that e-learning offered several activities and resources, and if it is used by the learners under the supervision of their teachers, it will help the learners enhance their language proficiency and independent learning. Mohammadi, Ghorbani and Hamidi (2011) mentioned that e-learning tools such as television, computer, smartphones, etc. were attractive as they consisted of sounds, actions and visual elements.

According to Mohammadi, Ghorbani and Hamidi (2011), "When children are attracted by the actions, sounds and pictures of television, they try to imitate them at first and imitation can be considered as the first step in learning for children" [5, p.466]. They also indicated that blogs, online games, chat rooms, websites, online English learning magazines, etc. which can be reached through the Internet were powerful learning environments because these tools help foreign language learners to be selfconfident and discuss on various topics and express themselves freely and achieve meaningful learning.

Mohamad, Rashid and Mohamad (2017) [6] carried a research on the pros and cons of using electronic dictionaries (e-dictionaries) in learning English. The findings revealed that using e-dictionaries had some benefits such as portability, visual features, saving time, ease of use and access, and word pronunciation. However, there are significant drawbacks to adopting e-dictionaries, including limited internet connectivity, insufficient definitions and credibility, and classroom or student distraction. Hubackova (2015) [7] performed a survey to determine the efficiency of ICT in language education and the frequency with which students utilized ICT to study foreign languages. The results of the study demonstrated that most of the learners liked working with audio and video recordings, and they considered that blended learning was the most suitable method for foreign language learning.

Research methods

Participants

Participants of the study are 87 respondents, 12 of whom are male and 75 of whom are female. They studied Foreign Languages Teaching Department at Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University in Kazakhstan at the academic year of 2020-2021.

Data collection instrument and data analysis

A questionnaire was used to gather information about the problems and potential of online education while studying English as a foreign language. Google Docs, a web-based office suite

provided by Google, was used to create the questionnaire. Students from universities took part in the study. In the questionnaire, the names of the participants were not asked; therefore, they would feel comfortable to answer the questions honestly. Some parts of the questionnaire cover a 3-point Likert Scale: agree, undecided and disagree while the other parts of the questionnaire have two options: agree and disagree. As the data analysis tool the SPSS 22 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program was used.

The questionnaire was prepared and used as a part of this research. During the preparation of the questionnaire, a comprehensive review of literature was done and the measurement tools developed for measuring e-learning processes were compiled and evaluated for suitability for the research. A questionnaire form developed by an e-learning researcher named Bettina Becker at PAVS (Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services) [8] for the general population was reached in the literature review. When the items in the questionnaire were examined, it was determined that 4 items could be taken as they were. The link of the questionnaire was sent to students by WhatsApp.

Results

Challenges of online education

This part of the questionnaire focuses on gathering information about challenges of online education. It is important to find out what learners think about challenges of online education and whether they think that online education has some disadvantages or not.

It is quite clear that self-study constitutes the success key of e-learning. The learners who have a discipline of working alone have no problem with planning their daily schedules. 80.9% of the respondents 'agree' that individuals who do not have a habit of self-study and have not developed this ability have planning difficulties in language learning. 19.1% of them claim that they are 'undecided'. There is nobody who 'disagrees'. In learning a foreign language, it is important to get instant feedback because the earlier learners notice their mistakes and correct them, the more false learning decreases. 70% of the respondents think that in e-learning, learning difficulties encountered in foreign language learning process cannot be solved instantly and this affects foreign language learning negatively. While 27 % of the respondents are 'undecided', only 3% of them 'disagree'. People may experience health problems such as cervical discalhernia, backache, visual disorder, etc. when they are involved in computer or other technological tools for a long time. Sometimes e-learning requires learners to use technological tools for hours. 72.2% of the respondents state that in e-learning, students and lecturers may experience health problems due to prolonged computer use. Some respondents 11.2% are 'undecided' and the rest of them (10.6%) 'disagree'. Another item of the questionnaire evaluates whether learners can do group work through e-learning or not. Most of the respondents (45.5%) indicate that in e-learning, like in formal education system, students cannot do group work. Although the figures are close, 25.8% of respondents are 'undecided,' while 28.8% disagree. Providing learners and instructors with technical training and support will increase their motivation and self-confidence. 63.6% of the respondents 'agree' that technical training and support for students and instructors are also among the limitations of elearning. 27.3% of them claim that they are 'undecided' and 9.1% of them 'disagree'. In e-learning, learners should know how to learn a foreign language effectively. If they do not have enough information about it, they will waste their time. Therefore, it is stated that learners need to know how to learn a language effectively through e-learning; otherwise, this situation turns into a disadvantage. The majority of the respondents (81.8%) 'agree', 15.2% of them are 'undecided' and only 3% of them 'disagree'. All learners can face technical problems when they learn online.

At this point, it is important to know how to deal with these technical problems and not to lose motivation. 82.2% of the respondents 'agree' that technical problems that may occur with the Internet or computer can have deterrent effect for the person who learns foreign languages. Still, there are some respondents (15.2%) who 'disagree', and 3.6% of them are 'undecided'. In item 28,

it is investigated whether lack of knowledge on e-learning and course selection is a disadvantage or not. The vast majority of the respondents (73.3%) 'agree' that it is a disadvantage that a foreign language learner has a lack of knowledge on topics such as e-learning and course selection. 20.6% of them are 'undecided' and 6.1% of them 'disagree'. Based upon these results, it can be said that learners who learn online should have information about e-learning and course selection. Another item that evaluates learners' use of technological tools is: 'It is a disadvantage that a person learning a foreign language does not have the ability to use computers'. 77.3% of the respondents 'agree' that EFL learners should have the ability to use technological tools. 13.6% of them claim that they 'disagree' this idea. 9.1% of them are 'undecided'. Some learners abstain from using technological tools because of their fear. The vast majority of the respondents (76.7%) 'agree' that a foreign language learner's fear of using technological tools (computer, smart phone, tablet, etc.) is a disadvantage. 6.1% of them are 'undecided' and 10.6% of them 'disagree'.

Based on these data, it can be stated that an EFL learner's fear of using technological tools is a significant barrier to e-learning success. It is widely known that technological tools are expensive. This causes learners to spend a lot of money to take advantage of e-learning. 60.6% of the respondents state that for a person who learns a foreign language, costs of technological equipment and the Internet connection are disadvantages. The choices 'undecided' and 'disagree' have the same percentages 19.7. The next item of the questionnaire evaluates the thoughts of the learners about social isolation. Most of the respondents (62.1%) 'agree' that the fact that people learning a foreign language in e-learning perform their education on their own without communicating with other people may create a perception of social isolation, and consequently, they can lose their ability to socialise with people. The percentages of the choices 'undecided' (19.7) and 'disagree' (18.2) are close to each other. Learners can learn a foreign language through the Internet for free. Also, they have another option: signing up for a fee-paying online course. 60.6% of the respondents indicate that online course fee is a disadvantage. 18.2% of them are 'undecided' and 21.2% of them 'disagree'. Learning styles can vary from one person to another. Some learners may think that use of technological tools is not suitable for them. 77.3% of the respondents 'agree' that it is a disadvantage that learning style of a person learning a foreign language may not be suitable for computer use. 16.7% of them mark 'undecided' and only 6.1% of them 'disagree'. Learners' attitudes shape their learning. If a learner has a positive attitude, his/her learning proceeds in a positive way. On the other hand, if a learner has a negative attitude, s/he can have learning difficulties or cannot learn. As a result, the learners' attitudes have great importance in learning. While the vast majority of the respondents (73.3%) 'agree' that it is a disadvantage that a foreign language learner has a negative attitude towards e-learning, only 4.5% of them 'disagree'. Also, some respondents (22.2%) are 'undecided'. After getting information about cons of e-learning, we will evaluate security problems that online learners face.

Opportunities of online education

As time goes on, information resources change and develop. The first item of this part of the questionnaire evaluates whether the learners can reach updated information resources or not. 81.2% of the participants 'agree' that they can easily access updated English resources through the Internet while 10.6% of them 'disagree'. Also, some participants (8.2%) are 'undecided'. E-learning requires self-study. For this reason, the participants are asked whether they can learn English on their own without needing anyone or not. The majority of the participants (45.5%) are 'undecided'. 28.8% of the participants indicate that they 'agree' and the rest of them (25.8%) 'disagree'. Based on these findings, it can be said that the participants who are 'undecided' should be encouraged to discover the ability of selfstudy inside them in order to benefit from e-learning. Self-paced learning is also one of the most important e-learning features because the learners have unlimited time to learn something completely in e-learning in accordance with their own learning speed.

The majority of respondents (65.2 percent) 'agree' that having limitless time in e-learning permits learners to continue their English learning activities at their own pace is one of the

challenges of e-learning. Still, there are some respondents (27.3%) who are 'undecided' and some of them (7.6%) 'disagree'. When learning a foreign language, it is important to communicate with the target language native speakers in order to have an acquaintance with their culture. Language and culture of a country are closely associated with each other. 77.3% of the respondents 'agree' that e-learning eliminates geographical and regional obstacles as a result of being independent of place; therefore, they can have the opportunity to speak with native speakers without going abroad. While 13.6% of the respondents are 'undecided', 9.1% of them 'disagree'.

69.7% of the participants 'agree' that they can learn English anytime and anywhere through e-learning. Both 'undecided' and 'disagree' responses have the same percentages (15.2%). Based on these data, it can be stated that the majority of respondents are aware that e-learning allows them to learn at any time and from any location. Another item was used to get information about the learners' planning ability. If a learner plans his/her time properly, s/he can have time to do other daily activities. Most of the respondents (62.1%) 'agree' that they can learn English through e-learning while they are doing their other daily activities. 31.8% of the respondents are 'undecided' and only 6.1% of them choose 'disagree'. It is difficult for the learners to have to go to a city for educational purposes other than the city they live in because travel and accommodation are both time and money consuming. Therefore, the majority of the respondents (78.8%) 'agree' that since there are no expenses such as travel expenses and accommodation costs in e-learning, it significantly reduces language learning costs. Some of the respondents (16.7%) state that they are 'undecided' and only 4.5% of them 'disagree'. Learners can access whatever material they want with e-learning at any time as long as they have access to the Internet. E-learning, according to 80% of respondents, provides 24/7 access to a language learning environment. Only 3% of respondents are 'disagreeing,' while 17 percent are 'undecided.' Learners can use the Internet to improve their language skills such as listening, writing, speaking, and reading. A high percentage (87.9%) of the respondents 'agree' that while learning English, they can practise reading, listening, speaking and writing through the Internet. Very few of them (12.1%) are 'undecided' and there is no one who 'disagrees'.

The last item of this part of the questionnaire aims to provide information about online course options. With a percentage of 53 (agree), most of the respondents think that there are a lot of course options for language learning in e-learning. Few of the respondents (12.1%) say that they 'disagree' while 34.8% of them are 'undecided'. Based on these findings, if we evaluate the percentages of those who choose 'disagree' (12.1%) and 'undecided' (34.8%) together, it can be concluded that almost half of the respondents (46.9%) are not conscious of online course diversity. To sum up, this part of the questionnaire evaluates whether learners are aware of the challenges of e-learning or not. Being aware of the challenges of e-learning motivates learners to learn English through e-learning. Based upon the overall results of this part of the questionnaire, it can be said that the majority of the respondents can benefit from e-learning effectively. After we have information about challenges of e-learning, we will evaluate cons of e-learning.

Discussion

One of the major goals of this study is to explore online education challenges and opportunities from the perspectives of EFL learners studying at Foreign Languages Teaching Department at Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University in Kazakhstan. Challenges and opportunities of online education while learning EFL are analysed through a questionnaire. The items in the third, fourth and sixth parts of the questionnaire may determine challenges and opportunities of online education following findings were obtained through the analysis of the data collected by using these items: 65.2% of the respondents 'agree' that unlimited time in elearning allows them to continue their English learning activities in accordance with their own learning speed. 87.9% of the respondents 'agree' that they can practise reading, listening, speaking and writing through the Internet. 34.8% of the respondents are 'undecided' while 53% of

them 'agree' that there are a lot of course options for language learning in e-learning. On the basis of these findings, it can be stated that the majority of learners are aware of the benefits of e-learning and use it to improve their foreign language skills. Providing the most updated and easily accessible resources, learning anywhere and anytime, and eliminating travel and accommodation expenses are the advantages of e-learning mostly agreed by the participants. The most important requirement of effective e-learning is that a learner has an ability or a habit of studying on his/her own. Nedeva, Dimova and Dineva (2010) [9] stated that learners should be highly motivated and aware of their responsibility to study on their own. Most of the learners (45.5%) are undecided that they can learn English on their own through e-learning. It may be due to the fact that they are used to guidance of a teacher in traditional education. Cons of e-learning were also explored through various items. These findings of the questionnaire show that the majority of the learners have information about the e-learning drawbacks. Learners' awareness of the e-learning drawbacks may lead learners about how to overcome them. Perception of social isolation may be the most critical disadvantage of e-learning. Another problem in e-learning is that learners cannot always get feedback immediately. Not getting instant feedback may cause learning difficulties and deficiencies.

Lack of information about technical problems and fear of using technological tools are among the most frequently encountered difficulties in e-learning. Because of these difficulties, learners have a negative attitude towards e-learning. It can be said that one disadvantage causes another one. 66.7% of the participants accept that they can chat with people who are native English speakers, make video calls and communicate with them easily via social media tools (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). 48.5% of the participants refuse while 51.5% of them accept that they spend a lot of time on their social media accounts and it affects their lives in a negative way. 47% of the participants indicate that they follow English language instructors who are from various countries on social media and they participate in their live broadcasts to improve their English pronunciation and speaking ability. 53% of the participants state that they do not improve their English pronunciation and speaking ability by following English language instructors on social media. The vast majority (90.1%) accept that information spreads faster via social media. 18.2% of the participants claim that they get thread messages from some people on social media. 81.8% of them state that they are not afraid of using social media and they do not get thread messages. Based on these data, it can be concluded that some learners use social media as a foreign language learning tool, and that having real-life conversations with native speakers is a significant benefit for them.

Alnujaidi (2017) [10] stated that Social Network Sites increased learners' communication skills, foreign language skills, knowledge and motivation of learning. However, SNSs have some drawbacks as well. Alnujaidi (2017) stressed that one of the disadvantages that was often discussed was privacy violation. After learners get used to communicating with other people through SNSs, they gradually start talking about their own private lives. This may cause personal data theft. What Are the Attitudes of the Learners Towards Technology Use? Various items were utilized in the questionnaire to determine the learners' views toward technology use. These items mainly aimed to explore how long they have been using the Internet, which tools they use to access the Internet, the average daily Internet usage time of them, the average time they spend on the Internet for foreign language learning, their e-learning experience, e-learning activities they have done, what they do when spend time online and their thoughts about ICT. Based upon the findings there is no one who does not use the Internet among the participants. It can be said that almost all of them are users of the Internet for a long time and their lives have become increasingly reliant on the Internet. Also, the findings show that although most of the learners spend their time online for many hours, they spend very little of this time for language learning. The most used tools by the learners to access the Internet are smart phone (98.5%) and laptop computers (65.2%). That's the reason why these two tools are chosen mostly to access the Internet is that both of them are portable. Learners can reach all kinds of information anytime and anywhere through portable tools with the Internet connection. These tools provide ease of use. 80.3% of the respondents state that they have done e-learning

activities before. Based upon the findings the mostly chosen e-learning activities are as follows: using mobile phone or laptop, using e-mail/the Internet, TV, using the Internet discussion forums, digital TV services, online language courses and video tapes. These findings show that the mostly chosen e-learning activities constitute learners' daily routine.

Conclusion

The findings of the study showed that the opportunities on which most participants agreed were easy access to updated English resources, learning at one's own space, time and location flexibility, and eliminating travel and accommodation costs. Most participants stated that they could improve reading, listening, writing and speaking skills through the Internet. But most of them expressed that they could not learn autonomously through the Internet. It can be said that they cannot develop self-study habits. In addition, these findings showed that most of the participants were unaware of the diversity in online courses. According to the results of the study, the most critical disadvantages of e-learning were social isolation, not getting instant feedback, negative attitudes towards e-learning, planning difficulties as a result of lack of self-study habits, and fear of using digital technologies. Fear of using digital technologies mostly results from lack of technical training and support. In the fifth part of the questionnaire, possible security problems online learners face were discussed. Deliberate misinformation, deletion of information, personal data theft, malware and viruses, and unwanted pages and advertisements were seen as serious threats to e-learning by almost all of the participants. In the last part of the questionnaire, EFL learners' social media usage was explored. The results of the study revealed that most of the participants stated that they used social media to communicate with native English speakers to improve their English language skills. Also, there were those who thought that social media was time-consuming.

This study focused on analysing challenges and opportunities of online education while learning EFL at a department of one university. A more detailed research can be done among all EFL learners in collaboration with researchers at other universities in Kazakhstan in the following years.

“The work was carried out with the financial support of the Ministry of education and science of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the framework of the scientific project AR09261132”.

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