Research Article

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

Thuong Nguyen *　iD

Department of Foreign Languages, Thai Nguyen University of Technology, Thai Nguyen City, Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam

* Corresponding author: Department of Foreign Languages, Thai Nguyen University of Technology: Thai Nguyen City, Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam.
Email: nguyenthikimthuong@tnut.edu.vn

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Since its outbreak, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the worldwide education systems, leading to school closures in many countries as well as changes in the whole educational system. Therefore, there has been a rapid shift from face-to-face education to emergency online teaching. English language teaching and learning is an integral flow in this stream of online processes. Hence, this study aimed to explore both teachers' and students' perspectives on English language teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology: The participants included 23 English as Foreign Language learners and 18 teachers. The respondents took part in semi-structured interviews and filled out the questionnaire. Thematic analysis was performed to analyze the obtained data.

Results: The findings from qualitative data revealed 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 was the most challenging skill to help students; moreover, some of their concerns included 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.

Conclusion: Overall, the research appeals to more support from university officials to improve the quality of online English teaching and learning. It also contributes to making both teachers' and learners' voices heard during the coronavirus quarantine.

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 Çoban

and Kuyumcu (2021), the use of information, communication, and technology (ICT) in teaching and learning during the pandemic cannot be avoided. Similarly, Suherdi (2019) insisted on how English language teaching should be implemented in the era of industry.

As one of the vital parts of education from kindergarten to higher education, English has been applied to the immediate transition from classroom building to online classes called Google classroom and other virtual learning platforms such as E-learning systems, ClassDojo, Edmodo, Nearpod, and BrainPOP. This change in the learning environment leads to changes in instructional delivery and technological application. To make it feasible and effective, the online

teaching and learning process requires the readiness of instructors, learners, even institutional officials and all other stakeholders involved. 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 determine the advantages and disadvantages of synchronous and asynchronous learning (Dhawan, 2020), which further 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 comprise "access, implementation, and pedagogical aspects", which provides an overall insight into language acquisition in online settings. Accordingly, the current study aimed to make it deeper by exploring both teachers' and students' perspectives on English language teaching and learning during COVID-19. With reference to the Vietnamese context, this study also offered a memorandum for the launch of remote language teaching during or even after the pandemic.

1.1. Review of the related literature

1.1.1. 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 or laptops. Dhawan conducted a systematic review to describe the importance of online learning and strengths, weakness, opportunities, and challenges. 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 of learning, there will no longer be a 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 increases new skills for lifelong learning since students become active in what field of knowledge they are exploring (White, 2007; Dhawan, 2020; Fatoni et al., 2020).

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

Chiablaem (2021) did a quantitative study to explore Thai students' opinions when using language applications in an online English course during COVID-19. Finally, the students all have a positive experience, and the combinations of applications based on their functions enable them to enhance all English skills and grammatical and lexical knowledge. According to Melvina et al. (2020), students are more familiar with ICT in their everyday lives so "they are ready to answer the demands of Education 4.0 in a disruptive era" (p. 355). Similarly, Kamal et al. (2021) studied the changes in the training process and cognitive abilities and academic performance during the coronavirus pandemic. He surveyed 103 participants at I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University (Russia) and Al Ain University (United Arab Emirates). The results showed that students' scores during online learning were higher than that in face-to-face classrooms. The factors contributing to better outcomes included more free time due to more breaks during several online classes, a more comfortable learning environment, and saving time to study at home instead of traveling 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) explored some issues of both advantages and disadvantages of online teaching and learning. Three aspects drawn out from the research were the affective, motivational, and cognitive aspects. Accordingly, students became more autonomous during the learning process as they could use 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 challenges, such as internet connection problems and students' reliance on technical devices. They had negative attitudes towards emergency remote learning as they were worried and stressed with changes in their study habits and the progress in language learning. Thus, students were more favorable to face-to-face classroom buildings after experiencing quite a long time of online learning community.

Adnan and Anwar (2020) shared the same idea of negative impacts when examining undergraduate and postgraduate students' perspectives on online learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan. The findings revealed undesired results of online learning in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan. The pandemic has caused some other problems for students, such as difficulty understanding their lessons as well as a lack of interaction and communication with their friends and teachers (Alawamleh et al., 2020; Esani, 2010). As Assareh and Hosseini (2011) stated, some E-learning barriers involve financial problems, motivation, assessment of progress, and isolation.

Regarding learners' perception, Sun (2014) investigated the difficulties learners faced and the ways they adapted to attend online learning fully. She was able to synthesize six major difficulties, including following the schedule and studying regularly, getting hold of classmates and finding a

suitable time to work together, pairing/teaming up and working collaboratively, ensuring constant engagement with the class, keeping self-motivated and being a self-directed learner, and socializing. Qualitative data retrieved from interviews in the study by Melvina et al. (2020) revealed several obstacles to online learning during the pandemic, such as a 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 had to help their parents with other family work. Their health was affected by spending a great amount of time in front of a computer or smartphone.

Rojabi (2020) reported that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students had problems with a home environment, which negatively affected their learning and concentration. Technical problems were also mentioned by Rahman (2020) when he studied EFL students' perception of online learning during COVID-19 Outbreak. To explore the perspectives of 40 senior students from the English Language Teaching department and their four instructors at a Turkish state university, Çoban and Kuyumcu (2021) conducted a survey and semi-structured interviews. As a result, positive opinions included time-space time-space flexibility, reviewing lessons by recordings, self-paced learning, affordability, comfort, sharing a wide range of resources, and instant feedback. In contrast, negative opinions were 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 conducted to explore the ways learners adapt to online education. With their research on the roles of learning strategies and motivation in online language learning, Lin and Zheng (2017) soon confirmed the importance of compatible online learning strategies. Later, Fernandez-Malpartida (2021) studied ESL learners' language strategies and their English proficiency. The findings indicated that most participants applied metacognitive strategies and improved their English with the teachers' support, helpful feedback and class recording availability. In addition, a study conducted by Famularsih (2020) focused on the utilization of online learning applications in EFL classrooms. Fansury et al. (2020) insisted that the EFL field is one of the proper fields to utilize some interactive digital content as learning resources if the teachers and students are digital natives. 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.

1.1.2. Online language teaching

Before the pandemic, after studying the barriers to both E-teaching and E-learning, Assareh and Hosseini (2011) reported that the teacher barriers comprised of lack of adequate knowledge about E-learning and difficulty in assessment. Peterson (2014) also realized the challenges of online second language teaching and learning and reported that using internet-based facilities would confuse teachers about the whole online teaching process. A study in Iran by Khatoony and Nezhadmehr (2020) indicated some other obstacles, including a lack of proper resources, students' motivation and attention, and financial support. Rasmitadila et al. (2020) and Melvina et al. (2020) came to a similar conclusion about the difficulties of online learning, involving the lack of time for lesson preparation, inadequate professional development concerning technology, and limited facilities and technical supports.

However, online language teaching also creates more opportunities for learning autonomy, as Haron and 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 about the implementation of emergency online English teaching. Some teachers upheld the idea that the transition to online teaching would sustain the quality of language teaching and develop students' language skills, while other teachers kept negative opinions. It cannot be denied that teachers would adopt new roles as remote instructors and gain experience in teaching online while increasing their technical knowledge to integrate pedagogical and content knowledge. Nevertheless, some challenges they have to face are a lack of familiarity with technology, particularly in case of older teachers, students' lower achievements, heavy workload, and irregularity of online teaching hours. This leads to the demand for innovation in pedagogy for online language teaching.

More than 10 years ago, Sun (2011) urged educators, teachers, and other stakeholders to rethink online pedagogical approaches. She strongly emphasized the shift in online language teaching from teacher-centered approaches towards a personalized, small-group-orientated, multi-dimensional teaching model. This can be aligned with the constructivism theory of learner-centered 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 and Lee (2020) discussed the teachers' hardship in pronunciation skills and writing classes as students may need immediate feedback to correct their mistakes. Some supplementary devices and platforms should be applied to support both teachers and

leaners. The 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 preferable to face-to-face foreign language teaching because they stated that the teachers emphasized 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' voices heard, Wahyuningsih (2021) explored the implementation of E-learning in teaching English 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, google classroom, YouTube, and video. However, 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.

1.1.3. English language teaching and learning at Thai Nguyen University of Technology during COVID-19

Under the 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, made all the teachers and students more adaptive to online activities from teaching, learning, meetings, discussions, and exams. Thus, all English language teachers at Thai Nguyen University of Technology (TNUT) 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 at the Division of Foreign Languages applied some technological tools, such as Zoom, Google meet, Microsoft Team, Facetime, and Zalo groups to have online lectures. Additionally, for students' better language acquisition, they actively search more interesting linguistic activities on YouTube, Quizlet, Quizizz, Padlet, and Nearpod, to make students focused and interested.

The positive aspects of online English teaching and learning at TNUT included a flexible schedule for both teachers and learners, more technical aids, and gamification (e.g., Kahoot and Blooket). Such games seem to refresh the normal and monotonous way of teaching and create a new atmosphere of language learning. Therefore, EFL teachers and students take opportunities to study useful applications or tools for better teaching and learning, and simultaneously share many other online resources on the English language. However, they also experience a hard time with technical

problems and other issues of language skill development. Hence, this study aimed to offer insight into English language teaching and learning at TNUT during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the study could contribute to the worldwide body of research in the field of language teaching, especially from the whole perspective of the online process.

The paper seeks to answer the following research questions:

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

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

The study was conducted at the Thai Nguyen University of Technology, Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam, during the second semester of the school year 2021-2022. Participants as learners were 23 students in K57AP class (21 male and 2 female). A total of 18 teachers from the Division of Foreign Languages also agreed to join the research voluntarily and complete eleven open-ended survey questions as well as answer the semi-structured interviews.

2.2. Instrumentation

This study applied a qualitative research model, involving two sets of data. Specifically, the researcher designed two Google forms for both EFL teachers' and students' questionnaires (Appendixes A and B). The questionnaires were adapted from questionnaires initiated by Çoban and Kuyumcu (2021) and Erarslan (2021).

As for the second data, focus group interviews and individual interviews were used in order to get in-depth meanings of participants' opinions (Creswell, 2012). According to Fraenkel et al. (2011), there are many ways to conduct and tools to access the data. Thus, the researcher chose Zoom as a video conferencing tool to hold the interview.

2.3. Procedure

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, and advantages/ disadvantages. Some questions were also adapted from the list of questions on the website https://www.questionpro.com.

Due to 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 to be ready for quantitative analyses in the next phase of the study.

During the interview, the focus group members of the teachers and students was 4 and 10, 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 joined the Zoom meeting and discussed the probed questions for two hours. The researcher tried to make the interview similar to a class discussion so that the students could freely and excitedly express their ideas since there were no right or wrong opinions and interrupted corrections. All answers were recorded immediately on the Zoom application. Four instructors were interviewed separately in person on Zoom at different times. Each interview with the instructor lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. The researcher, as an English language teacher, tried to listen attentively to the participants as her colleagues. Data from the interviews with the instructors included both recordings and notes obtained.

To analyze the data from semi-structured interviews, the researchers adopted thematic analysis. As Braun and Clarke (2006) defined, "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p.6). The process of thematic analysis involves several steps, including 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).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Learners' perspectives

3.1.1. 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 for the first and second questions showed that 65.2% of the learners had access to the internet with their smartphones. Yet, one-third of

them chose the option that their devices do not work well during the class. When students were asked about the effectiveness of online learning, nearly half of them chose "Moderately effective" (Figure 1). The responses to "Extremely effective" and "Very effective" were at the same rate (13%). Moreover, 13% of students believed online learning was "Slightly effective" and "Quite effective", meaning that some students would prefer face-to-face lectures to online sessions.

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 (Figure 2). The students found it hard to practice speaking while attending online classes. This was due to some issues with the internet. Moreover, teachers' instructions and facilitation might not be clear enough to provoke communication. These results align with the findings reported by Bailey and Lee (2020) when they insisted on teachers' difficulties in pronunciation and writing classes.

Positively, nearly 100% of the students highly appreciated the teachers' assistance in education during the pandemic. According to Crawford et al. (2020), students' positive perception of their teacher feedback also plays an important role as this motivates students to overcome challenges and have good academic performances at the university level.

Regarding the advantages of online English learning, about 50% of the participants mentioned some typical issues of a comfortable learning environment, flexible time of learning, self-paced learning, and sharing of many online resources (Figure 3). This has been mentioned in many other studies that learners become more active in their own learning approaches (Dhawan, 2020; Fantonia et al., 2020; Haron et al., 2015; Melvina et al., 2020). Learners in the current study found online learning much more convenient with recorded videos as they did not have to be worried about missing any information from the online lecture.
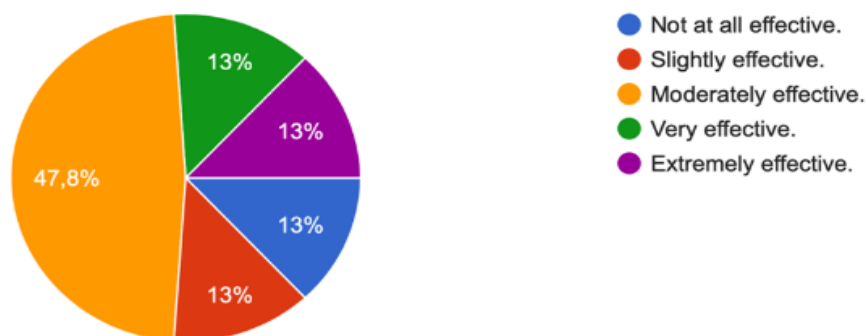

Figure 1.
Effectiveness of Online Learning

4. How do your language skills develop while interacting during online lessons?
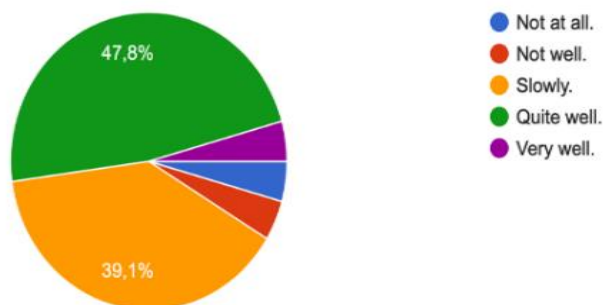23 câu trả lời

Figure 2.
Learners' Attitude toward Language Skills Development during Online Lessons

The majority of the responses about the disadvantages of online English classes focused on internet/technical problems, and difficulty in understanding the lessons (Figure 4). About 40% of the students were thinking about unexpected effects on health, and some others ticked the options of difficulties concentrating on studying 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 in a short time. Besides, when some learners were not self-disciplined enough, they could be easily distracted by a number of social networks, such as Facebook, Zalo, and Twitter. Another big problem was teacher-student and student-student interactions 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.

3.1.2. Findings from semi-structured interview

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

3.1.3. Overall experience

When asked about their likes and dislikes of online English learning, the participants' responses varied. Some similar or opposite ideas were summarized, indicating that they really had both positive and negative feelings toward learning during the quarantine.

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

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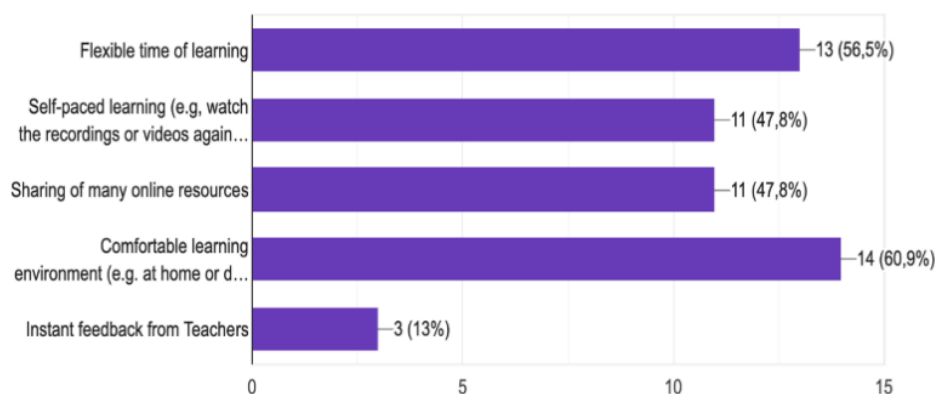23 câu trả lời

Figure 3.
Learners' Attitude toward Advantages of Online English Language Learning

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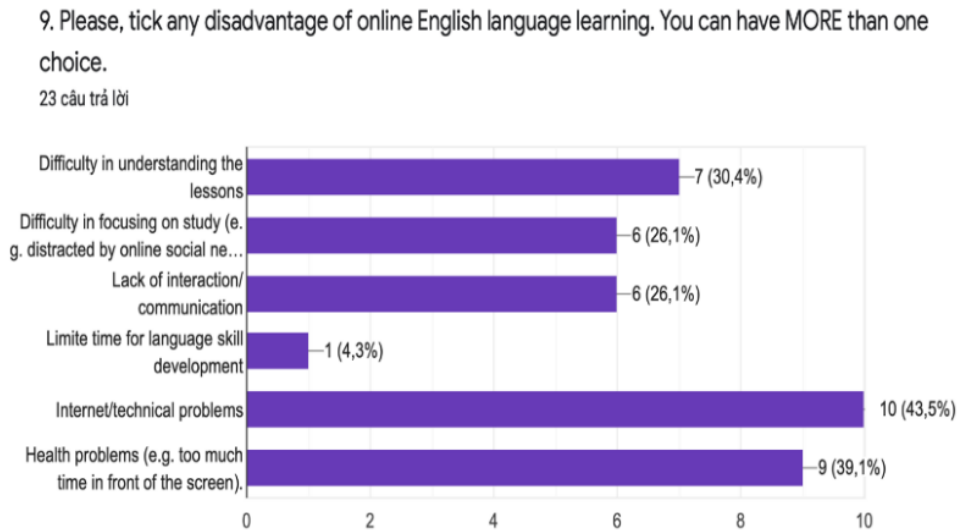
23 câu trả lời

Figure 4.
Learners' Attitude toward Disadvantages of Online English Language Learning

- *It's easy to access, save time, save money*

➢ "DISLIKE" 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 hurts eyes.*
- *Teacher sets up too much work, students have a 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 were expected to care about connection availability. Both learners and teachers were required to be trained and about technical issues. If the number of online assignments as well as exam formats were discussed at the beginning of the course, the students could understand the course objectives and what they would do and go through. Teachers should also pay attention to students' feeling, including anxiety, confusion, and stress in order to design appropriate tasks for them to complete.

3.1.4. Skill development

There were two answers about speaking skill, four answers about writing skill, and one about reading skill when the students talked about the 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 four skills.*

3.1.5. Effects of online English courses during COVID-19

The interview question involved the explanation of "How does the online English teaching and learning process affect your English development?" Their feedback included some information about skills, grammar, vocabulary, and communication ability. They all realized that online English courses during COVID-19 positively and negatively affected their English competence.

➢ Skill development: (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
- *Listening.*
- *Good*
- *I developed my skills very 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 makes it harder to get new words and grammar than studying offline.*
- *Not so good.*
- *When I learn on my phone, I can focus on grammar better.*
- *Normal.*
- *Improve slowly.*
- *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 is about the students' suggestions for better online English courses. When each multiple-choice was not limited to one option, more than half of the learners

confirmed the importance of the 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.*

3.2. Teachers' Perspectives

3.2.1. 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. Findings indicated that 88.9% of English teachers had three to five online English courses during a semester at the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. All of them used their laptops to teach, and half even used their smartphones as extra devices. About 83.3% of teachers confirmed that they had "quite good" access to the internet and/or technical tools was also big. Regarding the support and assistance from the university/ department, only 11 teachers agreed that the officials were "Very helpful", or "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 (Figure 5). 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 stressed 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).

However, , the teachers received pisitive feedbacks from their students at the end of the semester, 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" (Figure 6).
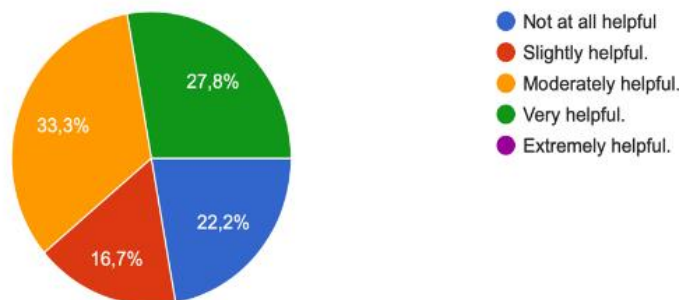
Figure 5.
Helpfulness of University/ Department Officials in Offering Teachers the Resources to Teach Online
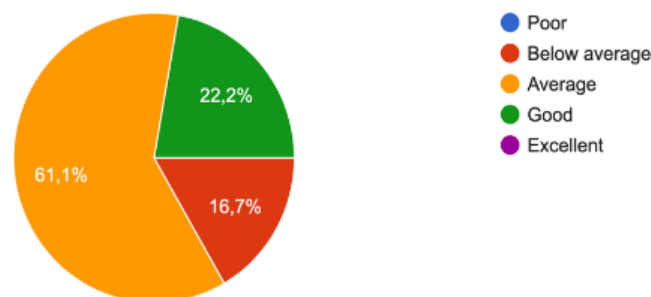

Figure 6.
Learners' Feedback toward Online English

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).
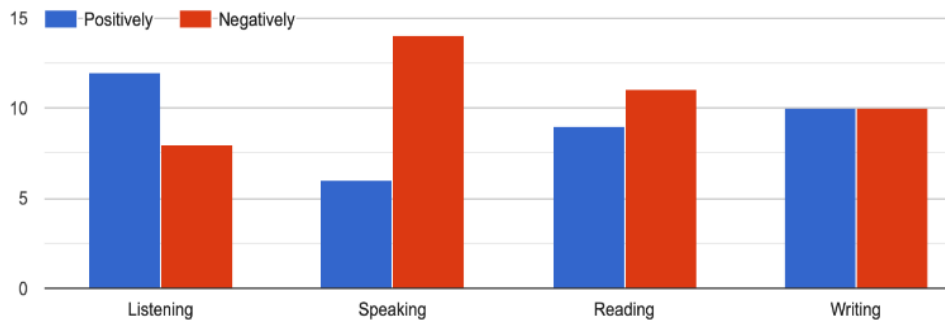

Figure 7.
Teachers' Attitude toward Language Skills Development during Online Lessons

Regarding the effects of the online academic process on students' language skill development, the teachers' assessments were a bit different from their students' conceptions. For EFL instructors, more than half of them found that listening and writing were 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 (Figure 7).

Question 7 was about the role of technology in remote teaching, so 100% of the instructors agreed upon the importance of technological devices and applications. However, it was obvious that the teachers had some big concerns about the quality of teaching and learning during COVID-19.

All of them were worried about the students' distraction as they might chat, play games or surf the internet while studying online. Almost 83.3% of teachers were concerned about learners' cheating on the exam and managing synchronous classes on Zoom video conferences and asynchronously Google classroom or Microsoft team group. Some others were bothered by the internet and maintenance of school facilities, and even some were nervous about their own limited experience with technological applications. Only two teachers were afraid of their learners' insufficient time to practice the lessons while learning online (Figure 8).

Regarding the advantages of online English language teaching, with more than one option for each question, the rates of 55.6-88.9% 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 discovered before. They also confirmed that online courses made their students become more active and get better self-regulation skills. These results are shown in Figure 9.

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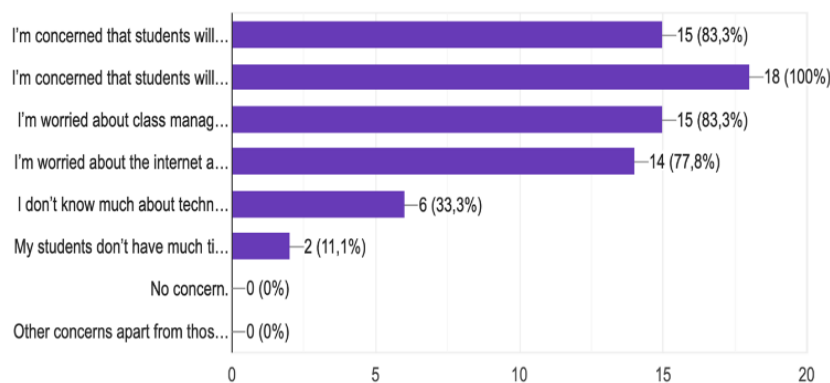
18 câu trả lời

Figure 8.
Teachers' Concerns about the Quality of Teaching and Students' Learning during COVID 19

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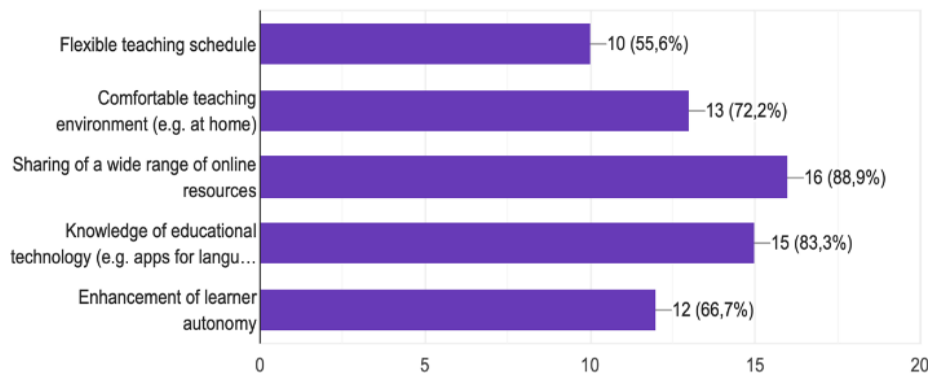
18 câu trả lời

Figure 9.
Teachers' Attitude toward Advantage of Online English Language Teaching

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 EFL teachers 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 (Figure 10).

Finally, English language teachers also provided some recommendations for better online English teaching and learning, such as
- *More support from the University officials/Administrators*
- *Intelligent adaptive software*
- *Development of technological skills*
- *Conferences/ Professional discussions about online language teaching*
- *In-school mentoring programs about online teaching and learning*
- *More collaboration/support from parent.*

3.2.2. Findings from semi-structured interviews

In order to collect these qualitative data, four semi-structured interviews were conducted using a Zoom meeting. 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 overall experience and pedagogical issues.

3.2.3. Overall experience

Looking back on the experience of teaching English

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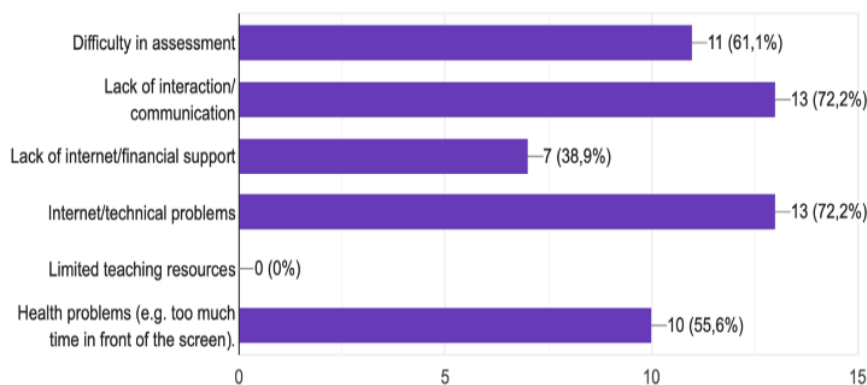
18 câu trả lời

Figure 10.
Teachers' Attitude toward Disadvantages of Online English Language Teaching

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 on teaching and finding 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 did not like their students' distractions during online classes. They were upset when students could not fully develop their social skills due to limited opportunities to interact with their peers and teachers.

➢"DISLIKE" 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.*

3.2.4. Pedagogical issues

Regarding pedagogical issues during COVID-19 era, the biggest concerns to talk about were class management, material distribution, instruction and facilitation, and other online teaching approaches. Some 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 content during online sections. In addition, they were not self-disciplined to finish all the homework in textbooks or lecture materials. This could negatively affect 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 (2 answers). Teacher has to wait for their response*

➢*Material distribution*
- *Materials are uploaded to Google classroom. Most students don't have a hard copy of learning material, so it's difficult 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.*

Speaking and listening were the most challenging skills for teachers to help their students. According to Wahyuningsih (2021), 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, they had to shift their teaching strategies to online performance immediately. It took much time for teachers and students to adapt to new ways of teaching and learning, especially since skill development could be slower than that during face-to-face courses.

Fortunately, English instructors in the current study 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 gained a better experience from online classes each semester; in other words, they became more professional in their careers.

4. Conclusion

Based on the above findings and discussion, the present study gave an insight into online college English education from the perspectives of both English language instructors and learners. What they have experienced during COVID-19 was not only about their safety towards the attack of disease but also the ways to live, work, and study effectively amid the worldwide pandemic. For English language learners, they took advantage of the positive effects of online courses so that they would develop their English to their full potential. Some of them were excited about modern, digital learning, while others might have internet or technical issues; nevertheless, they approved that online learning was the best solution for their academic continuity regardless of the coronavirus breakout. For EFL instructors, they obtained achievement in exploring educational technologies while applying their online English curriculum. Yet, they seemed to have little or no theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching English online. Therefore, the instructors were much worried about appropriate facilitation and instructions, their students' skill development, and communication enhancement. Apart

from pedagogical issues, the whole process of English teaching and learning also involved the outcomes of students' records; however, the intended results were not highly authenticated due to ineffective online assessment methods. Hence, institutional leaders or officials should be more responsible for teacher training programs so that teachers can be given enough training and practice before or during online remote teaching. More skillful teachers will be 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 and any other necessary support for online or blended English classes in the current post-pandemic period and the future.

Declarations

Competing interests

The author declared no competing interests.

Availability of data and materials

The manuscript contains all datasets generated and/or analyzed in the current study.

References

Adnan, M., & Anwar, K. (2020). Online learning amid the Covid-19 pandemic: Students' perspectives. *Journal of Pedagogical Sociology and Psychology, 2*(1), 45-51. https://doi.org/10.33902/JPSP.%202020261309

Alawamleh, M., Al-Twait, L. M., & Al-Saht, G. R. (2020). The effect of online learning on communication between instructors and students during COVID-19 pandemic. *Asian Education and Development Studies*, *11*(2), 380-400. https://doi.org/10.1108/AEDS-06-2020-0131

Assareh, A., & Hosseini Bidokht, M. (2011). Barriers to e- teaching and e-learning. *Procedia Computer Science*, *3*, 791-795. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2010.12.129

Bailey, D. R., & Andrea R. L. (2020). Learning from experience in the midst of COVID-19: Benefits, challenges, and strategies in online teaching. *Computer- Assisted Language Learning Electronic Journal, 21*(2), 176-196. http://callej.org/journal/21-2/Bailey-Lee2020.pdf

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Chiablaem, P. (2021). Enhancing English communication skills of Thai University students through Google Apps for education (GAFE) in a digital era during Covid-19 pandemic. *Shanlax International Journal of Education, 9*(3), 91-98. https://doi.org/10.34293/

Çoban, B. T., & Kuyumcu V. A. (2021). Evaluation of distance English language teaching education during COVID-19 pandemic from the perspectives of ELT student teachers and their instructors. *Journal of Pedagogical Research*,

5(3), 198-220. https://doi.org/10.33902/JPR.2021371746

Crawford, J., Butler-Henderson, K., Rudolph, J., Malkawi, B., Glowatz, M., Burton, R., Magni, P., & Lam, S. (2020). COVID-19: 20 countries' higher education intra-period digital pedagogy responses. *Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching, 3*(1), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2020.3.1.7

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson Education, Inc. http://repository.unmas.ac.id/medias/journal/EBK-00121.pdf

Dhawan, S. (2020). Online learning: A panacea in the time of covid-19 crisis. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, *49*(1), 5-22. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047239520934018

Erarslan, A. (2021). English language teaching and learning during Covid-19: A global perspective on the first year. *Journal of Educational Technology & Online Learning, 4*(2), 349-367. https://doi.org/10.31681/jetol.907757

Esani, M. (2010). Moving from face-to-face to online teaching. *American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science, 23*(3), 187-190. https://doi.org/10.29074/ascls.23.3.187

Famularsih, S. (2020). Students' experiences in using online learning applications due to Covid-19 in English classroom. *Studies in Learning and Teaching*, *1*(2), 112-121. https://doi.org/10.46627/silet.v1i2.40

Fansury, A. H., Restu, J., Ali Wira R., & Syawal. (2020). Digital content for millennial generations: Teaching the English foreign language learner on COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University*, *55*(3), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.35741/issn.0258-2724.55.3.40

Fatoni, N. A., Nurkhayati, E., Nurdiawati, E., Fidziah, Pamungkas, G., Adha, S., Irawan., Purwanto, A., Julyanto, O., & Aziz, E. (2020). University students online learning system during Covid-19 pandemic: Advantages, constraints and solutions. *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy*, *11*(7), 570-576. https://www.sysrevpharm.org/articles/university-students-online-learning-system-during-covid19-pandemic-advantages-constraints-and-solutions.pdf

Fernandez-Malpartida, W. M. (2021). Language learning strategies, English proficiency and online English instruction perception during covid-19 in Peru. *International Journal of Instruction*, *14*(4), 155-172. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.14410a

Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2011). *How to design and evaluate research in education*. McGraw-Hill.

Haron, N. N., Zaid, Y. H., & Ibrahim, N. O. (2015). E- learning as a platform to learn English among ESL learners: Benefits and barriers. *Research in Language Teaching and Learning, 7*, 79-105.

Kamal, M. I., Zubanova, S., Isaeva, A., & Vasily, M. (2021). Distance learning impact on the English language teaching during COVID-19. *Education and Information Technologies, 26*, 7307-7319. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10588-y

Khatoony, S., & Nezhadmehr, M. (2020). EFL teachers' challenges in integration of technology for online classrooms during Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Iran. *Asian Journal of English Language and Pedagogy*, *8*(2), 89-104. https://doi.org/10.37134/ajelp.vol8.2.7.2020

Kitzinger, J. (1995). Qualitative research: Introducing focus groups. *BMJ, 311*, 299-302. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.311.7000.299

Lei, S. I., & So, A. S. I. (2021). Online teaching and learning experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic–A comparison of teacher and student perceptions. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*, *33*(3), 148-162. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2021.1907196

Lian, J., Chai, C. S., Zheng, C., & Liang, J. C. (2021). Modelling the relationship between Chinese university students' authentic language learning and their English self-efficacy during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 30,* 217-228. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-021-00571

Lin, C. H., Zhang, Y., & Zheng, B. (2017). The roles of learning strategies and motivation in online language learning: A structural equation modeling analysis. *Computers & Education*, *113*, 75-85. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2017.05.014

Melvina, Lengkanawati N. S., Wirza, Y., Alicia, D., & Yulmiati. (2020). EFL learners' view on online learning implementation during Covid-19 outbreaks. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, *513*, 351-357. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201230.130

Peterson, K. B. (2014). Learning theories and skills in online second language teaching and learning: Dilemmas and challenges. *JISTE*, *18*(2), 41-51. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1087588.pdf

Rahman, K. (2020). Learning amid crisis: EFL students' perception on online learning during Covid-19 outbreak. *English, Teaching, Learning, and Research Journal*, *6*(2), 179-194. https://doi.org/10.24252/Eternal.V62.2020.A1

Rasmitadila, R., Aliyyah, R. R., Rachmadtullah, R., Samsudin, A., Syaodih, E., Nurtanto, M., & Tambunan, A. R. S. (2020). The perceptions of primary school teachers of online learning during the Covid- 19 pandemic period: A case study in Indonesia. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies, 7*(2), 90-109. https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/388

Rojabi, A. R. (2020). Exploring EFL students' perception of online learning via Microsoft teams: University level in Indonesia. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, *3*(2), 163-173. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1268365.pdf

Sun, S. Y. H. (2014). Learner perspective on fully online language learning. *Distance Education*, *35*(1), 18-42. https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2014.891428

Sun, S. Y. H. (2011). Online language teaching: The pedagogical challenges. *Knowledge Management & E-Learning: An International Journal*, *3*(3), 428-447. https://doi.org/10.34105/j.kmel.2011.03.030

Suherdi, D. (2019). Teaching English in the industry 4.0 and disruption era: Early lessons from the implementation of smelt i 4.0 de in a senior high lab school class. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *9*(1), 67-75. https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v9i1.16418

Tümen-Akyıldız, S., Çelik, V., & Hussein Ahmed, K. (2021). The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on EFL classes through the lenses of Secondary learners. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, *9*(4), 389-406. https://doi.org/10.34293/

United nations educational, scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO) (2020). Education: From disruption to recovery. https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse

Wahyuningsih, S. (2021). *Teaching English through E-learning during the COVID-19 outbreak: English teachers' perspectives at Indonesian junior high schools*. International Conference on Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Sebelas Maret. Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus, Indonesia.

White, C. (2007). Innovation and identity in distance language learning and teaching. *International Journal of Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, *1*(1), 97-110. https://doi.org/10.2167/illt45.0

World health organization (WHO) (2020). World health statistics 2020. https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/ situation-reports/20200121-sitrep-1-2019-ncov.pdf?sfvrsn=20a99c10_4

Appendix A.
Questionnaire to investigate learners' erspectives on English language teaching and learning during COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Student,
I'm working on the research titled "PERSPECTIVES ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING COVID-19 Pandemic." I would be grateful for your help with this survey, an important part of the research. Thus, your assistance in completing this questionnaire is highly appreciated. You can make sure that your name will not be identified in any data analyses as all of your answers are anonymous. If you need any further clarification, do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you very much!

1. Do you have access to a device for online learning?
Yes.
Yes, but it doesn't work well.
No, I share with others.

2. What device do you use for online learning? You can have more than ONE choice.
Laptop
Desktop
Tablet
Smartphone

3. How effective has online learning been for you?
Not at all effective
Slightly effective
Moderately effective
Very effective
 Extremely effective

4. How do your language skills develop while interacting during online lessons?
Not at all.
Not well.
Slowly.
Quite well.
Very well.

5. What skill of your four language skills is developing or not developing during online English learning process? (You can have more than ONE choice if you think your skill may be both developing a little and not developing so much.).

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Developing				
Not developing				

6. How helpful your (University or Teacher) been in offering you the resources to learn online?
Not at all helpful.
Slightly helpful.
Moderately helpful.
Very helpful.
Extremely helpful.

7. How do you feel about online language learning?
Poor
Below Average
Average
Good
Excellent

8. Please, tick any advantage of online English language learning. You can have MORE than one choice.
Flexible time of learning
Self-paced learning (e.g, watch the recordings or videos again and again)
Sharing of many online resources

Comfortable learning environment (e.g. at home or dorm)
Instant feedback from Teachers

9. Please, tick any disadvantage of online English language learning. You can have MORE than one choice.
Difficulty in understanding the lessons
Difficulty in focusing on study (e.g. distracted by online social network: Facebook, Zalo…)
Lack of interaction/communication
Limite time for language skill development
Internet/technical problems
Health problems (e.g. too much time in front of the screen).

10. Choose some of the following issues which you think would support and improve your online English language learning. You can have MORE than one choice.
Available resources online for learning
More interactions during online classes
Teachers' adaptive instructions
More technological applications for enjoyable learning
Suitable changes of assessment.

Appendix B.
Questionnaire to investigate teacher's perspectives on English language teaching and learning during COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Teacher,
I'm working on the research titled "PERSPECTIVES ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING COVID-19 Pandemic." I would be grateful for your help with this survey, an important part of the research. Thus, your assistance in completing this questionnaire is highly appreciated. You can make sure that your name will not be identified in any data analyses as all of your answers are anonymous. If you need any further clarification, do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you very much!!!

1. How many online classes on average do you have during a semester ?
1 - 2 online classes
2 - 3 online classes.
3 - 5 online classes.
More than 5 online classes.

2. Do you have a good access to device/internet for online teaching?
Yes, definitely good.
Yes, quite good.
Yes, but it doesn't work well.
No, it often has problems.

3. What device do you use for online teaching? You can choose MORE than one option.
Laptop
Desktop
Tablet
Smartphone

4. How helpful your (University/ Department) officials been in offering you the resources to teach online?
Not at all helpful.
Slightly helpful.
Moderately helpful.
Very helpful.
Extremely helpful.

5. What kind of response (of online English teaching and learning) have you got so far from your students?
Poor
Below average
Average
Good
Excellent

6. What language skill can be affected positively and/or negatively during the process of online English teaching and learning? (You can choose MORE than one option if you think the skill is affected both positively and negatively).
Positively   Negatively
Listening
Speaking
Reading
Writing

7. How important is the role of technology in remote teaching?
Not at all important.
Slightly important.
Moderately important.
Very important.
Extremely important.

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

I'm concerned that students will cheat on the test.
I'm concerned that students will be distracted by other things like chatting, playing games or surfing the internet while studying online.
I'm worried about class management.
I'm worried about the internet and maintenance of device.
I don't know much about technological applications online.
My students don't have much time for practice while learning online.
No concern.
Other concerns apart from those above-mentioned ones.

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

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

Difficulty in assessment
Lack of interaction/communication
Lack of internet/financial support
Internet/technical problems
Limited teaching resources
Health problems (e.g. too much time in front of the screen).

11. Choose one or MORE than one of the following issues which you think would support and improve your online teaching.

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 parent