

OTL & NON-COLLABORATIVE TENDENCY: A QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS ON STUDENTS' RECALCITRANCE TO MUTUAL WORK***Latifa SELLAM**

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Abstract

There is growing evidence that young adults underwent an overdose of loneliness outcomes since the digital teaching and learning has launched its flagship. This may have negative effects on their participatory sense, interactivity, and language attainment opportunities seizing, thus, academic return. Accordingly, blatant were some students' attitudes advocating the sense of isolation, and a tendency to uncooperativeness in learning. In contrast, the conventional mindset of exchanging, reviewing, and collaborating, hereafter, belongs to the past. It was proven that students in higher education embrace a positive stance towards online instruction. Furthermore, the pandemic era has spelled autonomy, as long as, learners take charge of their own learning. As it taught deliberate actions to recall and review courses in an individual way as well. The current context allows us to see on bold how it goes with their solitude leaning towards learning stemming from the Online Teaching and Learning (OTL) practices ; and how collaborative they are in performing academic tasks while in-group. On the light of this description, this paper examines the above stated problematic and seeks to gauge mutuality. The study group consisted of 30 master's students, relying on a semi-structured questionnaire and interview. With a qualitative content analysis, we identify the residues of the OTL, and their reflections on the students' learning strategies in the classroom, and outside. The results posit that they sporadically meet to do some collaborative work, and prefer, however, solo task management. Some recommendations preconizing learners to be more resilient to collaborativeness and reciprocity are eventually incorporated.

Keywords: Higher education, Non-collaborativeness, OTL, Recalcitrance, Resilience.

INTRODUCTION

Online classes allow students to be active part of the learning process, in the same way, or almost that traditional learning does. Online instruction has become a significant and inescapable educational modality in higher education. It gained approval, especially with the advent of the digital use. Therefore, understanding and studying how virtual learning system operates has an important place in the educational field. The definition of this concept differs from scholar to another, depending on their interpretation of the term. Therefore, the definition of certain academics could be considered as representations of concepts regarding online learning ([4]), for instance defines online learning as an alternative to distant education, that incorporates several technologies, with the use of the Internet to provide the transmission of information that learners require in their process. Online learning can also be defined as education that can only be accessed in the web. This implies that it does not encompass any physical learning materials given to students, or genuine face-to-face contact. Pure online learning is essentially the use of e-learning tools employed without any physical interaction. Likewise, according to [5], online learning is a form of distant instruction that uses a variety of technologies to impart education, including the World Wide Webs, emails, groups, texts, audio and video conferencing, etc. It enables the student to learn at their own pace, and at their own convenience (Ibid, [5]). They centered online learning technologies and tools, and their importance in the learning process. This mode provides a learning environment outside the classroom, at any time, and from anywhere.

Regardless of geographical boundaries, students can participate in a virtual meeting with their teachers and peers in cyberspaces. Besides, educational blogs and platforms are designed to help learners overcome their frequent daily classroom anxiety and rigid timetable; as they are time-saving for students who are employees and are unable to attend classroom sessions [6]. To sum-up, e-learning is seen as a major factor in the success of the student in case of unavailability of traditional setting. Indeed, it is serving a lot distant learners and employees enrolled in higher education, when the traditional chalk and talk becomes compelling, and burdensome. In those instances, time is the most prominent constraint to synchronise between job duties, and university compulsory attendance. As a result, most students find themselves studying alone, revising, and adopting synopses; no matter the strategy is in consolidating or recalling knowledge, the prevailing approach is solo learning. The current research paper addresses the problematic of students' uncooperative tendency, which is taking form, yielding average educational outcomes. This strengthens the belief positing that participatory and collaborative activities promote language attainment opportunities, and foster interactivity among participants. Therefore, the research problems are as follows:

1. How collaborative students are in performing academic tasks?
2. To what extent do they prefer socialising and cooperating with peers?
3. Does OTL have an implication on that; is it fostering further solo working?

There seems to be a consensus among teachers regarding the learning approach adopted by the population under study, which is master's EFL students belonging to didactics

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pathway. It was noticed that they flee group work, and tend to individual endeavours. Furthermore, they avoid cooperativeness in preparing for formative assessment (tests and exams). With a mixed-method, we identify the joint between this massive tendency and OTL existence. It is assumed, therefore, that:

1. Task performance is generally governed by an individual approach.
2. Subjects hardly ever meet to perform academic tasks collectively.
3. It is advocated that OTL has a part to play in nurturing the sense of uncooperativeness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When web-based systems and learning launched their flagship, their alliance turned universal. Therefore, we need first to understand the concept of Online Teaching and Learning (OTL) before going further, as this is the key starting point for this study. A developing body of evidence suggests that OTL has several definitions. When WebCT, and learning management system LMS, were first established in 1995, the phrase online learning was coined ([4]). The synchronous mode can be paired with an asynchronous mode, which has been shown to be effective in terms of student engagement, active learning, and content delivery [5]. Therefore, students have to grasp the benefits and the limitations of both modalities. A 30-year longitudinal study based on a comprehensive literature review (1988-2018) was conducted (Ibid. [4]) analysing several online education terminologies to discover common factors across them all. Researchers found that all definitions featured technology as a means to supply instruction, and increase engagement, but none mentioned the term learning, the study came to close with a number of suggested synonyms that incorporated both technology and learning.

OTL Climate

Internal and external entities such as students and board members in higher education institutions are the main stakeholders. Mastery of OTL technologies and processes is a time consuming operation that could distract faculty from their research, because OTL takes twice as long as traditional approaches. Faculty may confront many challenges in delivering online courses within the online experience, which will translate students' satisfaction. Students are at the centre of the OTL atmosphere. According to [7], students learn similarly online as they do in traditional classes, and the learning experience can be improved, when faculty prepares for lessons, interact with students, and communicate with them using appropriate online resources [8]. Learners' online experiences are improved when instructors have adequate support and training to promote cooperation, and create innovation, and engaging tasks using the OTL experience [9]. Students will assess and rate the success of the OTL experience, and their assessment have been shown to be valid and reliable across many studies [10]. Likewise, [11] indicated that when instructors use appropriate communication and engagement strategies, and foster cooperation through planned and interactive activities; consequently, students are satisfied with their OTL experience. In this research (Ibid [11]) emphasises the idea that students need effective time management coaching.

OTL Limitations

In fact, students value OTL in the current era, and most of them are cybernated; and acknowledge its flexibility as well. Many academics have determined that satisfied online learners may foster curriculum success, and have a beneficial impact on retention, attrition, and motivation [12]. According to research, satisfied learners can contribute to successful e-learning and effective language attainment outcomes [13]. However, there exist some limitations resulting to insufficient face-to-face interaction. Lack of in-person interaction and physical presence in virtual context can lead to feelings of isolation, and lower student socialisation. Accordingly, the generated amount of dissatisfaction would be instrumental to understand the underlying associations related to solo-learning approach. This issue is exacerbated by a perceived lack of peer-assistance and collaborative work. This means that students must feel socially present and connected (Ibid. [12]), and strong teacher's communication reinforces this attachment [14]. Similarly, effective time management and self-regulation are required for online learning. Students who battle with self-control, and find it difficult to manage their time properly may be confronted to abstruse sensation, yielding to dissatisfaction. [15], for instance discusses qualities that will improve a learner's performance in online education. Online students must demonstrate focus and time management ability. As they exhibit capability to work both individually or collaboratively with classmates, and be driven to succeed, and possess the skills and aptitudes to engage in self-regulated learning strategies. Self-regulated learners make goals, self-monitor and assess their progress approach activities with accuracy and complete them on time, and express highly motivating beliefs [16]. Eventually, students must accept responsibility for their education within the distance education spectrum.

METHODS

Participants

The study group consisted of 30 students, belonging to didactics pathway enrolling in a master's degree at Saida University Dr. Tahar Moulay, Algeria. The interview was set after an in-depth literature review on the core educational issues stemming from OTL. Among these, the solo tendency in performing academic tasks. The observed leanings towards individual work, was endorsed by the interview that further investigated the cooperativeness sense from the cognitive, emotional, and social perspectives. In parallel, it gauged the extent to which the students in question were able to conduct mutual classroom-activities, and outside.

Procedure

The interview and the observation allowed to shaping an overall picture about the embraced practices. An aggregate of subissues underlying non-collaboration and collaboration concepts were tackled. In essence, the acquisition of meta knowledge enabling students to complete their own learning with profit came at the top of the list. Secondly, the collaborative experience that might activate practices of positive interdependence, resulting to facilitative familiarization to university. Thirdly, collectivity, which can stimulate motivation, extrinsic in nature, or intrinsic, and serves as a boost to decrease anxiety-related examination.

Eventually, recognizance and awareness of academic career and chasing the educational back out threat.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The five axes that the interview orbited around, with respect to 'cooperativeness and non-cooperativeness' were addressed equitably. This implies that no extra-consideration was attributed to a question at the expense of the other. The respondents who represented a sampling of five (5), fully cooperated with the questions' contents. The first issue was, does group working foster meta-knowledge acquisition? The result was 02 out of 05 informants answered by yes it does, the remaining ones assumed that this strategy serves group leaders rather, and the other members are in fact just spectators that approve everything. The second point was that of university further integration. The total number asserted that working in group facilitates familiarisation with the academic context. The third axe was about motivation, the question was, does group working stimulate motivation? The collected answers were 03 out of 05 postulating that, this is depending on the personality type of the student. The fourth issue was, can recalling material in group decrease anxiety-related examination? The consented reply advocating yes it can, was by the entire number. The last inquiry was, is group working an awareness booster and a reminder of academic progress? In other words, does it generate a competitive spirit among group members? The answer was yes, it could be an incentive, provided by 03 out of 02 participants of the interview. In fact, casualness had its place at the end of the formal protocol of the meeting. An informal question passed in the researcher's mind at the end time of the interview, which was why do most students flee exchanging and sharing under the framework of 'collaborative artifacts'? The common answer was, this is because of the newly adopted solo tendency, stemming from the pandemic, and the OTL notably. According to [17] group work strategy aims at achieving the following objectives, and this can endorse the study's intent:

1. Inserting the spirit of cooperation among students.
2. Developing students' skills and improving them to a better level.
3. Blowing up the students' mental potential.
4. Taking responsibility.
5. Making the right decision.
6. Mastering the art of listening and responding directly.
7. The conclusion of information.
8. The fair competition that generates energy at the student.
9. Giving the student an opportunity to highlight his talents and mental abilities.
10. The power of concentration, attention and meditation.
11. Helping others and climbing to the top.

Further empirical evidence can corroborate this analysis. For instance, [17] study aimed to investigate the impact of the learning method in small groups on verbal interaction, and achievement by altering concepts of the science material for the tenth grade. The results showed that students who had studied in a small cooperative group were more likely to receive higher achievement than students who had studied through large groups. And that cooperative learning leads more to verbal interaction, and promotes the conceptual change among students. In sum, learners who have learnt by using workgroup strategy have fulfilled high levels of academic achievement and demonstrated good performance. Similarly,

[18] aimed to explore the impact of the use of cooperative learning on academic achievement. The sample of the study was made up of 120 students from the 11th and 12th grades, who studies Earth science and one teacher taught all groups, using the group work method. Whereas, he has used the individual learning method with the remaining group. The results showed statistically significant differences in trends, achievement, and emotional aspects in experimental groups. In essence, when there is the notion of give and take, which reinforces richness in views, and knowledge exchange, there are, eventually, more opportunities to learn. A priori, those students are in tune with the trend, and they are capable to reflect on their own process of understanding and assess their interpersonal aptitudes as well.

Conclusion and Recommendations

To upgrade student's collaborative engagement in an OTL environment, educators might explore strategies encompassing the provision of clear communication requirements, and instructions. Besides, promoting students' success in navigating the online learning context, and sustain them with a particular support comprising interactive activities, group projects, team works, etc. Likewise, virtual debates can increase learners' involvement and belonging, especially introverted ones, as they turn the extroverted students' to group leaders or debate-managers. Students can, therefore, overcome possible barriers and gain confidence in using the online medium in a collective way. To fit the instance, we recognise some recommendations to minimise isolation and individual approaches, and optimise, however, collectivity and mutual ways in task-management. Students, therefore, should be resilient to group work, sharing, and exchanging new or recalled material. Besides, they should be keen to learn from each other, and reciprocal correction of assignments, as well as problem-solving situations. Instructors, in their part should be considering the significance of collaborative spirit fossilization, and this by designing activities orbiting around this thematic. They should be actively contributing in fostering collectivity, and demonstrating supportiveness across disciplines taught. Ultimately, understanding students' needs as well as strategies under the umbrella of distance education is critical for improving the overall instructional experience. In so doing, we might be able to analyse the underlying factors that influence their integration, and socialisation. What lies in the backyard remains subtle, if we do not try to go inside, and detect what goes wrong with the student normal education, and full integration. In this respect, there is a consensus around the fact that collaborativeness fosters future socialisation, and interpersonal skills. This includes the panoply of tactics the individual uses for an effective interaction, thus accommodation, which is determinant in different social contexts.

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