

Impact of E-learning on Enhancing the Language Proficiency of ESL Learners: A Comparative Study Based on First Year ESL Students, Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna

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This study examines the impact of e-learning on the enhancement of language proficiency among ESL learners. Specifically, it investigates whether e-learning effectively improves the four key language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The research also acknowledges the challenges associated with e-learning. Through an extensive review of the literature, the study identifies key factors contributing to language acquisition in virtual environments, emphasizing both technological advancements and pedagogical strategies. A mixed-methods research design was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data were collected through surveys, structured questionnaires, and proficiency assessments administered to ESL learners engaged in e-learning programs. Qualitative data were obtained from semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and focus group discussions involving teachers, students, and other stakeholders. Classroom observations were particularly useful in providing insights into authentic language use within e-learning contexts. The findings indicate significant improvements in learners' language proficiency, especially in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. E-learning platforms were found to offer interactive resources, personalized learning experiences, and increased accessibility to language practice. However, challenges such as digital literacy gaps and motivational issues were also identified as factors affecting learning outcomes. Based on these findings, the study recommends the integration of adaptive and culturally responsive e-learning tools to enhance engagement and proficiency. Furthermore, targeted ESL support, well-trained teachers, and differentiated instructional materials are suggested to address individual learner needs and diverse learning styles. In conclusion, the study affirms that e-learning positively contributes to the development of ESL learners' language proficiency, thereby reinforcing the growing significance of digital education in contemporary language learning environments.

Keywords: *English as a Second Language (ESL), e-learning, language acquisition, language proficiency, virtual environment*