

Students' perceptions toward using Zoom application in learning English post- the COVID-19 pandemic.

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ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this research is to investigate Shaqra university female students' perceptions toward using Zoom application in learning English post- the COVID-19 pandemic. Zoom is One of the most widely used programs to facilitate online learning via video conferences. This research used quantitative descriptive approach that focus on survey research. The subjects of this research were 45 female students majoring in Early Childhood Education program in Almuzahmiya College of Education in Shaqra University, during one entire semester in the academic year 2022/2023. The students attended an obligatory online English course called (English language1-ENG151). The result showed that students showed a positive perception in using Zoom learning English post- the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher suggests for future studies to be conducted with a large sample size from other departments, both genders, and other courses to get various data to contribute a better suggestion for online learning at Shaqra university. Also, it is highly recommended to do a mixed-methods design or a qualitative study.*

KEYWORDS: *Students' Perception, Zoom application, Online Learning*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the late of 2019, schools, universities, and colleges globally changed and redesign their learning system. In order to continue education in a secure and safe manner, the Saudi Ministry of Education announced the possibility of online courses. All educational institutions including universities in Saudi Arabia shifted from providing face-to-face services to online platforms. A new era of radical technological transformation with accelerated digitalization of the higher education system is happening all due to the COVID-9 pandemic (Krishnamurthy, 2020). The pandemic has activated new methods of learning. A significant number of requests to use various online platforms have been made since then. Teachers and lecturers use all possible teaching tools to continue teaching their students from distance. Zoom Meeting application, Microsoft Teams platform, Google Meet, Google Classroom... etc. were utilized as a new online educational medium to interact and communicate with students at the same time from different places. After two years, Schools and Universities start the journey of reducing the COVID-19 precautions inside their facilities and prepare their members and students to continue the learning process. In May 2023, WHO, the World Health Organization, declared the end of the pandemic.

After this crisis, many Saudi Universities established new departments and units that concerned in the development of e-learning systems and programs to maintain the progress they achieved in utilizing information technology during the pandemic years. Following that in 2022/2023, some colleges in Shaqra University adopted a blend of online and traditional teaching approaches mode. Along with attending to their face-to-face lectures, students had the option of taking online courses such as English language, Arabic language, Islamic Studies, and some other theoretical subjects. Therefore, understanding students' perceptions towards the online learning post pandemic will help college administrators in evaluating how effectively students utilize this technology, understand the positive and negative aspects of different e-learning strategies and their limitations, and present an overall view of online learning among students.

The use of technology-driven media in learning a language has been the subject of various research. Fauziah (2021) investigated high school students' perception and motivation in e-learning through Zoom, and found that the students' perceptions on using this e-learning software were mixed (positive and negative) especially in the English subject. Nuryanto (2021) investigated to what extent Zoom Meeting can influence the quality of the learning experience of EFL learners. Vitoria, Mislinawati, & Nurmasiyah (2018) explored university students' perception of e-learning via a web-based module. They found that many students who used internet especially for online learning believed it was easy to use. It helped them improving their understanding, enhancing their English skills and increased their motivation to learn. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of students toward the implementation of online learning especially learning English

post-the COVID-19 Pandemic. To better understand the students' perception of the online learning mode, the research examined an obligatory online English course called (English language1-ENG151) presented to 45 female students majoring in Early Childhood Education program in Almuzahmiya College of Education in Shaqra University, during the third semester in the academic 2022/2023. The lecturer used Zoom meeting application as an educational Medium to communicate with the students.

Questions of the study:

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the students' perceptions towards learning English via zoom application post-the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Hypotheses of the study:

The study assumes the following:

1. Shaqra university students who learn English via zoom meeting application post-the COVID-19 will show positive perceptions towards it.

II. Literature Review:

Students' Perception:

Perception is a fundamental psychological notion that enables us to better understand the wide range of experiences that we encounter in daily life. Individuals has a unique way of interpreting things. It could have positive or negative effects. According to Qiong (2017), Perception is the process of being aware of or interpreting sensory information. Furthermore, Baron (1995) states that perception is the process through selecting, organizing, and interpreting input from the sensory receptors. Black (1996) stated that perception is a subjective thinking in the student mind which is differing from student to student even on the same subject and it is act to help each individual create their own perceptions of reality. From the previous definitions, we can understand that perception is the process by which we develop a visual representation of the environment by understanding the events around us.

The first and most essential resource in the teaching and learning process is the student. Chen (2003) stressed the importance of the perceptions of the students in the assessment and evaluation of the efficiency of the learning process itself. A teacher's ability to evaluate the way they teach according to the findings from learning systems depends on their understanding of students' perceptions. Chen and Hooswer (2010) confirmed that teachers must consider their students' perceptions in order to assess their teaching and learning efficacy. Based on the descriptions above it can be concluded that it is important to understand and be aware of how students perceive online learning—especially in learning English—when adopting web-based applications and platforms. By understanding student perceptions, educators can better design learning experiences that are relevant, engaging, and supportive for all students. This is necessary since technology has a chance to improve language learning outcomes and the quality of education.

Online learning:

Online learning is a method of education that grows rapidly these days. It is a flexible method that provides motivating opportunities to improve the learning environment for various students of different backgrounds. Urdan & Weggen (2000) define the term "online learning" as a wide set of applications and processes, including computer-based learning, Web-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration. Hartley (2001) describes e-learning as a type of teaching and learning that allows the delivery of teaching materials to students using the internet, intranet or other computer network media. Additionally, Cisco (2001) explains the philosophy of online learning as follows: a: Online learning is the delivery of information, communication, education, training online. b: Online learning provides a set of resources that can enhance traditional learning such as conventional learning models, studies of textbooks, CD-ROMs and computer-based training so that they can answer the challenges of the development of globalization. UNESCO (2010) mentions that online education can improve education administration and governance, support inclusiveness, encourage teacher development, increase quality and relevance of instruction, while making education more accessible to all.

The benefit of using online learning platforms is how simple it is for users to participate in the learning process. It is designed to create active roles between lecturer and students also among students themselves. In addition, online learning is categorized as synchronous or asynchronous. A synchronous virtual classroom is a real-time environment where the lecturer and students may connect and cooperate. It mimics a regular classroom with cameras and class discussion elements, except that all participants view it remotely over the Internet. Examples are Zoom Meeting, Google Meet, live broadcast on YouTube, etc. Because students are not

timed and can react at their leisure, asynchronous e-learning is the most widely used approach for online education (L. Lewis & Parsad, 2009).

Zoom meeting application and leaning English Language:

Multilingualism is becoming an increasingly valuable skill in today's world. Speaking a foreign language not only expands career options but also creates actual connections with other people and extends one's knowledge of many cultures and places. The fact that English is the most widely spoken language in the world makes it impossible to minimize or ignore its significance. Therefore, knowing that the only foreign language taught in Saudi Arabia is English (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015), teaching it as a foreign language is quite a challenging task for teachers. It can be difficult for them to teach English to students who are not native speakers. Likewise for students, learning English as a foreign language is one of the most difficult subjects they have learnt. Therefore, teachers must come up with the most effective methods to help them and increase their motivations to complete their learning prosses.

Through the use of technological tools and platforms that can manage the online learning process and help students succeed during the learning process in pandemic times, zoom application supports teachers and students to ensure that the learning process proceed effectively. Lowenthal, et.al (2020) pointed that many faculties and teacher educators have chosen to convert their courses to live synchronous web meetings using web conferencing tools such as Zoom. Many may have selected this app because it is now the industry leader in audio and video communications, offering a simple, dependable cloud platform for webinars, chat, and audio and video conferencing on desktop, mobile, and room systems (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020). It is an application that can support communication needs anywhere with many people without having to meet physically. It has some interesting features to help the process of online teaching and learning. The features are sharing screen, recording video, Q&A/chat (private and group), whiteboard, join, schedule, raise hand, document sharing, virtual background, and touch up my appearance. Therefore, on the basis of these features, teachers can work with this application with students in a simple and uncomplicated ways without any issues.

Many studies concentrated on the role of online applications in learning and improving English language skills. Wan-Hassan et al. (2020) realized that students had a moderate level of positive attitude toward utilizing the Zoom application in their studies based on their attitudes and perceptions of the Zoom platform. Besides Alameri et al. (2020) conducted research with students at the University of Jordan, which revealed that the students were satisfied with the use of Zoom and appeared very optimistic about learning because it could enable them to learn effectively during the virus period. Kim (2020) discovered that the utilization of Zoom has affected EFL students' reading achievement positively. The study also revealed that students showed positive perceptions towards Zoom indicated by students showing interest in learning and motivation towards learning, self-directed learning, active interaction, ease of access, and ease of information retrieval.

In addition, Li and Lalani (2020) indicated that online classes can decrease time; for example, students do not have to spend the whole session learning. Furthermore, Mu'awanah (2021) supported that learning English via Zoom helps students to practice English, makes the teaching-learning process more effective, and facilitates teacher-student interaction and communication. Moreover, Nuryanto (2021) indicated that zoom meetings can improve and boost learners' English skills and motivation.

In negative opinions, a study conducted by Vandenberg and Magnuson (2021) revealed that students' attitudes toward online practice experiences were overwhelmingly negative. Fauziah (2021) pointed out that English online learning through Zoom has some advantages and disadvantages; students can enroll in an online course to try out a new online platform, and somehow it provides slow internet access.

III. METHODOLOGY

Material And Methods:

The instrument used in the study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. It is a close questionnaire consisted of 8 statements. The questionnaire was designed to elicit students' perspectives on using zoom application as a tool to learn English. The answer for each item uses a Likert scale. In this research, each questionnaire item has a level from very negative to very positive 1 - 5 with scale strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. The study was conducted using a sample of 45 female Saudi students. They were studying a Bachelor degree in the early childhood studies department at Almuzahmiya Faculty of education, Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia. The students attended an obligatory online English course called (English language1-ENG151). The participants were chosen randomly from two levels: level two and level six.

Procedures:

Quantitative method was used in this research. Quantitative research is a kind of research that collects data in the form of a number. Creswell (2012) explained that survey designs are methods where a small group of individuals (the sample), is given a questionnaire or survey in order to find trends in the attitudes, views,

behaviors, or other characteristics of a larger group of people, (the population). In this study, Data were collected through one instrument: a questionnaire. In distributing the questionnaire, the researcher used the link of Google form. The researcher shared it through a telegram group in the third semester of the academic year (2022/2023). In this research, data are analyzed quantitatively to answer the research questions. After the online questionnaire is distributed, the data collected are going to be analyzed descriptively with the help of SPSS program that involved the means and the standard deviation in order to identify the students' perception towards using zoom meeting application in learning English post- the COVID-19 pandemic to answer the research question.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results from the questionnaire. It shows participants' perceptions towards using zoom meeting application in learning English post- the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher calculated the means and the standard deviation for each statement. The data is presented in Table 1, and figure 1 shows the mean scores for each statement.

Table 1. *Students' perceptions towards using zoom meeting application in learning English post- the COVID-19 pandemic.*

N	Statement		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	S.d	R
1	The use of zoom helps me to participate in the lecture effectively.	N	18	20	3	1	3	4.08	1.08339	3
		%	40	44.4	6.7	2.2	6.7			
2	The use of zoom makes it easier for me to discuss and ask questions	N	18	18	7	0	2	4.11	.98216	2
		%	40	40	15.6	0	4.4			
3	The use of zoom increases my motivation to learn English.	N	16	16	6	4	3	3.84	1.20521	4
		%	35.6	35.6	13.3	8.9	6.7			
4	Using zoom boosts my confident to express myself and my ideas in new ways.	N	24	15	3	1	2	4.28	1.01404	1
		%	53.3	33.3	6.7	2.2	4.4			
5	The use of zoom enhances my learning abilities.	N	13	14	7	4	7	3.48	1.40813	5
		%	28.9	31.1	15.6	8.9	15.6			
6	The use of zoom makes me board in the lecture	N	8	10	9	10	8	3.00	1.38170	6
		%	17.8	22.2	20	22.2	17.8			
7	Using zoom does not enable me to fully understand the lecture.	N	7	3	6	16	13	2.44	1.39081	7
		%	15.6	6.7	13.3	35.6	28.9			
8	The use of zoom decreases my focus in the lecture.	N	6	1	4	18	16	2.17	1.31924	8
		%	13.3	2.2	8.9	40	35.6			
Mean								3.4306		
Std. Deviation								.49540		

Figure 1: The mean scores of the statements

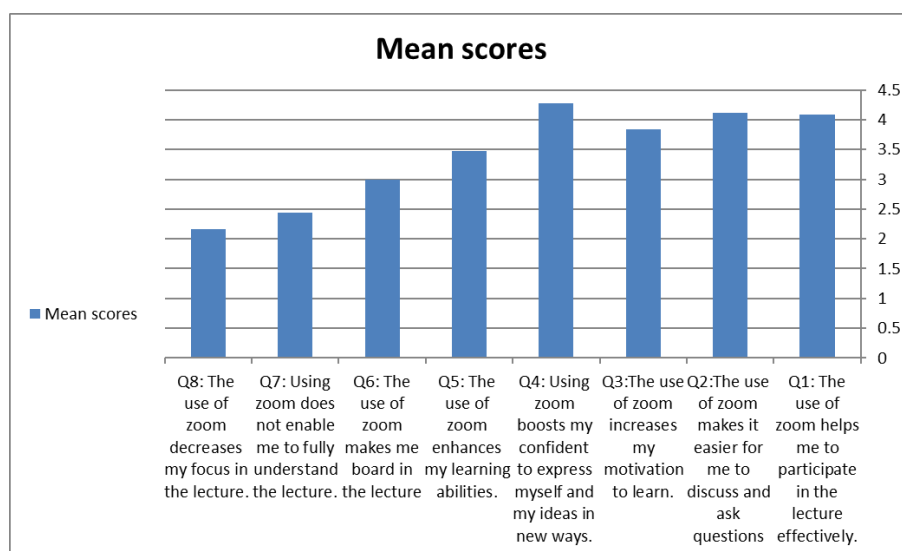


Table 1 shows that students' perceptions were significantly positive toward learning via zoom meeting application post-the COVID-19 Pandemic. The statements were ranked according to the highest mean as follows:

1. Participants' responses to statement 4, which states that (Using zoom boosts my confident to express myself and my ideas in new ways), reveal that 24 participants strongly agreed that Using zoom boosts their confident to express themselves and their ideas in new ways. The statement gets the first rank with the highest mean (4.28).
2. The analysis of participants' responses to statement 2, (The use of zoom makes it easier for me to discuss and ask questions.), shows that 18 of them have strongly agreed, and 18 agreed on the statement. With (4.11), they strongly agreed and agreed that zoom makes it easier for me to discuss and ask questions.
3. Twenty participants agreed on statement 1 which states (The use of zoom helps me to participate in the lecture effectively.). The statement gets the third rank with (4.08).
4. Participants' responses to statement 3, which states that (The use of zoom increases my motivation to learn English.) reveals that 16 participants strongly agreed and 16 agreed using zoom increases their motivation to learn. It gets the fourth rank with (3.84).
5. The analysis of participants' responses to statement 5, which states that (The use of zoom enhances my learning abilities.) shows that 14 of them agreed on that statement. It gets the fifth rank with (3.48).
6. Ten participants agreed on the sixth statement and ten participants disagree with it which states (The use of zoom makes me board in the lecture.). The statement gets the sixth rank with (3.00).
7. Participants' responses to statement 7, which states that (Using zoom does not enable me to fully understand the lecture.) show that 16 participants disagreed and 13 strongly disagreed that zoom does not enable them to fully understand the lecture. The statement gets the seventh rank with (2.44).
8. The analysis of participants' responses to statement 8, which says that (The use of zoom decreases my focus in the lecture.), shows that 18 of them they disagreed on the statement. With (2.17), it gets the eighth rank.

V. Discussion:

This study aims to analyze the perceptions of Saudi university students towards using zoom meeting application in learning English post- the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the findings, it revealed that the learners' perceptions were positive using zoom meeting application in learning English post- the COVID-19 pandemic with a general mean (3.43). The majority of the participants stated that using zoom boosts their confident to express themselves and their ideas in new ways. In addition, the use of zoom makes it easier for them to discuss and ask questions which increases their motivation to learn English. The students rated that the use of Zoom can help them to understand English very well. This supports the hypothesis of the study, which indicates that (Shaqra university students who learn English via zoom meeting application post-the COVID-19 will show positive perceptions towards it). Thus, it can be concluded that students tend to have positive perceptions about using Zoom application in learning English post- the COVID-19 pandemic.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study can be concluded that the students' perceptions towards using zoom meeting application in learning English post- the COVID-19 pandemic was considered positive by the learners. They agreed that this online platform can help them to improve language skills and to increases their confident in virtual lecture interaction. This research has limitations because data collected only take part of the population of one gender (females) and one department. Thus, the results cannot be generalized to all students and departments in Shaqra university. The researcher suggests for future studies to be conducted with a large sample size from other departments, both genders, and other courses to get various data to contribute a better suggestion for online learning at Shaqra university. Also, the researcher recommends to do a mixed-methods design or a qualitative study.

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