

# Perspectives on English Language Teaching and Learning during COVID-19 Pandemic

Thuong Thi Kim Nguyen

Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of International Training, Thai Nguyen University of Technology,  
Thai Nguyen city 240000, Vietnam

Tel: 84-208-3847093 E-mail: [nguyenthikimthuong@tnut.edu.vn](mailto:nguyenthikimthuong@tnut.edu.vn)

## Abstract

Since its outbreak two years ago, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the world-wide education systems, leading to school closures in many countries as well as the changes in the whole educational procedures. In order to reassure parents, students and other involved leaders, there has been a rapid shift from face-to-face education to emergency online teaching. English language teaching and learning is accordingly an integral flow in this stream of online process, which then motivates educators and researchers to have a further look at the effects of COVID-19 on digital language acquisition. Hence, this study aims to explore both teachers' and students' perspectives on English language teaching and learning during COVID-19 pandemic. The findings, from both quantitative and qualitative data, reveal that all the participants as learners agreed upon the positive influences of online English learning in terms of skill development. Besides, they also considered the flexibility of class schedules and a variety of online assignments as the biggest advantages while bothering with some disadvantages such as internet/technical and health problems. As for English language teachers, speaking skill is the most challenging skill to help students; moreover, some of their concerns include difficulties in class management, online interaction, facilitation, assessment and digital literacy. Nevertheless, they confirmed the advantages of online resources, new knowledge of technological issues and development of learner autonomy. Overall, the research appeals more support from the university officials to improve the quality of online English teaching and learning; in addition, it contributes to make both teachers' and learners' voices heard during the coronavirus quarantine.

**Keywords:** Pandemic, Online, English, Teaching, Learning, Perspectives, Development.

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## 1. Introduction

In January, 2020, the Chinese authorities identified a new type of coronavirus in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China (World Health Organization, 2020). The disease then spread so quickly to many other countries; therefore, the World Health Organization officially recognized the COVID-19 pandemic in most continents. This led to the lockdown in many parts of the world, which made face-to-face education impossible, particularly more than 91.3% of students in the world could not go to their schools (UNESCO, 2020). In order to maintain a qualified education, distance education has emerged as a common condition as it was reported by UNESCO that 429 universities in the world have shifted to distance education (UNESCO, 2020). According to Türegün & Kuyumcu (2021), in this time of the pandemic, the use of the Information, communication, and technology (ICT) in teaching and learning during pandemic cannot be avoided. Similarly, Suherdi (2019) insisted on how English language teaching should be implemented in the era of industry 4.0.

As one of the vital part of education from kindergarten to higher education, English subject has been applied the immediate transition from classroom building to online classes called Google classroom and other virtual learning platforms such as e-learning system, ClassDojo, Edmodo, Nearpod, BrainPOP, etc. This change in learning environment also leads to the changes in instructional delivery and technological application. To make it feasible and effective, the process of online teaching and learning requires the readiness from instructors, learners, even institutional officials and all other involved stakeholders. Moreover, it is time for educators and researchers to examine practical cases of online teaching and learning in many areas of the world.

Thus, during the last two years, many studies have been conducted to draw out advantages and disadvantages of both synchronous and asynchronous learning (Dhawan, 2020), which furthermore empowers the importance of remote education during the pandemic. Yet, there is a paucity of research focusing on English language teaching and learning. The challenges that Erarslan (2021) pointed out from his review work comprises "access, implementation and pedagogical aspects", which contributes to give an overall insight into language acquisition in online settings. Accordingly, this study aims to make it deeper by exploring both teachers' and students' perspectives on English language teaching and learning in the time of COVID-19. With a reference to Vietnamese context, this work also offers a memorandum for the launch of remote language teaching during or even after the pandemic.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Online Language Learning

When it comes to the definition of online learning, Dhawan (2020) pointed out that online learning is a flexible approach which can occur synchronously or asynchronously settings with internet-connected devices such as mobile phones, laptops, etc. Dhawan conducted a systematic review to describe the importance of online learning and Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, & Challenges (SWOC). In particular, in a synchronous learning setting, both teachers and students often go together on popular live meeting applications such as Zoom and Google meet to have live lectures and real-time interactions. During this process, teachers can implement some possible teaching activities for “online classrooms” where teachers can facilitate knowledge issues directly. However, in the asynchronous setting learning, there will be no longer fixed schedule for study as students can get recorded videos about the lessons and materials of the topic beforehand. After that, students can study the lessons at any time, then finish the assignments. This accordingly increases new skills for life-long learning since students become active in what field of knowledge they are exploring (White, 2007; Dhawan, 2020; Fantonia, et al., 2020).

The positives effects of distance education on English language learning are also mentioned in the study conducted by Haron & Ibrahim (2015) about E- learning as a platform to learn English among learners. They insisted that online learning makes teaching-learning process more student-centered. Students even become more responsible with what they want to learn and how they complete the task individually or collaboratively, which truly enhances their learning autonomy.

Chiablaem ( 2021) did a quantitative study to explore Thai students’ opinion when they use language application in an English online course during the Covid-19 situation. Finally, the students all have positive experience and the combinations of application based on the functions enable them to enhance all English skills and grammatical and lexical knowledge. Melvina, et al. (2020) confirmed that students are more familiar with ICT in their everyday life so “they are ready to answer the demands of Education 4.0 in a disruptive era.” (p. 355). Similarly, Kamal et al. (2021) did a research on the changes in the training process and cognitive abilities and academic performance during the coronavirus pandemic. He surveyed 103 participants at the of the I.M. Sechenov University and Al Ain University, and then the results showed that students’ scores during online learning were higher than that they got in face-to-face classrooms. The factors contributing to better outcomes include more free time due to more break during several online classes, more comfortable learning environment, saving time to study at home instead of travelling to school.

In his comprehensive, integrative literature review of 69 research studies between March 2020 and February 2021 about the effects of the pandemic on emergency online teaching and the learning of English, Erarslan (2021) confirmed some issues of both advantages and disadvantages of online teaching and learning. Three aspects drawn out from the researched were the affective, motivational and cognitive aspects. Accordingly, students became more autonomous during learning process as they can make use of free online resources and are involved in social interactions with their peers and teachers. Synchronous online discussion sessions with proper task negotiation and other teaching methods such as question and answer sessions were reported to increase students’ speaking skills. However, the emergency online teaching and learning of English creates some challenges such internet connection problems, students’ reliance on technical devices. They had negative attitudes towards emergency remote learning as they were worried and stressful with changes in their study habits and the progress in language learning. Thus, students were more favorable of face-to-face classroom buildings after experiencing quite a long time of online learning community.

Adnan & Anwar (2020) shared the same idea of negative impacts when examining the undergraduate and postgraduate students’ perspectives about online learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan. The findings revealed undesired results of online learning in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan. The pandemic period has caused some other problems for students like having difficulty with an understanding of their lessons, lack of interaction and communication with their friends and their teachers (Alawamleh et al., 2020; Esani, 2010). There are some e-learning barriers, as Assareh & Hosseini (2011) stated, involving financial problems, motivation, assessment of progress and isolation.

Regarding learners’ perception, Sun (2014) investigated the difficulties learners faced and the ways they had adapted to fully online learning. She was able to synthesize six major difficulties: “(1) following the schedule and studying regularly, (2) getting hold of classmates and finding suitable time to work together, (3) pairing/teaming up and working collaboratively, (4) ensuring constant engagement with the class, (5) keeping self-motivated and being a self-directed learner, and (6) socializing.” Qualitative data retrieved from interview in the study by Melvina, et al. (2020) reveal several obstacles of online learning during the pandemic such as lack of knowledge and skills in online learning, unstable internet connection, and the teachers’ limited experience with online learning. Some participants found it hard to study or complete tasks since they had too much time and flexibility, and they had to help their parents with other family work. Their health was affected by too much time in front of a computer or smartphone.

Rojabi (2020) reported that EFL students have problems in terms of a home environment, which affected their learning and concentration negatively. Technical problems was also mentioned in Rahman (2020) when he studied EFL students' perception on online learning during Covid-19 Outbreak. With a view to exploring the perspectives of 40 senior students from the English Language Teaching department and their 4 instructors at a Turkish state university, Türegün Çoban & Kuyumcu Vardar (2021) conducted a survey and a semi-structured interview. As a result, positive opinions refer to regarding time-space flexibility, reviewing lessons by recordings, self-paced learning, affordability, comfort, sharing a wide range of resources, instant feedback; whereas negative opinions are about technical problems, applied courses, lack of social interaction, assessment and evaluation, workload, health problems and low motivation.

In terms of learning strategies, several studies have been done to find out how learners have adapted to the era of online education. Five years ago, in 2017, with their research on the roles of learning strategies and motivation in online language learning, Lin & Zheng soon confirmed the importance of compatible online learning strategies. Later, Fernandez-Malpartida (2021) studied ESL learners' language strategies and their English proficiency. It turns out that the majority of participants applied metacognitive strategies and they improved their English with the teachers' support, helpful feedback and class recording availability. In addition, a study conducted by Famularsih (2020) focuses on the utilization of online learning application in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Classroom. Fansury et al. (2020) insisted that the EFL field is one of the most proper ones to utilize some interactive digital content as learning resources if the teachers and students are digital natives. In order to understand the relationship between Chinese university students' authentic language learning and their English self-efficacy during the COVID-19 pandemic, Lian et al. (2021) surveyed 529 students on their perceptions of authentic language learning (AULL), self-directed learning (SDL), collaborative learning (CL), and their English self-efficacy (ESE). The result showed that the students experienced meaningful language learning with technology because there were interconnected relationships among AULL, SDL, CL, and students' ESE.

## *2.2 Online Language Teaching*

Quite a long time before the pandemic, in 2011, after studying the barriers of both e-teaching and e-learning, Assareh & Hosseini (2011) reported that the teacher barriers comprised of lack of adequate knowledge about e-learning and difficulty for assessment. Peterson (2014) had also realized the challenges of online second language teaching and learning since the use of internet-based facilities would make it teachers confused about the whole online teaching process. A study in Iran, by Khatoony and Maeda (2020), discovered some other obstacles including lack of proper resources, lack of motivation and attention by students, and lack of financial support. In the same year of studies (2020), Rasmitadila et al. and Melvina et al. came to similar conclusions about the difficulties of online learning involving time for lesson preparation, inadequate professional development concerning technology, limited facilities and technical supports.

However, online language teaching also creates more opportunities for learning autonomy, like Haron & Ibrahim (2015) analyzed in their study on the benefits and barriers of E-learning as a platform for ESL learners. Online teaching can be regarded as a solution to overcome physical distance in the real-time teaching and learning process, in other words, E-learning can potentially enhance future planning and development among students and teachers (Lei & So, 2021).

With an overview of English language teaching and learning during Covid-19, Erarslan (2021) was concerned with the impacts of emergency online teaching on the language development of students and the effectiveness of online platforms and educational technologies. His findings revealed conflicting ideas of the implementation of emergency online English teaching. Some teachers upheld the idea that the transition of online teaching would sustain the quality of language teaching and develop students' language skills, other teachers kept negative opinions. It can't be denied that teachers would adopt new roles as remote instructors and gained experience in terms of teaching online, while also increasing their technological knowledge to integrate pedagogical and content knowledge. Nevertheless, some challenges that they have to face are lack of affinity with technology, particularly in case of older teachers, students' lower outcomes, heavy workload and irregularity of online teaching hours. This leads to the demand of innovation in pedagogy for online language teaching.

More than ten years ago, Sun (2011) urged educators, teachers and other stakeholders to rethink of the online pedagogical approaches. She was strongly approved of "the shift in online language teaching from teacher-centred approaches towards a personalised, small-group orientated, multi-dimensional model of teaching." This can be aligned with the constructivism theory of learner-centred pedagogy (Dhawan, 2020). Teachers, therefore, need to review and reflect on their own teaching strategies as well as be ready to change their own traditional, but incompatible to the era of emergency online education. In particular, for English language acquisition, Bailey & Lee (2020) discussed about the teachers' hardship in pronunciation skills and writing classes as students may need immediate feedbacks to correct their mistakes. Some supplementary

devices and platforms should be applied to support both teachers and learners. EFL instructors may also need to practice their skills in teaching and vary their strategies with students' different learning styles and approaches.

Through the lenses of secondary learners in EFL classes in a qualitative study by Tümen-Akyıldız, et al. (2021), remote teaching was not actually preferable to face-to-face foreign language teaching because they stated that the teachers "emphasised reading and listening skills in their lessons rather than writing and speaking". Hence, language teachers are "responsible for promoting an interactive environment and organizing different activities proper for interaction" (p. 401). In order to make English teachers' voice heard, Wahyuningsih (2021) explored the implementation of E-learning in teaching English viewed from English teachers' perspectives during the COVID-19 pandemic at Indonesian Junior High Schools. The teachers were found to be active in applying technological tools such as Zoom, WhatsApp, and google classroom, YouTube, and video. Yet, they confronted some barriers to language teaching; for instance, "the lack of internet connection, poor connectivity among students, the lack of preparation among teachers and students in using E-learning, difficulties in meeting students' needs, lack of training and support, and lack of technical expertise." Moreover, the study recommended better media tools for teachers, and more support from schools for both teachers and students during the COVID-19 outbreak.

### *2.3 English language teaching and learning at TNUT during COVID-19*

Under national impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Vietnam, educational institutions all over the country have quickly changed traditional, in-class teaching and learning into online education. In Thai Nguyen, the lockdown lasting for nearly two years from 2020 to 2022 has made all the teachers and students more adaptive to online activities from teaching, learning, meetings, discussions, exams, etc. Thus, all of the English language teachers at Thai Nguyen University of Technology (TNUT) have also decided to combine both traditional pedagogy with new, flexible, remote teaching strategies so that students would be able to improve their English without attending classroom lessons. The teachers of Division of Foreign Language have applied some technological tools such as Zoom, Google meet, Microsoft Team, Facetime, Zalo groups to have online lectures. Additionally, for students' better language acquisition, they actively search more interesting linguistic activities on YouTube, Quizlet, Quizizz, Padlet, Nearpod, etc to make students focused and interested.

The positive aspects of online English teaching and learning at TNUT comprises of flexible schedule for both teachers and learners, more technical aids, and gamification, for examples, from Kahoot, Blooket, ... which seems to refresh the normal, but maybe monotonous way of teaching, and creates a new atmosphere of language learning. EFL teachers and students together take opportunities to study useful applications or tools for better teaching and learning, and simultaneously share with one another many other online resources of English language. However, they also experience a hard period of time with technical problems and other issues of language skill developments. Hence, this study is going to offer an insight into English language teaching and learning at TNUT during COVID-19 pandemic, which then appeals more supports for both teachers and learners during the era of blended and e-learning education. Furthermore, the study aims to contribute to the world-wide library of research in the field of language teaching, especially from the whole perspective of online process.

The paper seeks to answer these following research questions:

1. How do English language learners perceive online English learning process?
2. How do English language teachers perceive online English teaching process?

### **3. Research Methods**

This study was applied a mixed-method research model, involving two set of data. Statistical analysis was used for quantitative data, from a questionnaire; while descriptive approach was used for qualitative data, from a semi-structured-interview. Specifically, the researcher designed two Google forms of questionnaire for both EFL teachers and students. Focus group interview and individual interviews were used in order to get in-depth meanings of participants' opinions (Creswell, 2012).

The study was conducted at Thai Nguyen University of Technology during the second semester of school year 2021-2022. Participants as learners were 23 students in K57AP class (21 male and 02 female). Eighteen teachers from Division of Foreign Languages also agreed to join the research voluntarily and complete the questionnaire as well as answer the semi-structured interview.

Initially the researcher sketched out some main issues of online language teaching and learning at TNUT; for example, technological devices, evaluation of online teaching and learning, language skill development, advantages/disadvantages, etc. After that, the final questionnaires were adapted by the list of questions on the website <https://www.questionpro.com>.

Due to the Covid-19, it was not easy to deliver the questionnaires to the participants directly, so Google forms seemed to be the best choice. The researcher sent Google forms to the students and teachers through emails. Data were then collected online and to be ready for quantitative analyses in the next stage of the study.

As for the second data of the interview, like Fraenkel, et al. (2011) stated, there are many ways to conduct

and many tools to access. Thus, the researcher chose Zoom as a video conferencing tool to hold the interview. The focus group members of the teachers and students was four and ten, respectively. According to Kitzinger (1995), these numbers can ensure the validity of qualitative data. All the participants were sent Consent forms regarding the procedure of the interview. The students join the Zoom meeting and discussed about the probed questions for two hours. The researcher tried to make the interview similar to a class discussion so that the students felt they could freely and excitedly express their ideas since there were no right or wrong opinions as well as interrupted correction. All of their answers were recorded immediately on Zoom application. Four instructors were interviewed separately in person on Zoom at different time. Each interview for the instructor lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. The researcher, also being an English language teacher, tried to listen attentively to the participants as her colleagues. Data from the interview with the instructors include both recordings and notes from any more suggested, interesting ideas.

To analyze the data from semi-structured interviews, the researchers adopted thematic analysis. As Braun & Clarke (2006) defined, "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p.6). The process of thematic analysis involves several steps: familiarizing the researcher with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 35).

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Learners' Perspectives

#### Findings from Google form questionnaire 1

The questionnaire for students focuses on exploring the preliminary information about the device students use, their attitudes and overall evaluation of online language learning. Responses from the first and second question show that 65.2% of the learners have access to the internet with their smartphones. Yet, one third of them choose the option that their devices don't work well during the class. When being asked about the effectiveness of online learning, nearly half of them set the degree of "Moderately effective". The ratio for "Extremely effective" and "Very effective" are the same at 13%. However, that ratio also accounts for the numbers of students who think online learning is "Slightly effective" and "Quite effective", which means that some students prefer face-to-face lectures to online sessions.

3. How effective has online learning been for you?

23 câu trả lời

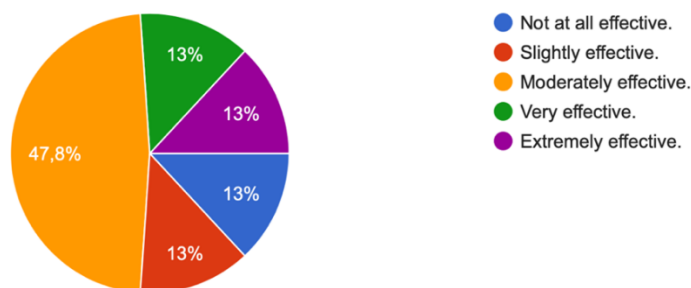


Chart 1. Question 3. Google form 1

In terms of skill development, 47.8% of the students confirmed that their skills developed quite well, particularly listening and reading were improving while speaking and writing were rather problematic. The students found it hard to practice speaking while attending online classes. This was due to some issues of the internet, or sometimes the teachers' instructions and facilitation might not be clearly enough to provoke communication. These results can be aligned with the findings from Bailey & Lee (2020) when they insisted on teachers' difficulties in pronunciation and writing classes.

4. How do your language skills develop while interacting during online lessons?

23 câu trả lời

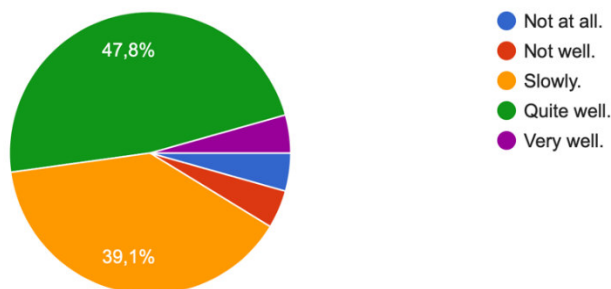


Chart 2. Question 4. Google form 1

Positively, nearly one hundred percent of the students highly appreciated the teachers' assistance in education during the pandemic. As Crawford et al. (2020) claims that students' positive perception about their teacher feedback also plays an important role as this motivates students to overcome challenges and have good academic performances at university level.

Advantages of online English learning, as shown in the following diagram, for about 50% of the participants, include some typical issues of comfortable learning environment, flexible time of learning, self-paced learning and sharing of many online resources. This has been mentioned in many other studies that learners become more active in their own learning approaches (Haron et al., 2015; Dhawan, 2020; Fantonia et al., 2020; Melvina et al., 2020). They found it much more convenient with recorded videos as they did not have to be worried about missing any information from the online lecture.

8. Please, tick any advantage of online English language learning. You can have MORE than one choice.

23 câu trả lời

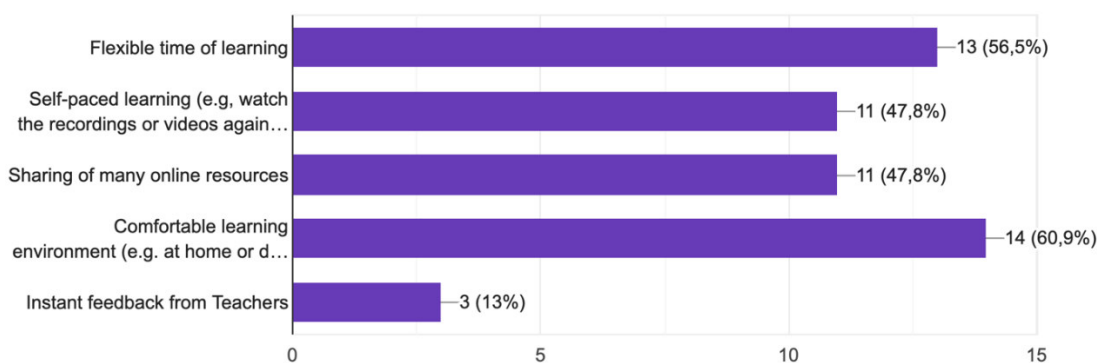


Diagram 1. Question 8. Google form 1

The majority of the responses about disadvantages of online English classes focuses on internet/technical problems, difficulty in understanding the lessons. About 40% of the students were thinking about unexpected effects on health and some others tick the options of difficulties in concentrating on study and lack of interaction/communication. Most of the time the knowledge contents were shared on Zoom screen so it was rather challenging for students to absorb a lot of topics quickly during a short span of time. Besides, if some of them are not self-disciplined enough, they can be easily distracted by a number of social networks such as Facebook, Zalo, Twitter, etc. Another big problem is about teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction during an English class. Communication is a prerequisite for developing speaking and listening so if these interactions are limited on online learning platforms, students will find it hard to develop their overall language skills.

9. Please, tick any disadvantage of online English language learning. You can have MORE than one choice.

23 câu trả lời

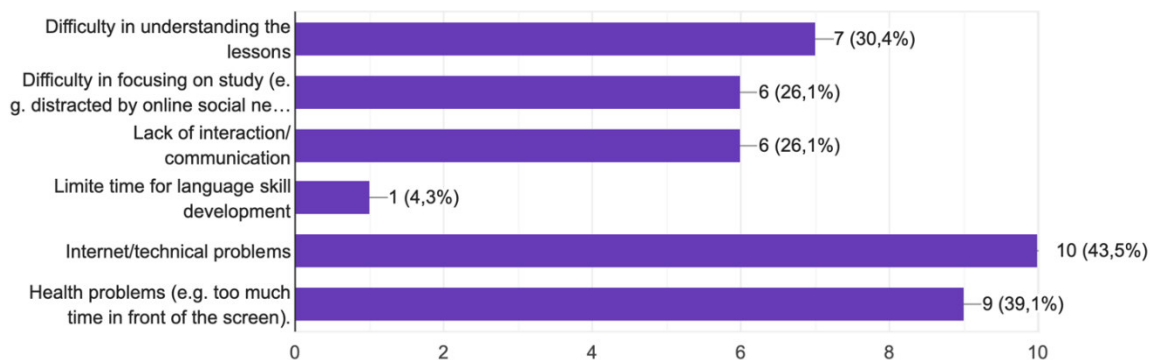


Diagram 2. Question 9. Google form 1

### Findings from Semi-structured interview

The discussion on Zoom meeting among the students as interviewees was recorded and then transcribed carefully. All the ideas were taken into consideration and coded to constitute three themes: overall experience, skill development, effects of online English courses during COVID-19.

#### Overall experience

When being asked about what they like or don't like about online English learning, the participants' responses varied and some similar or opposite ideas were summarized, which shows that they really had both positive and negative feeling towards learning during the quarantine.

##### ➤ "LIKE" responses:

- *I could save time, use the Internet to explore many activities, apps, entertainment for learning and playing.*
- *It's convenient, comfortable.*
- *I like online English learning because it's convenient. I can arrange the time, I also can learn English better, but sometimes my wifi was disconnected, so I can't follow the lecture.*
- *Learn English online comfortably on time.*
- *It's easy to access, save time, save money*

##### ➤ "DON'T LIKE" responses:

- *Lack of communication; I can't see friends' faces.*
- *Internet problems; network disconnected*
- *I had difficulty in concentrating.*
- *It's difficult to communicate or practice; It hurt eyes.*
- *Teacher sets too much work, students have very short time to complete.*

Most of the students alleged that they felt more comfortable with learning environment, i.e., at home or any internet-connected slot. Yet, the teacher and university officials should care about the problem of wifi or connection availability, and there should be some full trainings for both teachers and students about technical issues. If the number of online assignments as well as exam formats are discussed at the beginning of the course, the students will be able to determine what and how they would do and go through the course. Teachers should also pay attention to students' feeling such as anxiety, confusion and stress in order to design appropriate tasks for them to complete.

#### Skill development

There were two answers about speaking skill, four answers about writing skill, and one about reading skill when the students decided that what skill was the most challenging for them to develop online. Some other ideas were more specific as the students clarified the fact of online language learning required them a commitment to practice and improve their skills.

- *Reading skill is the most difficult.*
- *I think each skill has its own challenges but it isn't affected by online learning.*
- *In my opinion, speaking skill is the most difficult. It requires so many other skills; need enough grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary to build sentences and be able to speak. Honestly, all 4 skills.*

### Effects of online English courses during COVID-19

The interview question involves the explanation of “How does the process of online English teaching and learning affect your English development?” Their feedbacks include some information about skills, grammar, vocabulary and communication ability. They all realized that online English courses during COVID-19 had both positive and negative effects on their English competence.

- Skill development: (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
  - *Listening.*
  - *Good*
  - *I developed my skills every well during the process of online English learning.*
  - *Decreased listening skills.*
  - *Affected positively: listening, reading; Affected negatively: speaking, writing.*
  - *I love online listening and reading.*
- Grammar and vocabulary:
  - *Many new words (to check up immediately).*
  - *Studying online make it harder to get new words and grammar than studying offline.*
  - *Not so good.*
  - *When I learn by my phone, I can focus on grammar better.*
  - *Normal.*
  - *Improve slowly.*
  - *The teacher helps me a lot.*
- Communicative ability:
  - *Able to communicate, but not much.*
  - *Good; Normal.*
  - *I feel that my communicative ability is better when I study at school.*
  - *Not so good.*

The final question about the students’ suggestions for better online English courses. When each multiple-choice is not limited to one option, more than half of the learners confirm the importance of some following factors:

- Available resources online for learning
- More interactions during online classes
- Teachers’ adaptive instructions
- More technological applications for enjoyable learning
- Suitable changes of assessment.

#### 4.2 Teachers’ Perspectives

##### Findings from Google form questionnaire 2

The first three questions were about the number of classes during a semester, device to use and access condition. 88.9% of the teachers of English reported that they had three to five online English during a semester, at the midst of COVID-19 pandemic. All of them utilized their laptops to teach, and half of them even used their smartphones as an extra device. The number of teachers confirmed that they had “quite good” access to the internet and/or technical tools was also big, with 83.3%. When it comes to the support and assistance from the university/department, only eleven of the teachers agreed that the officials were “Very helpful”, “Moderately helpful” in offering them enough resources to teach online, accounting for only 33.3%. Seven other teachers evaluated the institutional support as “Slightly helpful” or “Not only helpful”. These results revealed that some teachers were rather disappointed with the situations they experienced during COVID-19. They really needed more support with not only technical training but also clear regulations aligned with curriculum changes. Similarly, Erarslan (2021) found out from many studies that teachers also feel stressful due to taking coping strategies; moreover, most teachers experience worry and anxiety due to heavy workload, irregular hours and online teaching itself. Thus, Fernandez-Malpartida (2021) emphasized that “Educational institutions should verify both teachers and students count with the proper internet connection and tech training to be part of the online experience” (p. 168).



4. How helpful your (University/ Department) officials been in offering you the resources to teach online?

18 câu trả lời

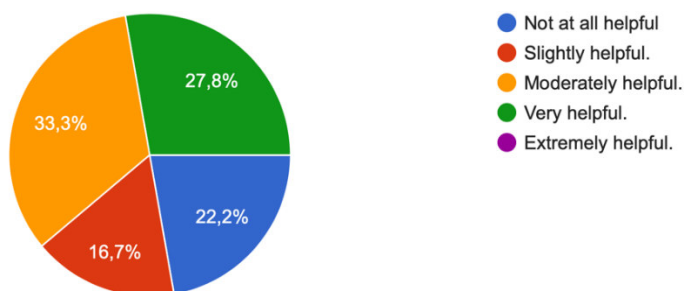


Chart 3. Question 4. Google form 2

From such a vantage point of teaching experience, at the end of the semester, the participants got feedbacks from their students, with positive comments, particularly, “excellent” accounting for 22.2%, “good” for 61.1%; nevertheless, 16.7% responses of the teachers reported that they received negative feedbacks from their students, with the option of “Below average”.

5. What kind of response (of online English teaching and learning) have you got so far from your students?

18 câu trả lời

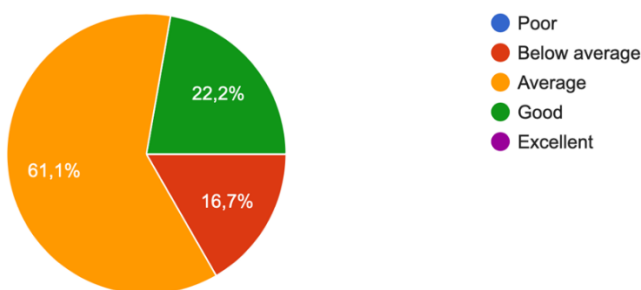


Chart 4. Question 5. Google form 2

About the effects of online academic process on students’ language skill development, it was interesting that the teachers’ assessments were a bit different from their students’ conceptions. For EFL instructors, more than half of them found that listening and writing are the skills that they could help students to improve online, while the percentage of the teachers who marked speaking and reading as challenging skills to apply online teaching strategies effectively accounted for over 61% and 77%, respectively.

6. What language skill can be affected positively and/or negatively during the process of online English teaching and learning? (You can choose MOR...skill is affected both positively and negatively).

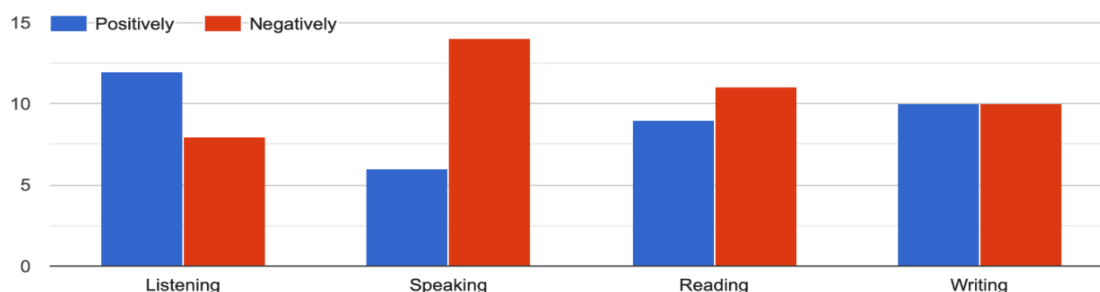


Chart 5. Question 6. Google form 2

Question 7 was about the role of technology in remote teaching, so one hundred percent of the instructors agreed upon the importance of technological devices and applications. What’s more in the next question, it is obvious that the teachers had some big concerns about the quality of teaching and learning during COVID-19.

**8. What are your big concerns about the quality of teaching and students' learning during Covid-19? You can choose MORE than one option.**

18 câu trả lời

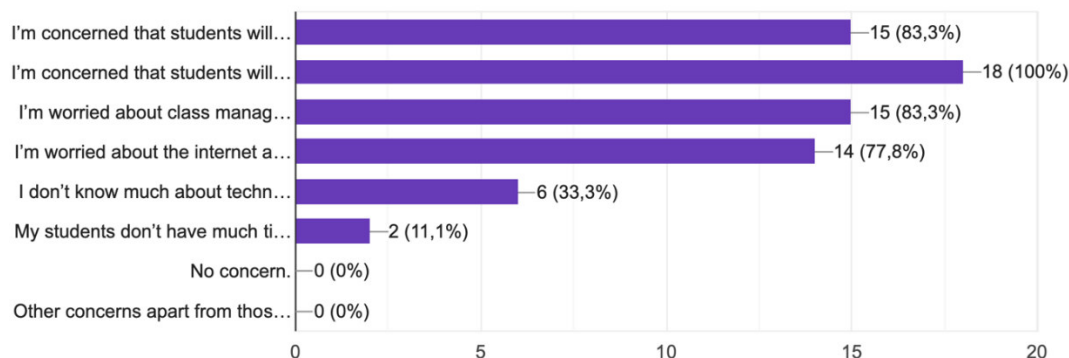


Diagram 3. Question 8. Google form 2

All of them were worried about the students' distraction as they might chat, play games or surf the internet while studying online. The same ratios of the choices, 83.3%, were about the teachers' concerns with cheating on the exam and managing synchronously class on Zoom video conferences as well as asynchronously Google classroom or Microsoft team group. Some others were bothered with the internet and maintenance of school facilities, and even some were nervous with their own limited experience with technological applications. Only two teachers were afraid that their students don't have much time for practice while learning online.

As regards to the advantages of online English language teaching, with more than one option for each question, the ratios from 55.6% to 88.9% were chosen for the issues of flexible teaching schedule, comfortable teaching environment (e.g. at home), sharing of a wide range of online resources, knowledge of educational technology (e.g. apps for language teaching and learning, ...), enhancement of learner autonomy. The teachers seemed to be exhilarated with new approach of online teaching as well as new knowledge about technical issues that they had never been discovered before. They also approved of the fact that online courses made their students become more active and get better self-regulation skills. These results are shown specifically in Diagram 4 below.

**9. Overall, please tick any advantage of online English language teaching. You can choose MORE than one option.**

18 câu trả lời

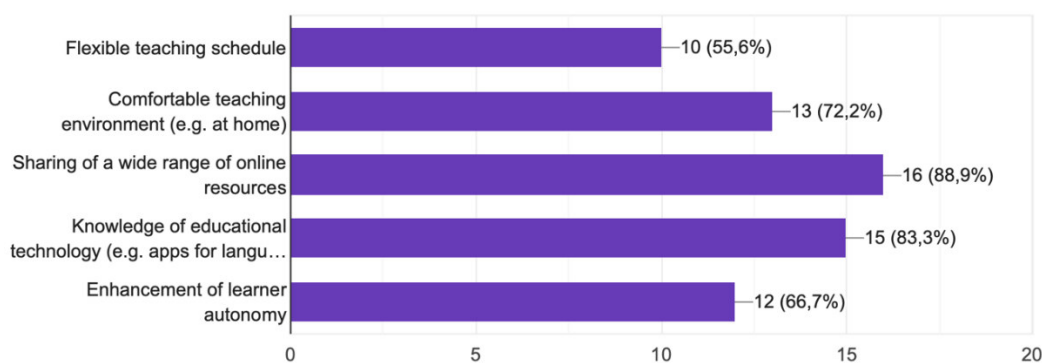


Diagram 4. Question 9. Google form 2

However, when reviewing the disadvantages of online language teaching, the instructors cared much about the lack of interaction and communication, difficulties in assessment and internet/technical problems. Besides, 55.6% of the participants were worried about their health as they spent too much time working with electronic devices due to successive online schedules. It was really hard for teachers to track students' learning as they had to create various forms of online assessment as well as spending time grading assignments. Only one third of the teachers thought of lack of internet/financial support. Additionally, no one was thinking of limited teaching resources, which might be one of positive aspects of online education in general.

10. Please, tick any disadvantage of online English language teaching. You can choose MORE than one option.

18 câu trả lời

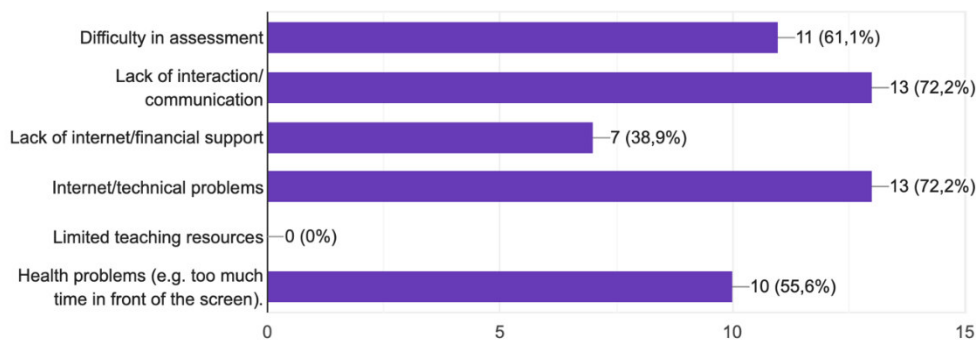


Diagram 5. Question 10. Google form 2

Finally, the participants as English language teachers also gave some recommendations for better online English teaching and learning, which involves the following issues:

- More support from the University officials/Administrators
- Intelligent adaptive softwares
- Development of technological skills
- Conferences/ Professional discussions about online language teaching
- In-school mentoring programs about online teaching and learning
- More collaboration/support from parents.

### Findings from Semi-structured interviews

In order to collect these qualitative data, four semi-structured interviews were conducted on a Zoom meeting in turn. The researcher simultaneously gave each teacher questions, recorded and took notes of any more interesting ideas. All the transcribed data were then coded into two themes of overall experience and pedagogical issues.

### Overall experience

Looking back the experience of teaching English during the pandemic, the teachers confirmed both positive and negative aspects of online teaching. One of the benefits was that they did not have to move from their house to school and vice versa, so they could save more time to teach and find materials.

#### ➤ “LIKE” responses:

- *I can work at home.*
- *Staying everywhere and teaching.*
- *I can use different apps to support my teaching.*
- *Online teaching is convenient for both teachers and students since they can teach and learn at home and avoid difficulties in moving from one place to the other.*

However, most teachers didn't like their students' distraction during online classes, and they were upset when students could not develop their social skills fully due to limited opportunities to interact with their peers and teachers.

#### ➤ “DON'T LIKE” responses:

- *Students are not attentive.*
- *Students' attention.*
- *Lack of students' interaction.*
- *Students cannot share everything with their friends directly. So they do not develop their social skills fully. Besides, teachers cannot observe their students as well as offline teaching to support students as soon as possible.*

### Pedagogical issues

Regarding pedagogical issues during COVID-19 era, the biggest concerns to talk about are class management, material distribution, instruction and facilitation and other online teaching approaches. Sometimes the teachers were not satisfied with students' concentration, which may be due to students' disengagement and interruption of connection. Although the course materials were available on Google classroom, some students even neglected to get hard copies of the books. Consequently, they could not keep track of knowledge contents during online sections, what's more, they certainly did not finish all the homework in textbooks or lecture materials. This affects negatively the quality of English teaching and learning when students were not determined to make

progress.

***How does the process of online English teaching and learning affect your pedagogy?***

- *Student participation and engagement*
- *Students don't pay attention to the lesson. (02 answers). Teacher has to wait for their response.*
- *Material distribution*
- *Materials are uploaded to Google classroom. Most of students don't have a hard copy of learning material, so it's difficult for them to follow and take notes.*
- *Instruction and Facilitation*
- *Instruction may not be clear enough.*
- *I avoid asking questions because nobody wants to answer or it's a waste of time.*
- *Speaking skills (02 answers).*
- *Listening, probably because of the poor quality of sound delivering.*
- *Other online teaching approaches:*
- *I have to create other test questions, mostly multiple choice ones to adapt to online testing.*
- *After some online courses, I have updated some teaching strategies in order to engage my students the most. I have used some tools or supported online resources to prepare for my lessons and check my students' understanding as well as participation. It is really useful.*

The most challenging skills for teachers to help their students are speaking and listening. Like Wahyuningsih (2021) stated, in offline classes, teachers use English songs and videos to teach listening and speaking, and they may use any books or stories to teach reading and writing. When the pandemic spread out, they had to shift immediately their teaching strategies to online performance. It took much time for both teachers and students to adapt to new ways of teaching and learning, especially skill development could be rather slower than that during face-to-face courses.

Fortunately, English instructors of Division of Foreign Languages strived to get the best education for their students by exploring different online and blended-teaching methods as well as joining actively in the community of English educators. They became creative in designing authentic plans and tasks to support their students, and then get better experience from online classes each semester; in other words, they truly became more professional in their own career.

## **5. Conclusions**

Based on the above findings and discussion, the study gives an insight into online college English education from perspectives of both English language instructors and learners. What they have experienced during the era of COVID-19 was not only about their safety towards the attack of disease but also the ways how to live, work and study effectively in the midst of the worldwide pandemic. For English language learners, they took advantage of the positive effects of online courses so that they would develop their English at their full potential. Some of them were excited about modern, digital learning while others might have troubles with internet or technical issues; nevertheless, they approved that online learning is the best solution for their academic continuity regardless of corona virus breakout. This is also the reason why Zou, et al. (2021) emphasized both teachers' and students' readiness and willingness to overcome challenges of emergency online education. For EFL instructors, they obtained achievement in exploring educational technologies while applying their online English curriculum, yet they seemed to have little or even no theoretical and practical knowledge in teaching English online. Therefore, the instructors were much worried with appropriate facilitations and instructions along with their students' skill development and communication enhancement. Apart from pedagogical issues, the whole process of English teaching and learning also involves the outcomes of students' records; yet the intended results were not highly authenticated due to ineffective methods of online assessment. Hence, institutional leaders or officials should be more responsible with teacher training programs so that teachers can be given enough training and practice before or during the process of online remote teaching. There will be more skillful teachers who are ready to promote their students' English competence if they have opportunities to utilize technological applications effectively and successfully. Furthermore, for a better quality of online English teaching and learning, the institutions should provide enough, convenient infrastructure as well as any other necessary support for online or blended English classes in the current post-pandemic period and also in the upcoming future.

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