Impact of Online Learning on International Students’ English Language Concerns

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Purpose

To learn how, if at all, online classes have an impact on international students’ English language usage.
Literature Review

- Foreign language classroom anxiety (Horwitz, 1986)
- International students’ English language concerns affect academic performance (Khanal & Gaulee, 2019; Trice, 2004; Zhao & Ng, 2016)
- Most students experience challenges navigating online classes (Pather et al., 2020)
- International students’ cultural features affect English usage (Kung, 2017; Louie, 2005; Yan & Berliner, 2013)
Research Design

- Exploratory research using survey (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Fowler, 2009)
- Online questionnaire survey using interval-level and continuous responses
- Topics:
  - Confidence volunteering in English
  - Enjoyment of interacting with native English-speaking classmates
  - Comfort level
Research Design

○ Data Collection
  ■ Email list via International Office; Internet
  ■ Participants: all international undergraduates
  ■ 272 surveyed; 124 responses (46% response rate)
  ■ \( n=91 \)

○ Data Analysis
  ■ Descriptive Statistics
Findings

During online classes...

• Q1: Confidence: twice as many students (12% in person; 28% online) were not confident volunteering answers in English
• Q2: Nervousness: 10% more students get nervous when getting ready to speak
• Q3: Interactions: 32% fewer students enjoy interacting with classmates
Findings (continued)

During online classes...

- Q4: Embarrassment: slightly more students (8%) were embarrassed about speaking English
- Q5: Grammar: no difference compared to in-person classes
- Q6: Anxiousness: slightly more students (6%) were anxious when not knowing what the professor says in English
Discussion – Surprises

● Stronger than expected preference for in-person classes
  ○ negatively impact students’ classroom engagement
● Grammar not a concern
  ○ In spite of advanced level of English ability, students still had language concerns
Implications

● Inform the online pedagogical practices and curriculum design by faculty
  ○ purposeful about engagement practices
● Inform academic and intercultural training for international students
  ○ classroom discourse
  ○ student and teacher expectations
Thank you!

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