

استخدام برنامج ADOBE CONNECT في التعلم الرقمي لطلاب قسم اللغة الإنجليزية (ELT)

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THE USE OF ADOBE CONNECT IN DIGITAL LEARNING
TOWARDS ELT UNDERGRADUATES

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Humanities, Urmia University, Irankawarali846@gmail.com**Abstract**

This article examines the potential for implementing Adobe Connect software as a brand-new method of remote education and includes a case study of some Iranian universities of higher learning. This research paper has been carried out at nearly five universities in Iran. Based on the gleaned data, 85 participants piloted this format of survey; the questionnaire was set out through a Google Form for students; and moreover, the Mann-Whitney U test was utilized for analyzing the data. The article highlights the major competences that students are expected to acquire after passing the course, describes the basic course structure and the technological tools used to build the course, and exposes the method used to assure active student involvement. Students who attended two separate campuses were connected in two different ways via Adobe Connect. One approach involved connecting students in classrooms at two different locations using Adobe Connect. The second format involved logging into an online class meeting from any place, utilizing the same platform as the first. According to the results, participants' interest in using Adobe Connect virtual classes is significantly ($P > 0.05$) higher than that of other apps, and most students responded favorably to the online class sessions, particularly in terms of convenience. However, some students did not believe that the exchanges during the classroom-to-classroom meetings promoted deep ties with both the teacher and other students.

Key words: Adobe connect, digital learning, EFL, undergraduates

ملخص

تبحث هذه المقالة في إمكانية تنفيذ برنامج Adobe Connect كطريقة جديدة تمامًا للتعليم عن بعد وتتضمن دراسة حالة لبعض الجامعات الإيرانية للتعليم العالي. تم إجراء هذه الورقة البحثية في ما يقرب من خمس جامعات في إيران. بناءً على البيانات التي تم جمعها ، قام ٨٥ مشاركًا بتجربة هذا الشكل من المسح ؛ تم إعداد الاستبيان من خلال نموذج Google للطلاب ؛ علاوة على ذلك ، تم استخدام اختبار Mann-Whitney U لتحليل البيانات. تسلط المقالة الضوء على الكفاءات الرئيسية التي يتوقع من الطلاب اكتسابها بعد اجتياز الدورة ، وتصف هيكل الدورة التدريبية الأساسي والأدوات التكنولوجية المستخدمة لبناء الدورة ، وتكشف عن الطريقة المستخدمة لضمان مشاركة الطلاب النشطة. تم ربط الطلاب الذين حضروا جامعيين منفصلين بطريقتين مختلفتين عبر Adobe Connect. أحد الأساليب توصيل الطلاب في الفصول الدراسية في موقعين مختلفين باستخدام Adobe Connect. يتضمن التسيق الثاني تسجيل الدخول إلى اجتماع صف عبر الإنترنت من أي مكان ، باستخدام نفس النظام الأساسي مثل الأول. وفقًا للنتائج ، فإن اهتمام المشاركين باستخدام فصول Adobe Connect الافتراضية أعلى بشكل ملحوظ ($P > 0.05$) من التطبيقات الأخرى ، وقد استجاب معظم الطلاب بشكل

إيجابي لجلسات الفصل عبر الإنترنت ، لا سيما من حيث الراحة. ومع ذلك ، لم يعتقد بعض الطلاب أن التبادلات خلال الاجتماعات من غرفة الصف إلى الفصل قد عززت العلاقات العميقة مع كل من المعلم والطلاب الآخرين. الكلمات الأساسية **Adobe connect** :، التعلم الرقمي ، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، الطلاب الجامعيين

Introduction

The idea of universities, schools, and institutions has recently undergone significant modifications as a result of the widespread use of computer technology. Having more access to the Internet gives students the chance to complete their education online (Greenland & Moore, 2014). Online students use synchronous and asynchronous communication methods in a virtual setting (Ku & Chang, 2011). In synchronous learning, everyone is connected to everyone else simultaneously over a shared network. Synchronous learning is applied in instructional programs and video conferences, for instance. The most popular kind of instructional technology is synchronous learning, which gives users a sensation of being in a classroom and encourages participation in the teaching and learning process (Faramarzi et al., 2015).

Learners may obtain the information they need for their studies with the aid of a wide range of multimedia materials. Because the courses are delivered in virtual learning environments, students may participate more actively in their education and more effectively meet their learning objectives (Elekaei et al., 2020a). An emphasis on self-control, independent thinking, student happiness and engagement, a variety of thinking models, and learning outcomes are the main goals of a technology-mediated virtual learning environment (Hill & Hannafin, 1997). One of the most apparent benefits of online courses is flexibility, which helps students overcome difficulties related to time and distance and equips them to study asynchronously (Waschull, 2001). In comparison to traditional face-to-face classrooms, it is thought that virtual learning environments can offer greater convenience, flexibility, feedback, and personalized learning (Elekaei et al., 2020b; Hackbarth, 1996; Kiser, 1999). The utilization of technology and the delegation of responsibility and control to the students are the key distinctions between virtual and traditional classrooms.

The worldwide shutdown of colleges, schools, and institutions owing to COVID-19 has resulted in an urgent paradigm shift in teaching and learning. With the aid of technologies, significant changes in behaviors have been caused. Universities have shifted to new pedagogies in an effort to generate outstanding learning results.

Universities find it challenging to assess how useful and beneficial each e-learning platform is in promoting learning given its size and diversity. For a number of reasons, the Adobe Connect software was selected as the platform in this study's use of technology in online learning. It makes it simpler for the instructors to deliver papers and audio/video resources in class. This software's ability to alter the formation and arrangement frames in order to satisfy the requirements of various courses is a significant feature. All of the functional pods, including the chat, video, shared whiteboard area, and participant list, may be reconfigured to create different layouts for the classroom. The purpose of the current study was to use Adobe Connect to explore the link between student attitudes and digital learning. Further, to investigate the happiness of those students who participated in Adobe Connect virtual classrooms about the new teaching environment was another problem examined in this research paper.

Review of Literature

The ability to develop new educational models has recently been made possible by recent advancements in communication technology and the customized, mobile, and portable nature of instructional material, (Wang, Crowcroft, (1996); Chen & Nahrstedt, 2000; Lin & Liu, 1999; Thornton & Houser (2005) have suggested that e-learning has great potential for giving students a significant amount of exposure to the target content. According to these studies, students can also do self-learning anywhere and at any time with the aid of computer technology. The attitudes of the students are one of the most important components of good instruction and high-quality e-learning. In order to better understand how instructors and students interact when utilizing Skype and Adobe Connect as synchronous virtual environments for spoken English teaching and learning, Lee (2009) performed a research. There were several methods employed, including participant observation, in-depth and semi-structured interviews, and course assessment. Because there was insufficient contact and social presence utilizing Skype and Adobe Connect, the participants' opinions about online classrooms were negative, and they preferred teaching and learning in the conventional face-to-face setting.

The ability of online conferencing tools like Adobe Connect and Big Blue Button to enable cooperative learning processes was examined according to Mavridis, Tsiatsos, and Tegos (2011). There were two case studies done. Through the first research, returning and new students worked together in Adobe Connect to facilitate the implementation of a required task. When the exercise was over, the users answered a questionnaire. The second investigation made use of Big Blue Button. Jigsaw and fishbowl were two collaborative learning methods that were employed. The findings showed that both technologies worked quite well together, despite Adobe Connect having more functionality than Big Blue Button. In this study, the partnership received positive feedback from more than 90% of the consumers. According to Hudson et al. (2012), the value of Adobe Connects polling function was evaluated together with the users' perceptions of the program and their engagement levels. The study's findings showed that synchronous learning raised students' levels of collaboration and involvement.

For undergraduate pathology students, Arosio, Branchini; Barbieri and Guasti, (2014) explored an online problem-based learning (PBL) environment and looked at the associated pedagogical impacts. Through Adobe Connect, eight PBL students completed four weeks of online PBL. The findings demonstrated that although the participants had favorable opinions of Adobe Connect-based online PBL, statistical analysis did not find any appreciable changes in assignment grades between the online and traditional PBL groups. Torun (2013) investigated the usage of Adobe Connect in online learning environments. The pupils took the online course in web programming. The findings demonstrated that every student had a favorable opinion of Adobe Connect-based online instruction. They claimed that having access to live lessons helped them study more effectively in their online courses. 16 pupils, however, said that they had issues with their technical backgrounds. Additionally, the lesson lasted 45 minutes, and the students said that virtual classes should be longer.

The usage of Adobe Connect to help students and improve their learning was examined by Smith et al. (2013). At the Australian University of New England, participants pursued chemical education. The results showed a very high proportion of student scores and that participants had entirely good views and confidence about utilizing Adobe Connect in online classrooms.

In order to comprehend the possible use of Adobe Connect to assist students at American and Chinese universities, Wang et al. (2013) performed a research. The findings showed that Adobe Connect provided options for synchronous communication and cooperation among students as well as between professors and students. Additionally, it promoted student interaction, enhanced synchronous communication in audio, video, and text formats for online learning, gave students immediate feedback from the teachers and their peers, and boosted their enthusiasm for independent study.

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In order to understand the behaviors of students and instructors in online courses utilizing Adobe Connect, akirolu et al. (2016) did a research. The study's participants were students in a course on computer education and educational technology. Semi-structured interviews and the observation of 22 online course videos were both employed. The findings showed that the participants could learn programming skills using the Adobe Connect learning assignments. Additionally, the teacher played a crucial part in the online learning environment. The researchers suggested that online conferencing courses should include the conceptual and strategic architecture of programming courses since they are significant.

Celikbas (2018) looked at how students in live learning discussion classrooms responded to utilizing Adobe Connect Live Learning Program (LLP). The findings demonstrated that LLP was a powerful language tool that significantly aided pupils in speaking and practicing a foreign language. In order to determine how students from Spain and Finland gain intercultural competency through the use of Adobe Connect as well as their attitudes toward utilizing this learning tool, Vurdien and Puranen (2018) performed a study on these students. The findings indicated that the participants had good attitudes regarding utilizing Adobe Connect and that they were eager to learn about one another's cultural characteristics.

Information of Participants

A total population of 85 students participated in this online survey questionnaire, 49 from Urmia University, 12 from Tabriz University, 6 from Azad University, 14 from Shiraz University, and 4 from Gilan University, with 63 men and 22 women. Out of 85 participants, 9 were between 20 and 25 years old, 49 were between 26 and 30 years old, 22 were between 31 and 35 years old, and 5 were over 36 years old, of these, only 2 had a diploma, 25 had a bachelor's degree, 48 had a master's degree, and 10 had a Ph.D. degree. The field of study of 10 participants was English Language and Literature, 49 were English Language Teaching, 13 were English Translation, and 13 were Linguists. 14 of the participants were studying in private universities, 69 in state-run universities, and 2 in aided universities. Of the 14 participants who studied online between two and five months, 28 between six and 10 months, 32 between one and two years, and 11 more than two years have studied online, of which 22 held online classes with Adobe Connect, 26 with Google Meeting, 14 with Skype, 10 with Whats App Group, and 13 with Zoom.

Results

The obtained results in this paper did not show a significant difference between the teaching quality of professors in virtual classes and in traditional classes, so it cannot be accepted that there is a difference between the two types of teaching methods in the opinion of the participants.

Table 1 Mann-Whitney U test results for comparing traditional and online teaching methods

Method	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
traditional	41	43.98	1803.00
Online	44	42.09	1852.00
Total	85		
Mann-Whitney U			862.000
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)			.719

The obtained results showed that the interactivity of the Adobe Connect environment increases students' participation in class work, so that the participation rate of students in Adobe Connect virtual classes is significantly ($P > 0.05$) higher than that of other software. This issue alone improves students' four ICDL skills. The results show that there is a significant difference between the digital literacy of students active in the Adobe Connect environment and other programs.

Table 2 Kruskal-Wallis test results for the used software

Devices	N	Mean Rank
Adobe connect	22	74.50
Google meeting	26	32.90
Skype	14	37.04
Whats App group	10	31.70
Zoom	13	25.00
Total	85	
Chi-Square		50.644
Asymp. Sig.		.000

The results showed that students had different opinions about holding classes, and their opinions were significantly different between male and female students ($P > 0.05$). Male

students were more interested in holding classes at different hours, while female students were more interested in regular class hours. Male students are significantly less interested in participating in class activities than female students.

Table 3 Mann-Whitney U test results for gender comparison

Method	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
traditional	63	50.50	3181.50
Online	22	21.52	473.50
Total	85		
Mann-Whitney U			220.500
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)			.000

Examining the students' responses showed that flexibility in teaching time, avoiding dormitory conditions, and reducing costs are among the strengths of virtual teaching, and technical problems, lack of access to needed digital facilities in personal life, and disorganization resulting from not attending classes are the disadvantages of this teaching method.

Discussion

The results show that nearly 32% of virtual case participants were entertained by using the Adobe Connect platform, and they acknowledge that this new app has a wide range of roles. Due to unexpected lockdown circumstances, this platform became effective for students, and up to half of them now prefer this app to other software. One method that offers a distinctive approach for course delivery is the usage of Adobe Connect for online class sessions. The online class meeting style seems to be the most popular for students, despite the fact that there are certain Adobe Connect-related challenges to be solved. The students thought that this format was similar to face-to-face class meetings and that they learned in it. "It takes effort to create a good online learning environment. It requires construction, management, and nurturing." Reushle (2006, p.5). This point highlights the need of looking at how the online learning environment can assist students in their learning, and in this case, how barriers raised by students may be removed to advance this technology. Falloon (2011) noted that in terms of relationships and communication, students could find it challenging to adjust to a virtual learning environment. Motamedi (2001) also mentioned the instructor's physical presence as an advantage of online video conferencing. When participating in classroom-to-classroom exchanges, students said they felt less connected to and able to communicate with the teacher when they were not in the host classroom. They got a better perspective of the teacher and appeared to feel more engaged when they participated in class meetings online. Future classroom-to-classroom exchanges utilizing Adobe Connect will take into account more research on this subject in an effort to close the communication gap between the pupils and the teacher. The fact that the online sessions allowed access to students who were farther away from university sites was another benefit or advantage mentioned by Motamedi (2001) that students in this research noted. This provided for an engaged learning experience while also cutting down on their travel time and petrol costs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this paper demonstrate the efficiency of learning with Adobe Connect and the pleasure of students with such a virtual classroom, particularly in terms of content presentation, sound and slide quality, interaction quality, and accessibility to the course materials at any time. The findings of this study might have some effects on English instruction and learning. As an addition to their courses, teachers can use the Adobe Connect virtual platform in their lessons. Higher education institutions can also take into account the variables that affect students' choices for online learning. This paper demonstrated how student attitudes impact online learning and how they may influence future choices for particular education delivery methods. Numerous participants have used this application as the best one. In order to continue learning about Adobe Connects efficacy as a tool for education students and to enable students to share their experiences of learning in this synchronous setting, more papers on its use and other video conferencing technologies would be necessary. Additionally, it is recommended that the teachers keep up their knowledge of Adobe Connect and how it may be used to support online class sessions, including how to resolve any issues raised by students regarding in-person meetings.

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