

Learning from the TV Screen: Challenges Encountered by Libyan EFL Students

التعلم عبر شاشة التلفزيون: التحديات التي واجهها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة
أجنبية في ليبيا

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الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف التحديات التي واجهها طلاب المرحلة الثانوية الليبيون الدارسون للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية أثناء متابعتهم للدروس التعليمية عبر التلفزيون. تم استخدام المنهج الكمي، حيث استُخدمت الاستبانة كأداة رئيسية لجمع البيانات. وتكونت عينة الدراسة من 120 طالباً من طلاب المرحلة الثانوية من ست مدارس تقع في ثلاث بلديات مختلفة في طرابلس. تم تحليل البيانات المجمعة باستخدام برنامج SPSS. أظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب واجهوا عدة صعوبات أثناء التعلم عبر التلفزيون. ومن أبرز هذه الصعوبات انقطاع التيار الكهربائي، وعدم وجود تفاعل مع المعلمين والزملاء، وغياب الواجبات والمتابعة والتقييم، إضافة إلى التشتت أثناء التعلم من المنزل، وصعوبة تدوين الملاحظات أثناء شرح المعلم للدرس. كما أظهرت النتائج وجود تفضيل محدود لاستخدام التلفزيون كأداة للتعلم مقارنة بالأجهزة الرقمية الأخرى. واختتمت الدراسة إلى أنه على الرغم من أن التلفزيون يمكن أن يُعدّ حلاً عملياً لتقديم التعليم في حالات الطوارئ، إلا أنه ينبغي معالجة التحديات المتعلقة بالتفاعل، وتنظيم الدروس، والبنية التحتية من أجل تحسين التعليم عن بُعد في ليبيا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعليم عن بعد، طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، الدروس التعليمية، التعلم عبر التلفزيون، تحديات.

Abstract

This study investigates the challenges encountered by Libyan EFL secondary school students while following the educational lessons on TV. A quantitative research design was employed using the questionnaire as the main tool for data collection. The participants consisted of 120 secondary school students from six schools located in three different municipalities in Tripoli. The collected data was analysed using SPSS software. The findings revealed that students experienced several challenges when learning through television. The most prominent challenges included lack of interaction with teachers and peers, absence of follow-up assignments and assessments, distractions during home-based learning, difficulty taking notes when teachers delivered the lesson and power outages. Moreover, the results showed limited preference for television as a tool for learning compared to other digital devices. The findings conclude that while television can serve as a practical solution for delivering education during emergency situations, barriers related to interaction, lesson organization, and infrastructure should be tackled in order to improve the delivery of distance education in Libya.

Key words: Distance Education, EFL Students, Educational lessons, TV-based learning, Challenges.

Introduction

Distance education has become an increasingly important approach to the teaching and learning process (Bušelić, 2020). The closure of schools during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 forced many countries to adopt alternative methods to ensure the continuity of education. However, Libya encountered significant challenges in implementing distance education. The Ministry of Education launched a TV-based learning program to continue the educational process for students who were unable to attend physical classrooms (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). However, Libyan EFL secondary school students were unfamiliar with this method of learning, as the education system before relied entirely on traditional face-to-face learning (Bubaker & Senussi, 2020). The lack of previous experience created many difficulties for students in following the lessons on TV, including difficulties in understanding the content, maintaining focus, and coping with the limitations of interaction (Fojtik, 2018). Continuing education under any circumstances is essential, yet the decision to provide educational lessons via public TV channels placed

students in a difficult position and exposed them to several challenges. While researches about distance education exists in the Libyan context, this study extends the literature by focusing on specific tool in this field. Thus, this study aims to:

- Investigate the challenges encountered by Libyan EFL Secondary School Students in learning through educational TV Lessons.

Literature Review

Educational Technology

The integration of technology into education has gained attention from researchers, who often refer to it as educational technology (ET). In the literature, the term educational technology is frequently used interchangeably with instructional technology, as both concepts involve the use of technological tools to implement educational processes. Thompson et al. (1996) noted that most researchers, particularly in the United States, tend to use the term instructional technology because it emphasizes the instructional function of technology in the educational context. However, the two terms refer to the same concept and used interchangeably in academic discussions (Thompson et al., 1996). Conceptions and terminology of educational technology have been evolving over the years as the technological developments employed in the teaching and learning process. Januszewski and Molenda (2013) defined educational technology as the ethical practice of facilitating learning through the use and management of technological aids. Similarly, Muppudathi (2014) described it as the application of technological tools, techniques, and resources to support and enhance the process of learning. These definitions collectively indicate that educational technology is primarily concerned in using technology to improve the outcomes of the educational process.

Educational technology includes a wide range of tools and resources that facilitate educational practices. According to Muppudathi (2014), educational technology involves the interaction of five key elements known as the 5M's: men, machines, media, methods, and materials. These elements work together in any educational environment where technology is used to support learning. In addition, technology in education can take many forms, including both traditional and modern media. Govindarajan (2021) pointed out that mass media such as television, software applications, websites, and mobile phones

are increasingly utilized in educational contexts. The use of educational technology may also serve several objectives, such as transmitting information, reaching a large number of students, supporting self-directed learning, identifying students' educational needs, and providing feedback for both teachers and learners (Muppudathi, 2014). From this perspective, educational technology plays an important role in expanding learning opportunities and providing alternative forms of education, particularly in situations where traditional classroom learning is not possible. One of the most widely used forms of educational technology for reaching large numbers of learners is television, which has played an important role in distance education programs (Karam, 2020).

The Role of Television in Distance Learning

Television has played an important role in distance learning programs by providing lessons to students in a wide range of settings (Vyas et al., 2002; Akhter, 2011). In many countries, television programs have been used to continue the educational process during crises, enabling students to access learning opportunities even when attending physical classrooms is not possible (UNESCO, 2020). Television-based distance learning is a practical way to deliver educational content in conditions where there are poor internet connectivity or other technical problems because it can reach a large number of students and offer a standardized mode of education (Rao, 2018).

Educational television (ETV) refers the use of television to facilitate and enhance the learning process, and it has been implemented in multiple formats to meet many educational needs (Roul & Sharma, 2010; Akhter, 2011). These formats include live or recorded lessons, broadcasting videos, equipped classrooms with televisions, interactive services, and edutainment programs (Jokipelto, 2006). Recorded lessons can be sent to students' homes or classrooms, ensuring access to educational content; however, these forms often lack direct interaction with teachers and peers, which may limit their pedagogical requirements (Fisch, 2005). Interactive television (ITV) and digital television (DTV) overcome some of these limitations by allowing learners to participate and communicate via digital networks, enhancing engagement and providing interaction (Prata, 2009; Meloni et al., 2006). Digital television, in particular, enhances the clarity of visual and audio content, provides internet access, and requires equipment such as set-top

boxes and return channels to support interactive communication. This can improve the potential of traditional television education (Jokipielto, 2006; Meloni et al., 2006).

The success of educational TV lessons depends on many factors, including the program quality, students' motivation, infrastructure, institutional support, and students' attitudes toward the program (Roul & Sharma, 2010). In general, television offers a flexible and accessible method of delivering education, yet its efficacy is influenced by the level of interaction it provides and the ability of learners to engage and be active with the content (Prata, 2009). Therefore, television can be both a powerful educational tool and a limited medium when interaction is absent, highlighting the importance of integrating television with other forms of educational technology. The discussion of television-based learning naturally leads to a broader consideration of the difficulties students face in distance education, which will be highlighted in the following sub section.

Challenges of Distance Learning for Students

Distance education has been increasingly employed worldwide, and it offers benefits such as flexibility and accessibility. However, it also presents numerous challenges for students (Yan et al., 2021). One major difficulty is the lack of prior experience with distance learning, which can make the sudden transition from face-to-face education challenging (Fojtik, 2018; Heriyanto et al., 2020; Yan et al., 2021). Inexperienced students may face a reduction in academic performance, lack of motivation, and feeling of isolation (Molnar et al., 2019), and they are more likely to drop out of distance learning programs early if they fail to adapt (Galusha, 1998). Another significant challenge stated by Sharp and Huett (2006) is the absence of interaction with teachers and peers. Many studies indicated that learner-teacher and learner-learner interaction contributes significantly to the student satisfaction and achievement. However, according to Haghighi and Tous (2014) distance education often cannot fully replace the benefits of face-to-face interaction. Motivation is another important factor, as students may struggle to stay engaged without prior experience or sufficient interaction (Fojtik, 2018; Cahapay & Rotas, 2020; Galusha, 1998). In addition, distance education requires students to take more responsibility for organizing their time and learning, and studying independently. This can be very difficult for

younger learners in particular (Fojtik, 2018; Niemi & Kousa, 2020; Yan et al., 2021).

Moreover, Students may experience difficulties in understanding lesson content and assessing their comprehension due to the limited support from teachers (Fojtik, 2018; Cahapay & Rotas, 2020; Galusha, 1998). Furthermore, distance education depends mostly on technology, which introduces additional challenges related to accessibility and usability of the Target device, as Yan et al. (2021) and Jokipielto (2006) argued that some learners may struggle with navigating television interfaces, or dealing with technological settings. Other common obstacles include power outages, poor internet services, unsuitable home environments, lack of parental support, distractions, difficulties taking notes as the teacher may speak quickly, unawareness of lessons schedule, and lessons being broadcasted at inconvenient times (Akhter, 2011; Cahapay & Rotas, 2020; Saleh, 2020). Many of the latter difficulties are particularly noted in home-based learning. Therefore, stakeholders and parents are required to and provide support and a suitable environment to study for students.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research design using a questionnaire as a data collection tool. The questionnaire was employed because it is one of the most widely used tools in social research for collecting data from a large number of participants (Neuman, 2006). The questionnaire contained 26 items, divided into two parts: the first part focused on the background information, and the second part on the challenges that students encountered (see appendix A). A closed-ended structure was utilized, which allows participants to select from pre-coded responses. This can reduce subjectivity and simplify data analysis (Dornyei, 2010). The responses were recorded on a Likert scale, which measured the extent to which participants agreed or disagreed with each statement. This scale is well-known for its effectiveness in measuring benefits and challenges (Neuman, 2006).

The study employed convenience sampling. This allowed the researcher to approach participants who were easily accessible, as Cohen et al. (2007) pointed out that convenience sampling considers the availability and accessibility of the participants, which makes it a practical choice for collecting data from a large sample efficiently. The participants consisted of

120 students (60 males and 60 females) from six secondary schools located in three different municipalities in Tripoli (Suq Aljumaa and Om Almuneneen in Suq Aljumaa municipality, Alasmaa and Ain Zarah in Ain Zarah municipality, and Shuhada Alshat and Fatat Althawra in Tripoli Center municipality). Since secondary students have difficulty understanding advanced English, the researcher had to translate the questionnaire into Arabic, then gave it to an expert translator for revision before distributing it. In addition, to ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was piloted with three instructors and ten secondary school students. the feedback received was regarding the clarity of instructions, and some ambiguous items. Based on this feedback, the questionnaire was edited accordingly.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire were analysed using SPSS software, which allowed for the calculation of descriptive statistics to measure central tendency and variability, including percentages, mean score and standard deviations (Dornyei, 2010). According to Dong (2023) descriptive statistics provide a clear summary of the dataset and present the data in an organized way. A five-point Likert scale was used to examine students' responses regarding the challenges they encountered in following the educational lessons on TV. In this scale, higher mean scores indicate stronger agreement with the items, reflecting greater difficulty perceived by the students (Babbie, 2010). That is, from 1 to 1.80 means "strongly disagree", from 1.81 to 2.60 means "disagree", from 2.61 to 3.40 means "neutral", from 3.41 to 4.20 means "agree", and from 4.21 to 5 means "strongly agree". Furthermore, the standard deviation measures the spread of responses. That is, a high standard deviation indicates that students' opinions varied widely, while a low standard deviation indicates that responses were more consistent toward the item (Babbie, 2010).

Table 1: Five-point Likert scale about the students' challenges encountered in following educational TV lessons

The statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1- I cannot follow TV lessons because of the power outage	119	1.00	5.00	4.2017	1.30566
2- There is no interaction with other students	116	1.00	5.00	3.7672	1.07427
3- I sometimes find it difficult to write down notes because the teacher speaks quickly	117	1.00	5.00	3.7521	1.21702
4- There is no interaction with the teacher	117	1.00	5.00	3.7521	1.19558
5- I do not prefer using TV in learning	117	1.00	5.00	3.7179	1.31205
6- I am unaware of the schedule of the lessons	116	1.00	5.00	3.6724	1.20705
7- There are no follow up quizzes and assignments	117	1.00	5.00	3.6410	1.22799
8- I sometimes find myself distracted from the task of learning	115	1.00	5.00	3.5913	1.12309
9- I sometimes find it difficult to understand some points	117	1.00	5.00	3.5812	1.21938
10- The time of broadcasting is not suitable for me	117	1.00	5.00	3.4701	1.23576
11- Educational TV lessons have poor video and sound quality	115	1.00	5.00	3.3913	1.34879
12- It requires more effort to study by myself	117	1.00	5.00	3.3846	1.30547
13- It is difficult to organize time correctly	114	1.00	5.00	3.2456	1.18666
14- I do not have motivation for distance education	119	1.00	5.00	3.2185	1.19433
15- The duration of the lessons is not enough	119	1.00	5.00	3.1681	1.20956
16- The repeated times of the lessons are not enough	116	1.00	5.00	3.1207	1.14326

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17- Others share TV with me, so I have limited access to TV	116	1.00	5.00	3.0862	1.36139
18- I have no experience with this type of learning	118	1.00	5.00	2.9831	1.10154
19- It is difficult to understand the lesson from the teacher	119	1.00	5.00	2.7983	1.10146
20- There is no comfortable environment to study at home	118	1.00	5.00	2.6610	1.31539
21- I face difficulty in dealing with TV settings and navigation	117	1.00	5.00	2.3419	1.26738
22- I do not have access to television	118	1.00	5.00	2.1271	1.18066
23- My family does not support me to follow educational TV lessons	119	1.00	5.00	2.0504	1.22716

Table 1 above presents the main difficulties encountered by students while following educational TV lessons. The results indicated that the most significant challenge reported by the students is power outages, with the highest mean score (4.20). This finding highlights the strong impact of infrastructural issues on the learning process, as electricity interruptions prevent students from watching the lessons consistently. The second most reported difficulty is the lack of interaction with other students (3.76). It is notable that this item recorded the lowest standard deviation (1.07), indicating that most participants shared similar concerns regarding peer interaction. The third and fourth most reported difficulties are difficulty taking notes when the teacher speaks quickly and the lack of interaction with the teacher, both with the same mean score of (3.75). This indicates the students' need for clearer explanations, appropriate pacing, and opportunities to communicate with teachers during the learning process.

Other challenges were also reported with relatively high mean scores. For example, not preferring to use television as a learning tool (3.71), which reveal that some students were not comfortable with TV-based learning method. Moreover, the unawareness of lesson schedules (3.67) and the

absence of follow-up quizzes and assignments (3.64) were highlighted as important difficulties. These results suggest that students value regular assessments to support their understanding. In addition, distractions while focusing on the task of learning (3.59) and a difficulty in understanding some points in the lessons (3.58). This indicates that maintaining concentration and comprehension can be challenging in a home-based learning environment. Another related issue is unsuitable broadcasting times (3.47) which may prevent students from attending lessons regularly. It is noteworthy to say that the lessons broadcasted and repeated in a fixed schedule for students (see appendix B). These findings demonstrate that organizational and instructional factors can strongly hinder students' ability to follow and benefit from the educational TV lessons.

The remaining difficulties received moderate to lower mean scores. These include poor video and sound quality, the effort required to study independently, difficulty organizing time, and lack of motivation for distance learning with (3.39) (3.38) (3.24) and (3.21) mean scores, respectively. Moreover, concerns such as insufficient lesson duration (3.16), limited repetition of lessons (3.12), sharing television with others at home (3.08), lack of previous experience with this type of learning (2.98) were reported. The least indicated challenges were difficulty in understanding the teacher's explanation, lack of a comfortable study environment, difficulty in navigating TV settings, lack of access to television, and lack of family support (2.79) (2.66), (2.34) (2.12) and (2.05) mean scores, respectively. These results suggest that most students did not face serious challenges related to television access or family assistance. Overall, the findings indicate that the main challenges were related to lack of interaction, organizational aspects of the lessons, and infrastructural issues.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicated that students experienced several challenges while following educational lessons on TV. The most significant challenge reported was power outages, which received the highest mean score. This result is consistent with the findings of Saleh (2020) who stated that electricity interruptions is a major barrier to distance learning. These results highlight the importance of reliable infrastructure for the successful

implementation of distance education programs. In addition, the findings revealed that lack of interaction with other students and teachers was among the most prominent difficulties. This aligns with Galusha (1998), Sharp and Huett (2006), and Fojtik (2018), who found that interaction between teachers and learners, as well as among students themselves is essential for improving learning satisfaction and academic achievement. The absence of this interaction in TV-based learning therefore represents a major limitation of this method.

Another difficulty highlighted in the results is the pace of lesson delivery, which makes it difficult for students to take notes. Similar findings were reported by Akhter (2011) and Cahapay and Rotas (2020), who asserted that rapid explanation from teacher can hinder students' ability to record important information. It is noteworthy that this issue is further complicated in TV-based lessons because students cannot pause or replay the lesson, unlike many online learning platforms. In addition, students reported difficulties related to lesson schedules, absence of follow-up quizzes and assignments, and distractions from the task of learning at home. According to Galusha (1998), Haghighi and Tous (2014), and Akhter (2011), it is important to conduct continuous assessment and activities in supporting student engagement and understanding. The presence of assignments and quizzes helps students monitor their progress and allows teachers to evaluate the learning outcomes.

The findings also indicated that some difficulties were less significant for the students. For example, the lack of prior experience with distance learning. This result contradicts with Fojtik (2018) Molnar et al. (2019) and Heriyanto et al. (2020), who emphasized the importance of prior experience in facilitates adaptation to distance learning programs. A possible explanation is that secondary school students often rely more on themselves in learning and may not perceive previous experience as an essential factor in adapting to new learning methods. In addition, technical aspects related to television, such as navigating TV settings and accessing television, were among the least reported challenges. This is in contradiction with Jokipelto (2006), who claimed that students might experience difficulties operating television devices. This can be associated to the fact that most secondary school students

are already familiar with common technological devices. Furthermore, family support was also revealed as one of the least encountered difficulties, indicating that families generally supported their children in following educational lessons. Overall, the results suggest that interaction, infrastructure, and lesson organization remain the most influential challenges experienced by students in their learning through TV-based distance education.

Conclusion

This study investigated the difficulties experienced by Libyan EFL secondary school students in following educational lessons on TV. Although this approach helped in continuing the learning process during school closures, the findings revealed that students encountered several challenges that hindered the effectiveness of this learning method. The most prominent challenges included power outages, lack of interaction with teachers and students, the absence of follow-up assignments and assessments, the distraction during home-based learning, and difficulty in taking notes when teachers delivered the lesson. In addition, many students demonstrated limited preference for television as a learning tool compared to other digital devices. The findings suggest that while television can serve as a practical solution for delivering education during emergency situations, issues related to infrastructure, interaction, and lesson organization need to be addressed in order to improve the delivery of distance education in Libya. In addition, relying more on internet-based applications may help overcome some of the challenges associated with TV-based learning. Therefore, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education and the related bodies should make greater efforts to develop and improve distance learning systems so that they can be more effectively adopted in the future.

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