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Students' attitudes to online reading in the era of technology at the

University of Transport and Communications

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Abstract

Thanks to the remarkable development of technology 4.0, online reading is becoming more popular for students. Higher education institutions encourage their students to participate in online learning courses as well as widening their knowledge by reading online after campus–based learning, especially in the Covid19 epidemic. The study was conducted to investigate the students' attitudes to online reading as well as the effects of online reading for UTC2 students and ways to access information accurately by collecting 200 students from five different majors, including Civil Engineering, Construction Engineering, Economics, Mechanical Engineering, and Information Technology. The qualitative approach with a well–structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data from respondents. The findings pointed out that the students showed their positive attitudes toward online reading because online reading is an effective way to improve their knowledge and the effectiveness of online reading significantly varies with their reading purposes, technology usage and skills.

Keywords: online reading, online reading effects, UTC2 students.

1. Introduction

In the era of technology 4.0 and the outbreak of the COVID19 epidemic, online reading is one of the most popularly searched keywords to meet students' studying needs worldwide in general and the students at the University of Transport and Communications in particular. Online learning programs require learners to be autonomous and be experts at using online learning tools. For students to widen their professional knowledge, paper and online documents are considered important documents. However, not all students know how to select materials to read online effectively. It is the process for learners to determine goals, reading content, and apply their searching skills. Therefore, a study needs to be done to investigate how effective online reading is as well as its drawbacks.

2. Literature review

In order to explore how online reading affects learners' knowledge acquisition, the part aims to build up a theoretical framework on which the learners' online reading will be grounded. Hence, this part focuses on the definitions of online reading, its effective and drawbacks in the previous study, and the related studies of online reading techniques.

2.1 Online reading

Scientific areas in general and in education, in particular, have been influenced by developments in the field of science and technology. This promotes the technological infrastructure developed for educational organizations, particularly how learning changes rapidly. Currently, online reading is considered a popular way to widen readers' knowledge in the world. Apart from reading printed materials, online reading is the

process of extracting meanings from a text that is in a digital format.

2.1.1 Effectiveness of online reading

Nowadays, it is easy to access a huge amount of information through the Internet in digital forms without cost and without going anywhere. According to Hira and Munira (2018), reading requires concentration because of the mental process. However, on the Internet, so many things are available that distract readers' attention, and focus on the required information is really challenging. In contrast, the authors report that online reading enhances learners' reading interest. In addition, Karim, Hasan, and Shahriza (2011) determine that the young combine online reading in their learning mostly because of the availability of an increasing amount of information and entertainment. Furthermore, Liu (2005) also supports that the growth of online information available influences readers' behaviors towards online reading, and people spend more time on online reading. Hence, it is considered as imperative need to understand the reading phenomena for the benefits of reading.

In the article by Akpokodje (2016), they identify that online reading is used among learners all the time. Readers prefer online reading for information seeking because of its availability of cross-references and hyperlinks. As can be seen, learners read materials as well as information of all fields through the Internet.

Verma and Malvyya (2010) explored that the internet and digital media impact learners' reading habits. Based on the results of the comparative study, it showed the reading habit of traditional library readers changed due to the electronic environment. The Internet provides easy access to portable information. It has a great source on Internet for sharing and receiving a large amount of information. As a result, the learners can read worldwide information in spite of staying at home.

2.1.2 Drawbacks of online reading

Apart from the advantages of online reading as above, several disadvantages need to be improved.

Ajayi, Shorunke, and Aboyade (2014) describe that a key factor hindering the use of electronic resources is poor internet facilities. In order for learners to read online effectively, internet-connected devices play an important role in fulfilling their purposes of reading. Reading online in rural areas is challenging for students.

In the article by Loan (2012), the impact of internet surfing on reading practices and choices of students' net generation is investigated. The result revealed that online reading makes interactive and superficial reading increased while sequential reading, concentrated reading, and in-depth reading decreased. Additionally, there has been an increase in the reading of news, reviews, general information, selected fields, and religious text through internet surfing, while reading of literature has decreased.

Noticeably, Mokhtari, Reichard, and Gardner (2019) revealed that students mainly used the Internet for entertainment. A majority of the students determined that they enjoyed Internet more than academic purposes reading. As mentioned above, students go online reading for relaxing more than acquiring academic information.

Lazonder, Biermans, and Wopereis (2018) determined that the electronic reading effectiveness may be varied as a function of individual variables in terms of learners' level of technological experience or their prior knowledge of the content area. The result defined the learners who are experts at technology usage were faster, more successful, more efficient, and more effective in the website location tasks. Moreover,

learners' ability seems to be influenced to navigate through content, make choices among several document links, and understand content and information sources by prior knowledge. As a result, first-year students or low technology students seem to be difficult to read online most effectively.

2.2 Research Questions

In order to determine what the students' attitudes toward online reading at UTC2, and based on the literature review, previous studies, and the research problem, this research endeavors to answer the following questions so that it is to achieve the objectives of the study:

a)   What are the UTC2 students' attitudes toward online reading?

b)   What influences on UTC2 students' online reading in the era of technology 4.0?

c)   How do UTC2 students read online materials most effectively?

3. Methods

3.1 Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The Covid19 pandemic seriously affects health and all living aspects. Many schools, colleges, and universities have been closed. Online reading is an appropriate way to widen learners' knowledge in the case of homeschooling as well as direct schooling. Because of the Covid 19 pandemic, the University of Transport and Communications (UTC2) has boldly applied online learning to teaching activities to ensure knowledge for students during break time. Hence, online reading has been required to enhance learners' information acquisition. However, there is a major important question in doubt: Do the students show their positive attitudes toward online reading as well as does online reading offer any effectiveness and drawbacks for UTC2 students? If yes, what is a good way for online reading?

This research was employed to examine the students' attitudes toward online reading at UTC2. The target population consisted of 200 students majoring in Civil Engineering, Construction Engineering, Economics, Mechanical Engineering, and Information Technology. All participants use the Internet and reader of online materials regularly.

3.2 Design of the Study

This study was employed to examine the effects of online reading. To fulfil the objectives of the study, the qualitative approach is applied.

A 3 Likert questionnaire is designed to fulfill the objectives of the study. This questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part is demographic questions in terms of the name (optional), gender, major, and schooling year. The second part consists of questions used to investigate the effectiveness and drawbacks of online reading. The last part is several open questions relating to some effective online reading techniques applied by the students of UTC2. To ensure the credibility of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted in advance. One interview meeting was carried out in the classroom after the questionnaire.

3.3 Data collection & analysis

A Vietnamese questionnaire version was delivered to the classes by the co-workers. All participants were instructed clearly to answer the questions. Participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire during the

lecture.

4. Results/Findings and discussion

4.1 Respondent Demographics

According to Figure1, 148 (74%) males and 52 (26%) females are included in the study. The students' ability in using the computer and technology is at a moderate level in general (76%) (Figure 2).
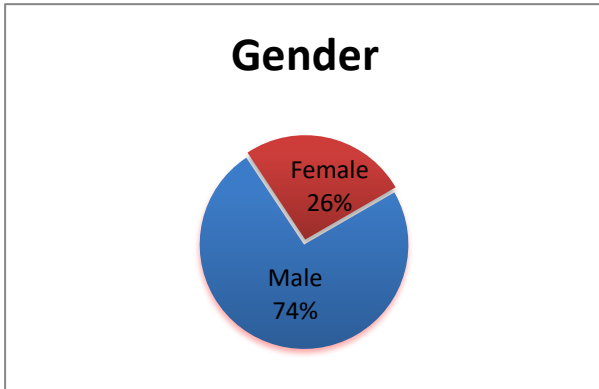
Figure 1. Respondents' distribution according to gender
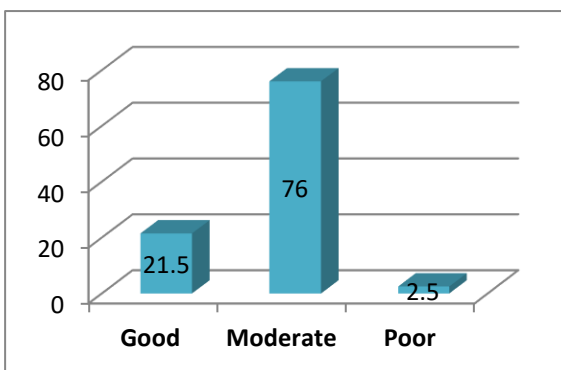
Figure 2. Respondents' distribution according to   ability in using the technology

Table 1 below revealed the distribution of the students according to majors. As can be seen, 25% of the respondents are from Civil Engineering, respondents majoring in Construction Engineering are 24%, 20.5% from Economics, 13.5% from Mechanical Engineering, and 17% from Information Technology.

Table 1. Respondents' distribution according to majors

Major	Frequency	Percentage
Civil Engineering	50	25%
Construction Engineering	48	24%
Economics	41	20.5%
Mechanical Engineering	27	13.5%
Information Technology	34	17%
Total	200	100%

Table 2 illustrated the respondents' schooling years. 33.5% are freshmen, and mostly 79 respondents (39.5%) are second-year ones. Fifty-four respondents (27%) are the number of the third-year ones.

Table 2. Respondents' distribution according to schooling year

	Frequency	Schooling year	Percentage
	67	1st year	33.5%
	79	2nd year	39.5%
	54	3rd year	27%
Total	200		100%

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Spending time on online reading

As far as online reading in Table 3 showed, the majority of the respondents spend 1-2 hours a day on electronic reading. Simultaneously, 36% identified they read more than 2 hours, and 22.5% spend less than 1-hour reading materials online.

Table 3. Spending time on online reading

Spending time on online reading	Frequency	Percentage
30 min- 1 hour	45	22.5%
1-2 hours	83	41.5%
More than 2 hours	72	36 %

4.2.2 Students' online reading behavior

Table 4. Students' online reading behavior

Online reading behavior	Frequency	Percentage
Direct read on the Internet	97	48.5%
Download and read on the computer screen	63	31.5%
Download and print out then reading	40	20%

As can be seen from Table 4, the majority of 48.5% of respondents agreed that they directly read on the Internet because their portable devices are connected to the Internet, and it is easy to access information anywhere and anytime. 31.5% of participants first download information and then read it on a gadget or computer screen. The interview findings revealed why learners would like to download materials because of electricity failure and poor internet connections. 20% of respondents pointed out they download and print out materials than read them when they realize they need to read materials.

4.2.3 Students' online reading attitudes

The 3 Likert scale questionnaire in terms of agree, neutral, and disagree was designed to collect the data. As table 5 identified, most of the respondents admitted that online reading is an effective way to learn and relax. Online materials improve their independent learning skills because it is easy for learners to access and retrieve any information through the Internet. There is brief and concise information on any topic that can be getting from Google. Hyperlinks and related links about the topic provided help to understand and comprehend the topic, which helps to develop the topic's understanding. In addition, online materials give information about different subjects. Currently, the Internet makes it possible to connect the world easily. Students are able to catch up with the latest information about social events as well as academic materials.

Furthermore, it could not deny that online reading is a relaxing way which is popular, especially for young learners. In general, most of the students show their positive attitudes toward online reading.

Table 5. Students' online reading attitudes

Questions	Frequency	Agreement percentage
Q5.1 Online reading improves my independent learning skills.	178	89%
Q5.2 I can take information about field subjects.	180	90%
Q5.3 Online reading makes it possible to connect the world.	200	100%
Q5.4 Online reading enhances my ability to deliver lectures.	154	77%
Q5.5 Online reading helps me to do research better due to online materials.	123	61.5%
Q5.6 When I read online, it is a good way to enhance my vocabulary, especially in English.	98	49%
Q5.7 Online professional forum helps learners to get the latest information about my major.	134	67%
Q5.8 Online reading helps me to relax and get information all the time in all places.	200	100%

4.2.4 Online reading difficulties

To find out the drawbacks of online reading, a questionnaire with a 3 Likert scale was used to collect the data. All the students pointed out reading online gives them different values that depend on their different reading purposes. To get the information needed, students are expected to follow the reading purposes and close various entertainment online pages. The interview results and questionnaire clarified the students with good technology skills like information technology students can search information concisely and quickly. To fulfill online reading effectiveness, learners need to be well-prepared for gadgets or computers and ask their lecturers about available pages or online materials to read online more effectively and academically.

Table 6. Online reading drawbacks

Questions	Frequency	Agreement percentage
Q6.1 I sometimes get hard because of electricity disruption and poor internet connection.	184	92%
Q6.2 I have some difficulty in finding out research/ academic materials.	175	87.5%
Q6.3 Low technology is an obstacle to search for information concisely and quickly.	194	97%
Q6.4 I do not know academic information webpages.	89	44.5%
Q6.5 I am easy to be distracted because of numerous information/ webpages.	181	90.5%
Q6.6 Wasting lots of time to read online if I do not have any purposes of reading.	156	78%

4.2.5 Effective ways of online reading

The findings in the interview revealed that in order for learners to read materials from the Internet effectively, it requires learners to determine their purposes of reading. Learners themselves should be autonomous with good independent learning skills. Moreover, because of an amount of various information

from the Internet, learners are expected to master precise webpages and concise information. As an instructor at school, he should give some suggestions of online materials relating to learners' majors or professions. One of the best ways to avoid being distracted when reading materials online is to close social network pages or even disconnecting Wi-Fi.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations should be suggested. Firstly, online reading in modern technology can be applied in campus-based activities as well as in E-learning. Secondly, experiment studies for further comparisons between online reading effects and book-based reading should be conducted. Furthermore, identifying other variables in terms of students' major, attitudes that may impact online reading effectiveness is recommended for further study.

The study is conducted to find out the students' attitudes toward online reading. The study results showed the students had positive attitudes toward online reading and clarified the effectiveness and drawbacks of online reading. However, this study has found that learners' purposes and technology skills impacted the online reading effectiveness. Hence, to control such drawbacks as mentioned, learners should be autonomous in their independent learning skills and improve their technology skills. As a teacher, he has to select and introduce precise online webpages to his learners, especially freshmen.

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Biodata

Currently, Bui Thi Nga is a teacher at University of Transport and Communications in HCMC, Vietnam (UTC2). To be honest, she is in charge of teaching English for students following the program of CEFR, so her best teaching skills are speaking and listening. At the university, she has just done several minor research studies on teaching English for non-majored English students so far and she takes up doing this study for the first time this year.

A Study on Collaborative Online Learning among EFL Students
in Van Lang University (VLU)

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the benefits and drawbacks that EFL students met when they studied in a group online at Van Lang University. This is based on the theoretical framework of Laila Rawahi and Abdu Mekhlafi (2015). This study was conducted with 60 students from first-year students to seniors majoring in foreign languages at Van Lang University (VLU) and already experienced online learning. They answered a questionnaire to point out what they faced when working in a group via the Internet. The results show that while some students find collaborative virtual learning methods beneficial in terms of distance and the elimination of time and financial border, other ELF students had trouble in interaction and concentration.

Moreover, findings suggest that some technical problems such as the Internet connection and weak computer skills still play a main threat, leading to controversial issues between teammates. Moreover, some distractions such as social media, noisy outside environment, and talkative members also influence the learning progress. It is implied from the study that e-learning is such an evolution in education; however, it is not effective for learning in a group online. The purpose of this study will suggest some upsides and downsides of online collaborative learning so that schools and lecturers can seek solutions to solve the problems and enhance the positive impacts of online collaborative learning.

Keywords: online learning, collaborative learning, learning in a group, working in a group

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The background of collaborative learning:

Prior to this time, collaborative learning activities were regarded as difficult with students who had problems finding time and space to work together. In recent days, thanks to the high advancement of technology, members in a group can easily access Internet-based technologies to study together without commuting to school.

"Collaborative learning" is a type of learning that requires students' contributions or with a little support from teachers to broaden knowledge. Normally, children will work in groups of two or more, searching for learning materials, making a study plan, taking in knowledge, discussing, completing tasks, and so on. Collaborative learning exercises depend mostly on students' self-study skills, cooperation between them, not teachers' explanation or representation. (Smith & MacGregor, 1992). Unlike cooperative learning, students will do work with collaborative learning and discuss together to complete the assignments (Razmerita & Brun, 2011).

Ashong and Commander reported that the practice of collaborative learning is highly deployed in virtual education because many program developers and instructors of web-based courses are beginning to understand its positive impact on students' academic performances. Therefore, collaborative learning integrated into the online classroom is significantly considered as one of the pedagogical strategies.

1.2. The role of collaborative learning in today world:

The world is changing ceaselessly, and the human must acquire new knowledge and new methods of learning to catch up with the developments of modern life. Collaborative networked learning becomes increasingly common in general education and language in particular (Thach, Vijay, Eva, 2014). Moreover, collaborative learning is believed to be one of the common skills students use to learn a lot of new things, help them gain knowledge, and renew the information (Contrast studying Alone to Studying in A Group, 2016). The concept of collaborative learning for the aim of accomplishing scholarly objectives has been broadly investigated and advocated throughout the professional literature. The term "collaborative learning" is a method in which students at different learning levels work together in a small group in order to gain the general-purpose (Anuradha A. Gokhale, 1995). In other words, students have to be responsible for their work and their teammates' work to make sure the work

goes as planned. Thus, each teammate plays an important part in providing information and trying their best to complete tasks, and all members are essential for project completion (Colbeck, Campbell & Bjorklund, 2000).

Despite the advancement of e-learning widely used worldwide as an alternative method of face-to-face learning, there are literally a few pieces of research about the connection between online learning and collaborative study, particularly in Vietnam. Although many studies have investigated collaborative learning at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels; however, there is little persuasive evidence about online collaborative learning, specifically at the undergraduate level. Moreover, the majority of the previous researches is about collaborative learning in regular live courses.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the eLearning model had been applied at Van Lang University as the alternative way for traditional classes. It is believed that this modern learning and teaching method, it would be beneficial for collaborative learning among EFL students. And due to the negative impacts of this pandemic, students need to study in the group via online platforms including MS Team, Zoom, and so on. Specifically, with theory-oriented subjects, collaborative teams might find it easier to finish schoolwork due to the benefits of supervising each other's works than with practice-oriented subjects such as speaking or listening classes. Students might find it hard to communicate and discuss.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Besides, some proponents of the benefits of collaborative learning have been proved in some previous research papers. According to Nokes-Malach, Rickey, and Gadgil (2015), they reported that collaborative learning has also been hypothesized to increase individual motivation and engagement. Collaborative teams have given the obvious evidence that they achieve higher levels of thought and retain information longer than students who prefer to study alone (Johnson & Johnson, 1986). In the study conducted by Gokhale, the author has concluded that critical thinking development can be fostered by collaborative learning through discussion, clarification of ideas, and evaluation of others' ideas.

Although we cannot deny some great benefits of collaborative learning, some students are still irresponsible for the group's work. Moreover, collaborative learning is important, requiring self-study skills so that if a member in the group works inefficiently and ineffectively and does not finish the work assigned for them, all of the works will be delayed. Finally, the assignment is not clear. For example, leaders always have to deal with a heavy workload while other members have nothing to do. As a consequence, this will put leaders under a lot of pressure and noncooperation among members. (Nguyen, 2007).

2.1. Operational Definition of Terms:

The researcher includes an operational definition of the term used in this study. It is as follow:

Collaborative learning is widely seen as an activity that is beneficial in the progress of students' learning since this learning style requires more than two students to construct knowledge and accomplish their common shared goals together. Chao, Sai, and Hamilton reported that carrying out a collaborative course is ideal for forming high-quality online courses.

Dilenbourg and Schneider claimed that when someone alludes to "distance education", the word "distance" regularly sounds as the keyword since it implies major technological use.

2.2. Concepts

Online collaboration accompanying project-based learning can support learners in their language learning thanks to web-based tools which can store information in an organized way for future reference. Moreover, project-based learning stimulates students to interact with their peers to complete long-term projects, for learning becomes more meaningful and interesting (Koufman-Frederick et al., 1999). According to Pallof and Pratt, quality learning environments are designed to facilitate participation in interactive and collaborative activities among students. The researchers also recognized such conditions as advantages to adding to better learning results, including the development of higher-order thinking skills. Explicit pedagogical advantages of collaborative learning are enhancement of critical thinking skills, co-creation of knowledge and meaning, reflection, transformative learning. Different reports firmly suggest that knowledge made collaboratively is more likely to be reviewed (Freedman, 2009). Therefore, learners can acquire more significant comprehension of different points (Yang & Wu, 2011). Working in groups also creates more positive attitudes toward learning and disciplines than personal learning (Johnson et al., 1998). On the other hand, in a study of Changwatchai, the main challenge that graduate-level students often faced was the lack of group and individual accountability of their peers when it came to online collaborative learning. A good online collaborative environment was suggested to consist of student-faculty interaction, peer-to-peer collaboration, and active learning (Richardson and Swan).

2.3. Previous Studies

A study conducted by Chang Zhu (2012) examined satisfaction, performance, and knowledge construction of two groups of undergraduates via online collaborative work. College students majoring in educational sciences at Beijing University (China) and at Flemish University (Flanders) experienced a three-month semester of online group learning before filling the researcher's questionnaire about their satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Apart from a 15-question questionnaire, a comparison of the performance and knowledge construction between two groups was investigated. The final results indicated both groups of participants satisfying with the functions of online peer learning. However, Flemish students tended to spend more time on this educational form and gained higher performance than Chinese students. In contrast, the Chinese group was more likely to enjoy peer learning online to a greater extent and were happier with members' contributions.

In another study in 2014, Muuro, Wagacha, Oboko and Kihoro, researchers from universities in Kenya, reflected the wider use of the e-learning platform in most Kenyan colleges. Digital data collected from total of 210 students in Kenya after given purposive sampling. On the one hand, the researchers agreed with the major contribution of collaborative learning in an online environment recognized in a lot of previous studies. On the other hand, the participants revealed various drawbacks of this platform. Particularly, most of the students got extremely frustrated when dealing with online group assignments due to awful connections. The lack of attention and participation of group members drove them crazy during the course. Another big challenge came from the instructors with no feedbacks for their work. There are not only state college students who experienced these, but also those in private schools did.

The research paper of Zhang, Peng, and Hung (2009) aimed to analyze college students' experience in learning in a group online for the first time in a project-based learning (PBL) environment in Taiwan. They conducted interviews with 48 selected students to collect qualitative data and from other sources such as instructor's field notes, online observation, students' virtual interaction, and group assignments. In each focus group, all different levels of participants were included in purpose. Due to the introverted students and a lack of response, group interviews were conducted, and a focus group may motivate students to give more and more answers as well as allow the questioner to witness and identify the interactive dynamics among different types of learners. At the end of the semester, the same researcher conducted all the interviews in person, which took 30 to 60 minutes each. All conservations were recorded with the permission of participants and later transcribed in Chinese. The survey figured out interesting phenomena that were because of the influence of culture and the educational system. It also revealed that online collaborative learning greatly changed the position of teachers from traditional, teacher-led, and teacher-centered face-to-face classes to project-based, online collaborative learning, in which students have to take more responsibilities and be more active to complete school works with a little support from lecturers, have contributed to a lot of uncertainty, worry, discomfort for college students. Moreover, some of them were still jealous of their colleagues' performance, which resulted from the competitive educational system in Taiwan.

The study of Kumi-Yeboah, Yuan, and Dogbey analyzed minority college students' perceptions of online interactive learning activities with 20 minority graduate students from diverse ethnic backgrounds involved (10 African Americans, 5 Hispanics, and five international students from Africa). All of them registered online learning technology for graduates and special education programs at a university located in the Northeastern United States. This qualitative research was collected by semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and observation by a non-participant. The study results indicate that teachers responsible for teaching online courses should consider the advantages, expectations, and difficulties of learners from different cultural backgrounds when they engage in interactive online learning activities. Six concepts on minority graduate student views of online interactive learning experiences were also established in the data review. (1) It is suggested that this team of participants are able to collaborate in a culturally integrated group that encourages them to tap into the dynamic awareness building of students participating in collaborative online learning experiences. On the one hand, collaborative online learning experiences allowed them to contribute to the development of knowledge by evaluating colleagues' activities, feedback, and feedback. Learners often benefited from learning in a dynamic group and the feeling of belonging to an online community where there was constant social contact between student groups and teachers. (2) The research pointed to the preference of small-group interaction in a collaborative learning environment among culturally diverse students over collaborative learning experiences within the group. Due to the small number of team members, learners claimed that they felt much more motivated and confident to contribute to small-group activities. (3) They stated that students also have a chance to share their cultural and educational experiences with others to improve cross-cultural awareness. The respondents also revealed that cross-cultural collaborative online learning experiences encouraged them to discuss and lead discussions. (4) This result indicates that online collaborative learning practices provided minority participants with opportunities to develop communication skills which helped them achieve access to group decision-making

process control, which helped them satisfy their learning preferences and cultural perspectives. (5) Researchers found that students still face some challenges in term of understanding particular preferences in collaborative online learning, lacking non-linguistic cues, finding hard to express disagreement, communicative limitations leading to less substantive postings; and mismatched forms of contact due to the diverse cultural backgrounds. (6) The survey found out that in discussing cultural gaps and the lack of cultural diversity in the instruction or content of the materials they read online, the participants found out that they encountered obstacles. However, this research still has a limitation in that data was collected from observing a group of 20 minority graduate students, so this cannot properly reflect the perceptions of all culturally diverse students' digital platforms. Via comparative research, future studies may look at the experiences of minority students in online collaborative practices. In order to compare the experiences of different minority graduate students from diverse programs and other similar variables such as ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic class, additional studies should be performed.

The purpose of Durrington and Mathews' study is to look at online student group discussions from a student's perspective so that we identify the essentials that students find important and that they are interested in their learning. Research papers applying the method ---- mentioning some of the main contents are "Importance of Group Work," "Group Size," "Prior Preparation," "Characteristics of Group Members," "Group Purpose" with research data is a system of 26-question questionnaires and applied to over 24 students to survey on issues surrounding online group discussion. Specifically, a survey about six issues: Quality of online learning discussions, The number of participants by groups in online discussions, Ways to respond in online discussions, Discussion-related issues and are liked in the online discussion, Priority is given to selected partners in the online discussion, Ways to prepare in online discussions. Research results show that the majority of students agree that the quality of online teaching is the best because they can use the knowledge gained in a group discussion to achieve high effectiveness in learning. Most students prefer online discussions with 4-6 students or as a group. Moreover, students will feel the discussion is more effective if carefully prepared, and students find online group discussion highly effective when discussing theoretical subjects. Most students will split discussion groups according to their interests or will choose those with good knowledge and expertise; others want to work alone. In order to prepare a good group discussion, the majority of students will read the reference materials first or contact the teacher first to find out the content of the lessons.

Based on research "Collaborative online learning in virtual discussions" by Fisher and Coleman. Due to the advancement of technology, more and more students access the Internet, so the educational system also develops in the direction of new technology to create virtual classes online, social networking sites. The purpose of this study is to find out the benefits of the education system. In detail, describing the structure and students' learning interactions in virtual group discussions includes a description of online students' learning strategies and different motivation functions. The content of this study is to present the structures and ways of working in online group learning. (1) "face-to-face" (2) Share own insights and experiences about the course learning. (3) End the exercise in the open direction. (4) project-based learning (5) Set originals and roles (6) Use metaphorical language and symbols. (7) Limit members' participation to easily control (8) Be the supporter, not the controller. The shortcoming in this research is that it has not been directly surveyed, and there are no specific data results for the research.

The research "Collaborative online learning: interaction patterns and limiting factors" of Fung in online communication, collaborative learning, and distance learning courses have two studies. That is "student participation patterns in online discussion" and "reported use and reasons for lack of active participation in online discussion", the research paper also adopts OLE in three courses. This research aims to provide a framework for students to understand the information of lessons online easily. Next, it will find why students do not participate in group discussions in collaborative online learning and measures to motivate students to engage in collaborative online learning. Study 1 in this research is "student participation patterns in online discussion". This research database is from E817 "learning, curriculum and assessment" for analysis and applied to 60 students. Study 2 in this research is "reported use and reasons for lack of active participation in online discussion". The tool used in this study is the questionnaire system on two issues. The first is a survey of students' access and OLE usage, and the second problem is that the survey lacks positivity when participating in online learning. This study shows that the direct cause of online collaboration is that students do not have time, and most students prefer to read rather than spend time in group discussion. Moreover, the way team-members work and their attitudes also affect students' participation in online learning.

One related research is the study of Laila Rawahi and Abdu Mekhlafi, which aimed to investigate students' perceptions toward online collaborative learning by investigating the benefits and impediments they endured during the process of collaborative e-learning. Employing both quantitative and qualitative methods in launching a survey on 93 participants, the results showed that the students working in groups highly appreciated network

collaborative learning since it helped students gain a greater understanding of writing skills (vocabulary and grammar) and improve communication and interaction among peers. On the other hand, some pointed out that online collaborative learning is a tiring and difficult task because of slow connection and poor techniques; the inadequacy of time made group learning worse; insufficient language knowledge leads to group learning difficulties, and passive online peers also caused more problems. Besides, many solutions were proposed for facilitating students participating in online group learning and making progress more effectively, such as encouraging students to join, build and share new knowledge, provide adequate training, and invest time in peer-to-peer learning projects given.

In the previous findings, Brindley, Walti & Blaschke evaluated the effective strategies of creating collaborative learning in the online environment through forming two groups of students: Master of Distance Education (MDE) 601, and Master of Distance Education (MDE) 608 in which the students graduated and experienced online learning regularly. Based on the data showing that MDE 608 students were more satisfied with group learning online than MDE 601 students did and the different perspective of two groups in the relationship between grading and participation, the researchers finally expanded more instructional strategies used for enhancing collaboration in online learning including transparency of expectations, obvious instructions, appropriateness of task for group work, meaning relevance, incentives for participants embedded in course design, sharing responsibilities, respecting each other and giving regular feedback. The study is limited in implementing evaluation to test the efficacy of the strategies above to escalate participation in and satisfaction in group learning. Further investigation is required to understand better and check interactional factors among variables.

2.4. Review Method

2.4.1. Definition of qualitative method

Qualitative research has relied on data expressed in the form of words – descriptions, accounts, viewpoints, feelings as opposed to in the form of numbers so that it cannot be accurately measured or counted (Walliman, 2007). Moreover, the qualitative method is widely used to comprehend people's beliefs, experiences, outlook, behavior, and interactions. "Qualitative research focuses on understanding a research query as a humanistic or idealistic approach" (Pathak et al., 2013). Walliman also reported that the richness and subtlety of collected information create a greater understanding of human society. The qualitative method's fundamental weakness in dealing with corpus investigation is that their discoveries can't be reached out to a more extensive population with the same degree of conviction that the quantitative approach can. This is on the grounds that the discoveries of the research are not examined to find whether they are statistically significant or due to chance (Ochieng Pamela Atieno, 2009).

2.4.2. Applying the qualitative method into research

In Kumi-Yeboah and teammates' research, the qualitative method was carried out to conduct a survey about the perceptions of culturally diverse students toward online collaborative learning. Qualitative research was utilized in the psychological field when research found numerical measurement did not work effectively for this area (Pathak et al., 2013). Since then, the qualitative method was also leveraged in clinical research, for it helps people have a comprehensive sight of data. Marilyn Lichtman (2013) indicated historically scientific advancement through practical theories and qualitative data.

In this study, the qualitative method using closed and open format questions was mainly employed to collect participants' responses. The survey consists of 10 questions in a form which was sent through the Internet for the focus group to discover advantages and disadvantages of online collaborative learning. Particularly, there were students' perceptions, feelings towards theoretical and practical disciplines in a web-based collaborative environment.

Qualitative research methods may lead to some controversial issues for its flexibility and reliability, but its applications have made a major breakthrough in scientific research.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the survey was seeking to answer the following research questions:

1. What benefits do students have when they worked in a group online?

2. What drawbacks do students tackle when they worked in a group online?

3. Is online collaborative learning as effective in this high-tech century as people believe?

4. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of this study is twofold. In the broad sense, most universities and colleges in Vietnam have currently delivered courses and programs online without geographical barriers. Computer use is considered as a part of the curriculum at schools and universities. Online classes allow teachers and students to interact online synchronously by using many features such as communicating orally, exchanging texts through typing, audio chat, upload PowerPoint presentations, transmit video, and more, stated by JL McBrien et al., 2009. With online collaborative learning, Shea and teammates found that students taking online courses feel more satisfied in their learning experiences when they are engaged in collaborative assignments than in traditional classes (2012).

In the narrow sense, this research may help VLU students as well as the Faculty of Foreign Languages to have a deeper view of virtual online learning and have some solutions. First of all, universities can organize some orientational workshops to provide lecturers some useful skills for online teaching and how to supervise online group assignments. Next, educators can have some methods to prevent students from cheating while taking exams online. Thirdly, lecturers can have a new way to evaluate their students' academic level in online delivered classes. Finally, students can be aware of some disadvantages that they will meet during working in a group online.

5. RESEARCH SCOPE

By using the Google form website and sending it to some groups of EFL students from the first year to the fourth year of Van Lang University majoring in English, the research intends to find out the upsides and downsides of online collaborative learning.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1. Participants

The participants at first were randomly chosen among thousands of EFL students at the university. Under the condition of changing the learning method to online last semester, all EFL students at VLU experienced different problems, and they had different attitudes toward the learning style. Therefore, the study would investigate different generations of EFL students (regardless of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors) in order to explore the greater depth of their experiences. Finally, 60 students who dealt with online learning last semester would be sent the form plus the explanation of the main goal of the research. They were encouraged to respond in one week, and the form would be closed after each response was sent.

6.2. Design and data collection

Utilizing the online surveying software Google Forms, an online survey was well designed and sent to the group of 60 EFL students at VLU. With the encouragement for responding to the form in one week, 10 simple closed questions with options for them to choose from were time-saving and efficient ways to respond via smartphones, tablets, etc. Furthermore, in order for undergraduates to submit more opinions out of the options, the form was designed to have extra space to text. Also, they could keep anonymous during questioning. The responses were automatically recorded and illustrated in charts and figures by Google Forms before discussing specific data given by students.

7. RESULTS

The purpose of this survey is to identify some advantages and disadvantages when students experience online collaborative learning in theory-based classes and practice-based classes. This experiment attempted to test the following hypothesis.

"Online collaborative learning is more beneficial for students than face-to-face collaborative learning."

7.1. Graphical Representation of results and statistics analysis
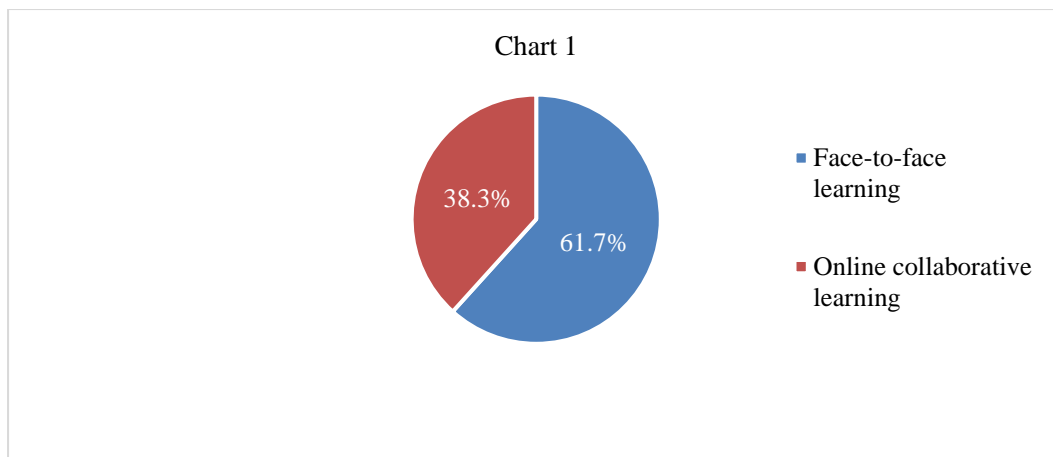
Figure 1: Method of learning that EFL students in Van Lang University prefer.

Figure 1 shows information about which method of learning that EFL students in Van Lang University prefer.

Overall, the survey finds that more EFL students have a tendency to choose the traditional learning method rather than the modern one.

According to the survey, students who voted for "online collaborative learning" are 38.3%. And the percentage of students who are interested in face-to-face group work is 61.7%.
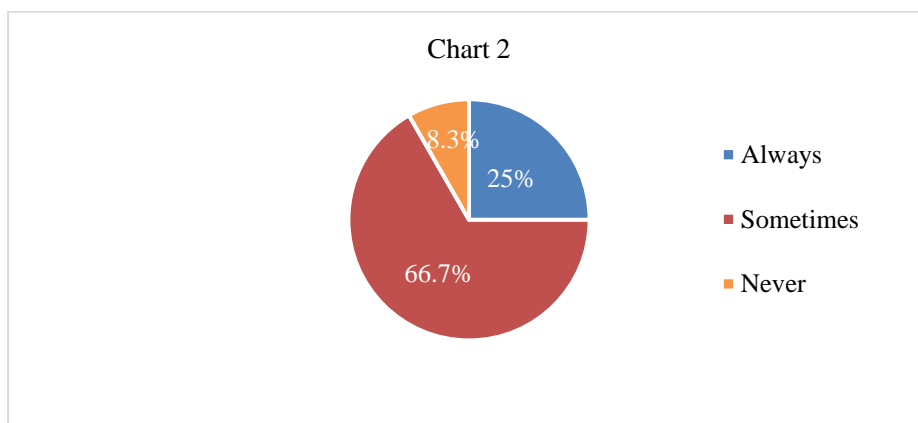
Figure 2: Learners experiencing conflict during collaborative work.
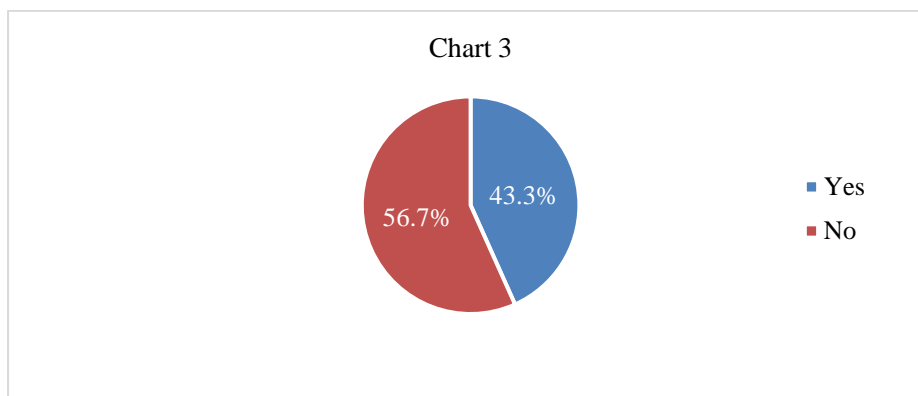
Figure 3: Learners solving conflict during collaborative work.

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate data about how often EFL in Van Lang University learners experience conflict during collaborative work and whether those conflicts have been solved easily through online platforms.

Overall, most of the students admit that they sometimes had conflicts with peers during online group work. In addition, the majority of English learners believe that conflicts will be easily resolved through the Internet

According to the survey, the figure of students who occasionally argue with their teammates during working in a group online is 66.7%. The number of students who always have conflicts with colleagues during collaborative learning time is 15 out of 60 EFL students, accounting for 25%. 8.3% of the respondents think they never have arguments.

We can obviously see from chart three that more than half of EFL students believe that they can easily solve group conflicts through the Internet, which is 56.7%. In contrast, 43.3% of learners have the opposite idea.
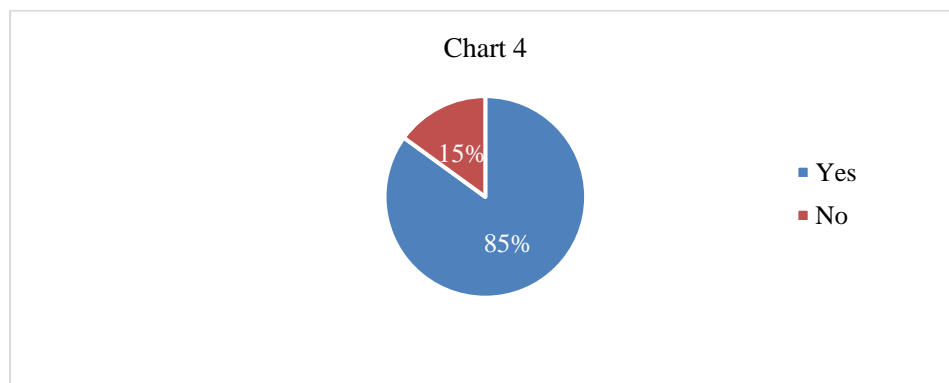

Figure 4: Learners sharing responsibilities.

Figure 4 shows information that whether EFL learners in VLU share responsibilities to finish work.

Overall, the survey found that more EFL students are keener on sharing tasks to get teamwork done than those who do not.

The results show that the majority of EFL students agree to share responsibilities to complete group work is 51 students, accounting for 85%. At the same time, 15% of the respondents have an opposite view.
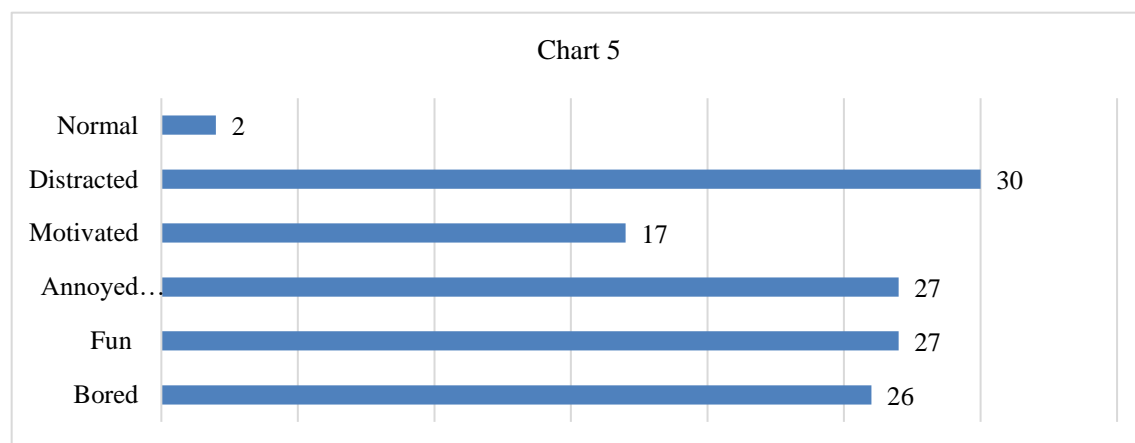
Figure 5: Feelings of EFL students in the online environment

Figure 5 illustrates EFL students' feelings in Van Lang University when they engage in online group work.

Overall, most of the students feel distracted. While just a few respondents feel normal.

The survey finds that 30 EFL students feel online collaborative learning is extremely distracted. The number of students who feel annoyed and angry is 27, as much as the figure of respondents who have fun during online group work.

Next, 26 EFL learners usually feel bored, while only 17 students are motivated by online collaborative learning. And only two people admit that they find it normal.
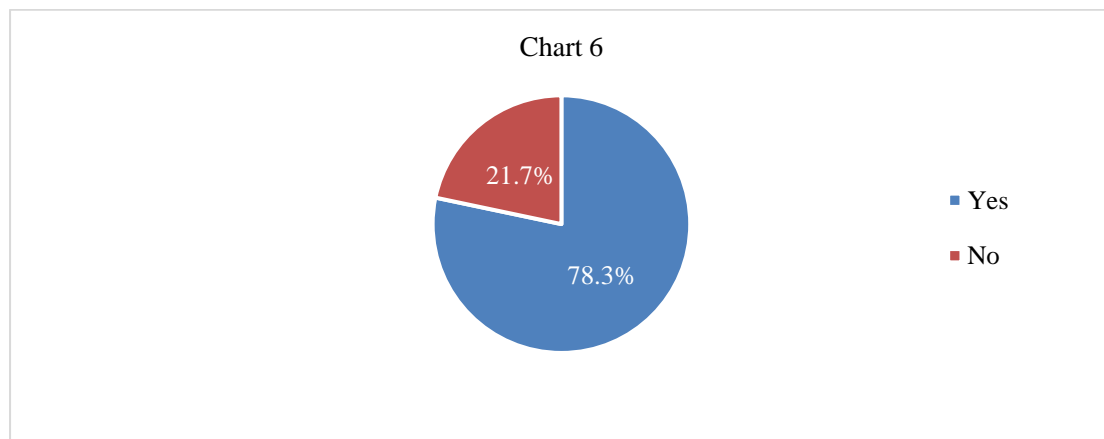
Figure 6: Frequency of group work in learning speaking and listening online
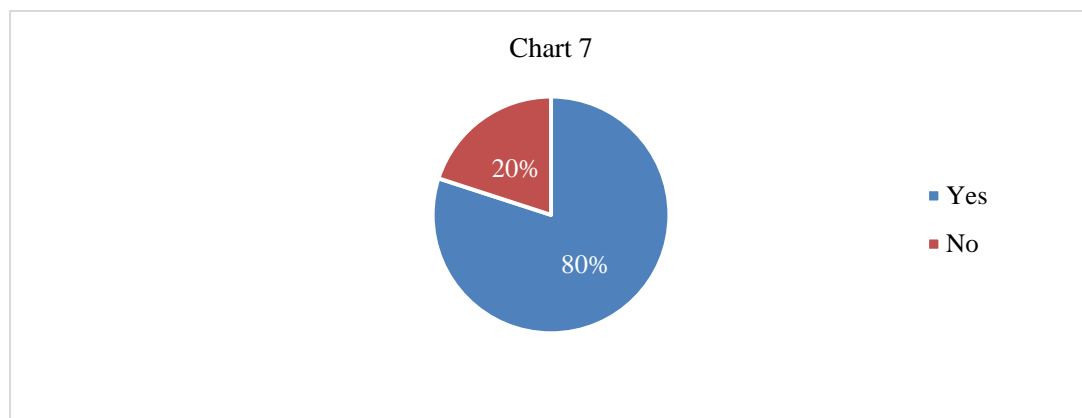
Figure 7: Frequency of group work in learning reading and writing online.

Figures 6 and 7 show how frequently the students worked collaboratively online when learning speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

Overall, a large number of students admitted that they already experienced working in a group when learning theory-based subjects (reading and writing) and practice-based subjects (speaking and listening).

It can be seen from pie graph six that nearly 78.5% of participants answer that they have engaged in online group working while around 22.5% of students never have a chance to take part in this type of learning.

It is obvious in Chart 7 that 80% of learners have applied online collaborative learning in learning theory-based subjects. In contrast, only 20% claim that they did not experience virtual group working when learning reading and writing skills.
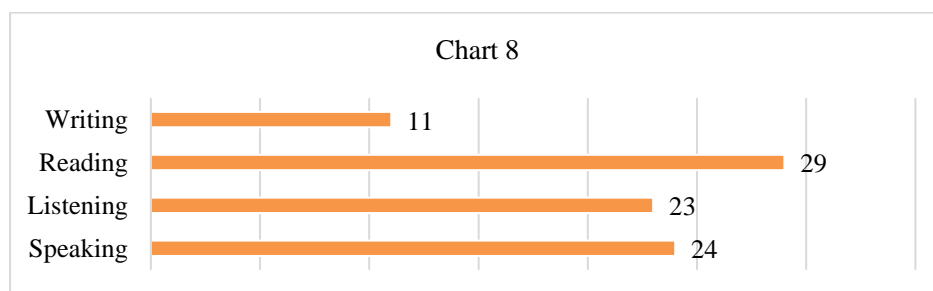
Figure 8: Students choosing their most favorite skill areas to learn online.

The bar chart above shows students choosing their most favorite skill areas to learn online with other students.

Overall, the majority of participants prefer applying to online group working in Reading classes, while just a few students are interested in experiencing this style of learning in Writing classes.

It can be easily seen from the chart that nearly half of respondents, 29 people are interested in applying online collaborative learning in Reading classes. On the contrary, only 11 students enjoy working in a group online in Writing classes. Moreover, with Listening and Speaking classes, there are 23, and 24 learners respectively would like to engage in group working online.
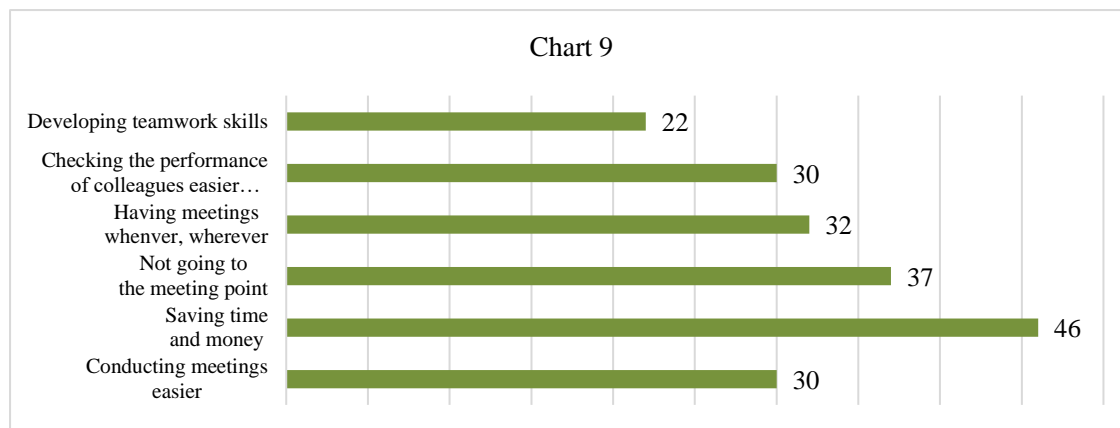
Figure 9: Advantages of online learning.

Figure 9 illustrates the advantages of collaborative learning. Overall, a great number of respondents admitted that learning in groups online is beneficial for them in terms of saving time and money. On the other hand, the figure for developing teamwork skills is not as high as other figures.

Firstly, we can see from the chart that more than two-thirds of students agree that online collaborative learning helps them save money and time in terms of eliminating living expenses, tuition fees, and commuting time, about 46 people. Next, 37 respondents admit that with the help of web-based collaborative learning, they do not need to go to the meeting point as they used to do. Besides, more than half of learners, about 32 people, confirm that they think virtual collaborative learning is useful, as they can conduct the meeting on online platforms regardless of how far they are and what time it is.

Furthermore, the same number of students choose "checking the performance of colleagues easier with the help of screen-sharing function" and "conducting meetings easier" as another advantage of distant collaborative learning. However, just more than one third of learners can totally develop teamwork skills via Internet, about 22 people.
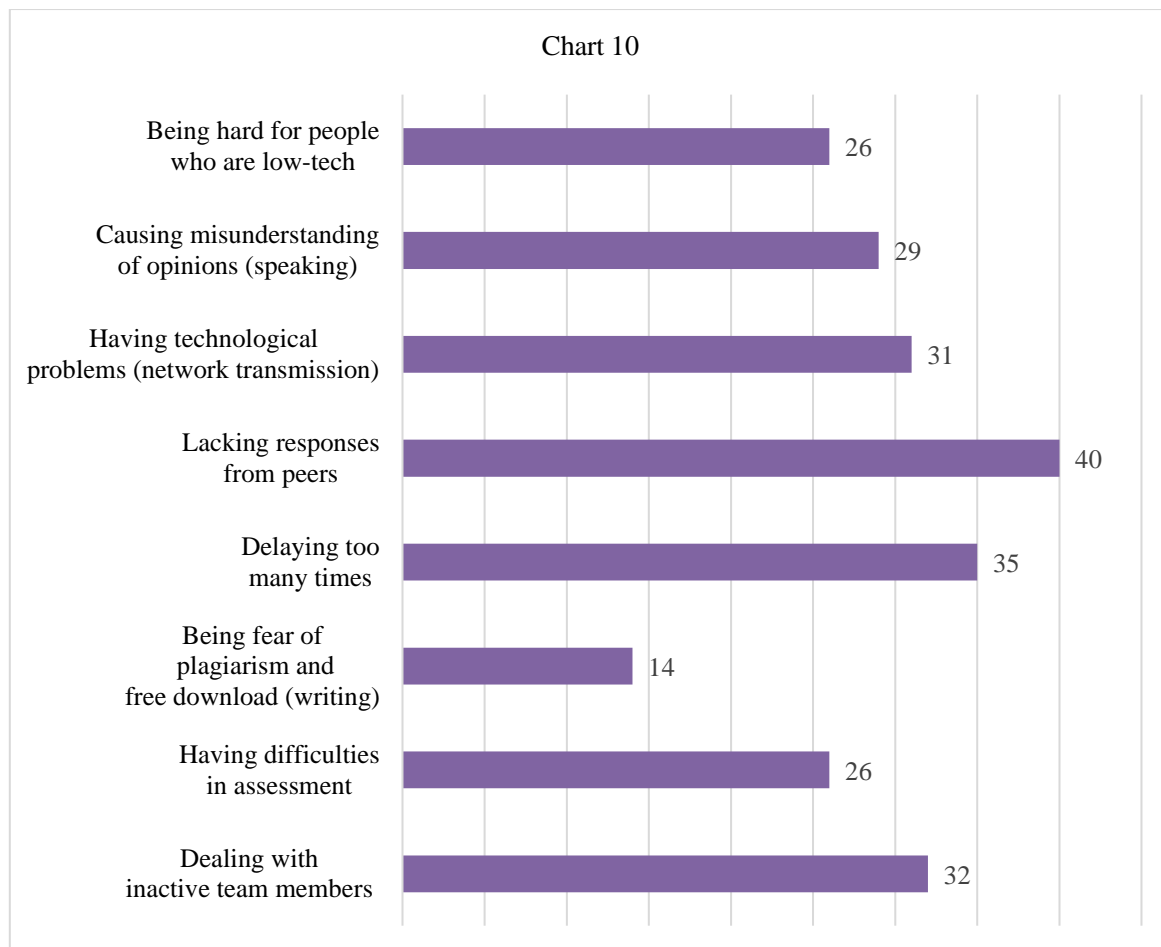
Figure 10: Disadvantages of online learning.

Figure 10 identifies some of the disadvantages that respondents listed in online learning. In general, most students lack responses from peers, while not many learners have trouble with plagiarism and free download.

In general, most students lack responses from peers, while not many learners have trouble with plagiarism and free download.

As shown in the graph, 40 people admitted that they have difficulties in contacting other members. Next, about 35 students find it nearly impossible to choose a suitable time for conducting meetings that suit every member. Next, the figures for having technological problems, including unstable Internet connection and dealing with inactive, irresponsible peers, are 31 and 32 people respectively.

Looking at the graph in more detail, 29 learners think online collaborative learning causes misunderstanding of opinions during the process of discussion. Besides, the same number of students who struggle to deal with some technological functions because they are low-tech and have difficulties in assessment is 26 respondents. However, being fear of plagiarism and free download is not a common drawback among students. Only 14 students choose it.

8. DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to investigate the positive as well as negative impacts of online collaborative learning on the discussing progress among students. It suggested some materials for further discussion and considerations. As virtual learning is a new learning method in Vietnam, specifically in VLU, students still found it difficult to work in a group on online platforms. The use of virtual classes seemed to be not as effective as traditional learning. The responses from the questionnaire pointed out that the disadvantages of applying virtual collaborative learning on speaking skills outweighed the advantages.

The study found that students still met some difficulties related to Internet connection, social media, eyes problem, and so on (chart 10). And the most notable drawback is lacking peer-to-peer interactions during learning online.

In contrast, students highly appreciated some benefits of learning in a team online in terms of distance and especially the elimination of time as well as financial borders.

9. CONCLUSION

Collaborative learning in an online environment is thought of as a universal method benefiting undergraduates in different ways in which the ability to appeal to online learners' satisfaction and self-motivated participation in groups is obvious. Moreover, the major positive impact on learners' skills can be see through their better capacity for solving hard conflicts, sharing responsibilities, etc.

Despite its enormous potentiality, peer-to-peer learning in a virtual environment will absolutely be influenced by several internal and external factors causing negative feedback from learners. For these drawbacks, the low connection among equipment is considered a major problem. Furthermore, a lack of initiative and of interaction with instructors is clearly available.

Finally, we gain perspectives of this learning style from the study that it is not efficient to apply this method of study in any context and period. That is due to its pros and cons, which changeable depending on an individual's background. Understanding the impact of collaborative online learning would help learners gain and enhance their performance and instructors design more effective educational activities. According to those figures, we think that virtual collaborative learning is not as effective as traditional learning.

10. LIMITATIONS

The study remains a certain limitation that should be noticed. Although the findings of the research revealed significant benefits and drawbacks specifically, the relationship of the pros and cons of

online group learning and learners' differences relating to different cultures, educational systems, the social environment has been neglected, which makes the results not pertinent in various contexts. Further, because the survey was conducted with 60 participants, it cannot totally evaluate exactly the situation.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The researcher suggests the following ideas and titles for further studies.

a. The effectiveness of virtual classes on developing the students' communicative skills.

b. The effectiveness of virtual classes on EFL students' academic performance and attitudes.

c. The impacts of online learning on EFL students' speaking skills.

d. How to supervise students and evaluate their performances fairly and effectively.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The Integration of 21st Century Skill and Virtual Learning with COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Trilling and Fadel emphasized the importance of 21st-century skills early in 2000. 3Rs and 7Cs were particularly important, but now 8Cs should be added 'coexistence with AI.' 8Cs should be emphasized in our pedagogy whatever subject we teach for 21st-century education. An empirical investigation was carried out from May 2020 to December 2020, targeting undergraduates in Tokyo. From the first semester of 2020, all courses were taught online with a ZOOM. About 30% of students enrolled in all classes were satisfied with virtual online learning; however, 30% of students were unsatisfied with virtual online learning. The second semester we carried out the experiment to promote the virtual exchange program with the National University of Singapore (NUS) for eight weeks. How the students learned under COVID-19 will be explained more in detail.

Keywords: *21^{st-century} skills, Flipped Learning, PeerEval, ZOOM, Virtual Language Exchange.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Trilling and Fadel (2009) emphasized the importance of 21st-century skills early in 2000. 3Rs and 7Cs were particularly important (Figure 1), but now 8Cs should be added 'coexistence with AI.' 8Cs should be emphasized in our pedagogy whatever subject we teach for 21st-century education. According to the prediction of Kurzweil, AI is exponentially now advancing to approach Singularity in 2045（Kurzweil, 2005）. In the article of The Future Employment, about 48 percent of the present type of job will be replaced by AI-related jobs（Frey & Osborne, 2013）. Harari (Harari, 2018), in his book, commented, "Humankind is likely to be divided into two main camps-those in favor of giving AI significantly authority, and those opposed to it." Harari predicted the people would be divided into two camps, one who could use AI and the other will be used by AI. Therefore, in addition to the 21st century-skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009), 8Cs will be playing an essential role in the pedagogy of English education. Based on this concept, this article was written to promote global education even during the COVID-19.

These days, due to COVID-19, students have been engaged in virtual learning through the integration of the videoconferencing software program Zoom for all classes since 2020 April. The first case study was carried out from May to August 2020 under COVID-19 using virtual learning with Zoom, Facebook, Line, Messenger, Course Power, Moodle, and other online materials. The students engaged in virtual learning were discussed by showing their advantages and disadvantages from student feedback on a questionnaire. The second case study was carried out from October 2020 to November 2020 for about eight weeks, emphasizing exchange programs with the National University of Singapore (NUS). My 19 seminar students and 19 NUS students of the Japanese class started the join seminar early in October and finished up on November 10th, every Tuesday from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm, we had an online virtual seminar with a Zoom and a final presentation.
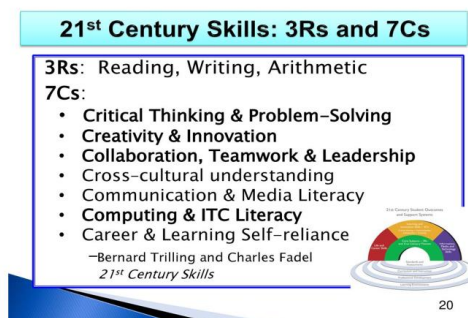

Figure 1: 21st Century Skills: 3Rs and 7Cs

2. The First Case Study with COVID-19

All universities in Japan decided to teach all classes using virtual learning environments with ZOOM, TEAMS, WebEx, and other learning tools, from May to August 2020. The author of this study taught 10 classes at three universities, mainly with ZOOM and Facebook. This section will describe how the students struggled with virtual learning and show both its advantages and disadvantages from student feedback on a questionnaire.

2.1 Training procedure

(1) All students at three universities had their English lessons using real-time virtual learning with ZOOM and Facebook. The learning materials were uploaded on Facebook in advance.

(2) Students engaged in real-time learning with ZOOM, listened to the author's mini-lectures and participated in breakout sessions with more active discussions about the contents.

(3) Students prepared PowerPoint slides about their assigned work and delivered several presentations in front of all the students. However, at times they joined breakout sessions in a group of 4 students and gave their presentations with peer assessment using PeerEval software on smartphones.

(4) Flipped learning was conducted all through the semester, actively engaged in presentations and discussions about the contents assigned in advance.

(5) Students took the online ATR CALL Brix test several times.

(6) Students learned presentation skills by downloading the Successful Presentation video contents by Oxford University Press. Each unit consisted of 8 units containing 3-minute video contents.

(7) Professor Weakley from the US was invited as a guest lecturer several times and engaged in the virtual teaching worldviews, global leadership, and cross-cultural IQ. He also actively took part in the breakout sessions and interacted with many students. Sometimes his students joined the virtual classroom from the U.S.A. and enjoyed discussing the cross-cultural differences between Japanese values and Christian-oriented values. These sessions were most important for students to learn the worldviews.

(8) Several lectures from Oxford University professors about scientific realism and worldviews were given, and the students prepared PowerPoint slides with more presentations and discussions using ZOOM breakout sessions.

2.2 Presentation Assessment with PeerEval

(1) Students delivered 5-10-minute English presentations about the assigned tasks with PowerPoint slides.

(2) All students had their presentations evaluated by their peers using the PeerEval software on a smartphone, with six items being assessed about presentation skills. After each presentation, immediate feedback was provided with comments about how to improve his or her presentation skills (Figures 2).

(3) Students were highly engaged in learning the contents of the cross-cultural issues and worldview studies, including the advancement of AI.
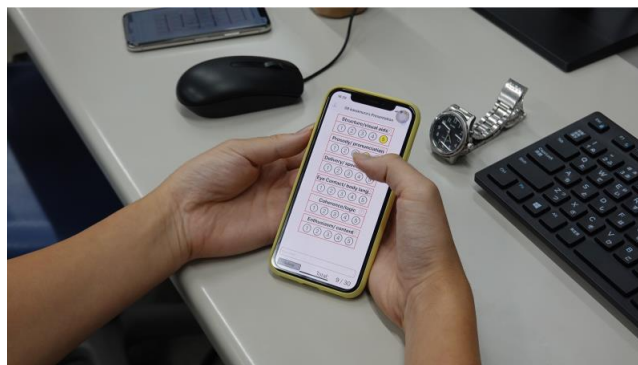
Figure 2: Assessment with a smartphone

2.3 Feedback on the student questionnaire

(1) Did you enjoy the ZOOM lesson? (n=257)
40% enjoyed the ZOOM lesson.
38% were neutral.
22% did not like the ZOOM lesson.

(2) Was the lesson with ZOOM effective? (n=54)
a.   74% agreed.
b.   24% neutral.
c.   2% disagreed.

(3) What kind of lesson do you like best? (n=54)
a. Face to face lesson: 48%
b. Hybrid lesson: 35%
c. Lesson with ZOOM: 9%
d. Video-on-Demand: 8%
People like face-to-face lessons best, and the second best is Hybrid lessons. The virtual lesson only with ZOOM is not so popular among students.

(4) Did the visiting professor's lectures change your worldviews and help you to improve your English proficiency? (n=54)
a.   91 % of students agreed.
b.   9% did not agree.

(5) Was the assessment software 'PeerEval' effective in checking your presentation performance? (n=54)
a.   69% agreed.
b.   26% neutral.
c.   5% disagreed.

(6) Was the virtual presentation effective in learning English? (n=51)
a. 96% agreed.
b. 2% neutral.
c. 2% disagreed.

2.3 Discussions

Virtual online ZOOM lessons were carried out for the first term in all classes. According to the questionnaire (1) and (2), only 40% enjoyed the ZOOM lesson, and 74% of students felt the lesson effective in learning English. The questionnaire (3) indicated that students generally like face-to-face lessons (48%), Hybrid lessons (35%), and ZOOM lessons (9%). However, visiting the professor's ZOOM lecture helped students to change their worldviews and improve English proficiency. In the presentation, the assessment software was used, and students felt it useful to check their presentation performance (69%), and 96% agreed that even virtual presentation was effective in learning English.

3.   The Second Case Study with COVID-19 -online virtual seminar-

The second case study was carried out from October 2020 to November 2020 for about eight weeks, emphasizing virtual exchange programs with the National University of Singapore (NUS). My seminar students and 19 NUS students of Japanese class started the online virtual joint seminar early in October and finished up on November 10th, every Tuesday night from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm, we had an online virtual seminar with a Zoom and a final presentation on November 10th, 2020.

3.1 Joint Seminar between AGU and NUS

Joint seminars between AGU obari seminar and NUS Japanese class had been going on for about ten years due to the cooperation with NUS Japanese Language teachers. We usually spent about ten days visiting APEC, NEC, Microsoft, and other famous sightseeing spots with NUS students' help. We hold a joint seminar for several days as a language exchange program. My seminar students prepared the presentations about Japanese culture and other interesting topics in English and gave a presentation as a group of 4 students. In contrast, NUS students of Japanese classes gave a presentation about various topics related to issues in Singapore in Japanese with discussion and Q and A. This program's uniqueness was to visit very famous and historical places with a guide of NUS students as a group of 6 or 7 students, mixed AGU and NUS students. This way, both AGU and NUS students developed a good friendship stimulating each other. We often attended the Sunday service at the St. Andrew Church near our hotel to understand the cultural and religious worldviews by listening to Singapore English.

3.2 Virtual Online Joint Seminar

This year due to the COVID-19, we decided to go ahead to have an online virtual exchange between my 19 AGU seminar students and 19 NUS students of Japanese class under Professor Izumi Walker's guidance, vice-director of Foreign Language Centre at NUS. We divided 38 students into five groups where we did some joint research with Zoom for seven weeks and held a joint presentation seminar on November 10th, 2020 (Figure 3). The first part of the group presentation was the summary of the joint research with PowerPoint slides, mainly NUS students presented, on the other hand, the second part of the group presentation was given only by Japanese students in English. This way, NUS students could study advanced Japanese, and AGU Japanese students could improve their English presentation skills. Both groups could take advantage of language and cultural exchange through this join seminar and made some positive comments from their reflections of 8 weeks seminar (Figure 4).
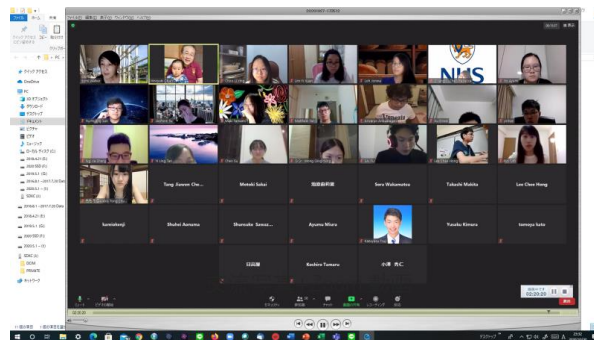

Figure 3: AGU and NUS Regular Joint Seminar with the ZOOM

Figure 4: Online Virtual Join Seminar between NUS and AGU on November 10, 2020

3.3 Discussions

Through this virtual online exchange between AGU and NUS, both students had been highly engaged in the discussion and presentations for eight weeks (Figure 5). They enjoyed the last day joint presentation on November 10th, 2020. Even though we are now facing COVID-19, we could still have positive and lovely intercultural experiences. One important thing about the join seminar is to have a weekly meeting to have the last joint presentation conference. This way, the international exchange could be more effective than just holding a one-day exchange. Last October, we had one-day joint conference only after exchanging the self-introduction and student-based exchange using Line between NUS and another Japanese private university. Compared with one-shot virtual meeting altogether between NUS and Japanese private universities, 90 minutes meeting for eight weeks could make both NUS and AGU feel more intimate and active learning engagement even in the virtual learning environments.

Figure 5: AGU and NUS Joint Presentation with the ZOOM

4.   Conclusions

In Case Study 1, under the influence of COVID-19, 60% of the students may not have liked the ZOOM lesson, but 74% of the students felt it was effective and they could still improve their presentation skills. Most of the students liked taking part in face-to-face lessons, although hybrid lessons might be preferred. At times it might be easier for us to invite visiting scholars during virtual lessons, just as in Case Study 2, as the foreign lecturer greatly influenced the students in improving their English proficiency and becoming more open-minded. To some extent, future lessons could be easily integrated with AI and virtual online lessons.

In Case Study 2, with the COVID-19, we could still have a virtual joint seminar between AGU and NUS stimulating each side. It would make it a lot easier to have a sort of exchange program with the ZOOM than in person. In the future advanced virtual exchange technologies could make more contributions as if we were meeting each other in person due to the development of mixed reality or augmented reality using google glasses or whatever.

This is an ongoing research project using virtual online teaching 100% of the time. The results of the two case studies suggest that integrating blended learning along with 21st-century skills, including hybrid learning with ZOOM virtual classroom teaching, may be an effective way to improve the English proficiency of native Japanese undergraduates.

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Acknowledgments

The Difference Effects of Paper Dictionaries vs. Online Dictionaries

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Abstract

The dictionary helps to learn foreign languages more easily and, with the invention of the online dictionary, users are now better supported and more effectively. Therefore, many studies have been conducted to show the influence of paper dictionaries and online dictionaries on users and problems in using the two types of dictionaries. The present study was based on 300 junior students from Van Lang University in Ho Chi Minh City. The results illustrated that students had a strong preference for online dictionaries. The survey also found that most students use the dictionary regularly as an effective tool to improve their language levels when it comes to boosting the vocabulary bank. Finally, most students at Van Lang University tended to choose online dictionaries for learning new vocabularies, although some of them still do not deny the value of paper dictionaries.

Keywords: paper, online, dictionaries, students, University, differences, benefit, advantages, effect.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Today, with the integration of cultures worldwide, language acts as a bridge between different regions of different countries in this modern era. According to D'Astoli (2016), if seen in any aspect, the ability to communicate in a foreign language makes people able to be able to get a better understanding of each other. So people believe that a foreign language is essential to life and try to improve their knowledge about foreign language. However, many people have problems understanding the meaning, intonation, and usage in the learning process. Therefore, the dictionary becomes an indispensable tool for those who are having problems learning foreign languages.

1.2 Statement of the problem

For these reasons, print dictionaries were born and became an effective tool for the student to find new words' meanings. It has been recognized over time by the undeniable upsides that it brings. Kipfer (2013) claimed that print dictionaries are more detailed when it comes to explanation and pronunciation and are a good brain exercise that pushes learners' critical thinking and spellings during the searching process. What is more, our fast-growing digital society has led to the popularity of online dictionaries worldwide. According to Shamar (2020), online dictionaries seem to be beneficial in terms of illustrating foreign terms through audio and visual methods. Thus, both online and paper dictionaries are equally appreciated by learners for their own benefits.

1.3 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to clarify the value of using a dictionary in learning foreign languages. Learners have the chance to recognize the validity of dictionaries when it comes to facing new words. Besides, the research focuses on emphasizing each type of dictionary's strengths and weaknesses so that learners could make the right decision about which one to choose in the long run. McKeown (1993) mentioned that different dictionaries suit different kinds of users as many of them require English learners of high level to grasp new words completely. What is more, the conducted research provides learners the chance to enhance their English levels by deeply understanding how to use a dictionary correctly. According to Ridley (2016), being able to make use of a dictionary in the right way enables students to enhance communication and upgrade their academic achievements at school. Thus, English teaching quality is significantly improved.

1.4 The significance of the study

This study's implication stems from the improper use of self-electricity by learners of a foreign language, even laziness to use a dictionary. From there, the reference will cause awareness for the readers as an opportunity to reaffirm the indispensable role of the dictionary in human life, and this method will encourage learners to be more interested in using appropriate dictionaries for themselves in the 4.0 era today for its benefits because Underhill (qt. in Ilson, 2012) mentioned that there are advantages when using dictionaries to learn a new language.

2. Literature Review

Many recent studies have focused on the problem of contrast between the helpfulness of online dictionaries and print dictionaries to English learners. Rundell (2014) reported that since the dictionary began to change its form from the printed to the digital, people have discussed the negative sides of a paper dictionary, the positive sides of an electronic dictionary, and the potential usefulness of an electronic dictionary. Based on the specific advantages that the computer dictionary, for example, the producer can easily upgrade the dictionary's quality, users can access and search large amounts of information quickly. People tend to favor online dictionaries over paper dictionaries. The online dictionary provides a special consultation service for users; for instance, the users do not need to look up each page to determine the word they need in alphabetic of a traditional dictionary (Kim, 2003, p.5). The human tendency towards convenience has prompted students to Many recent studies have focused on the problem of contrast use e-dictionaries more than ever and leads to electronic dictionaries' mass production (Zarei & Gujjar, 2012, p.631). Li Lan's (2006) survey shows that more than 70% of students use online dictionaries more often than traditional dictionaries, and she confirmed that the era of paper dictionaries is coming to an end (qt. in Zarei & Gujjar, 2012).

Amirian and Heshmatifar (2013) reported that through an experiment, the students who use an online dictionary determine the definition and the meaning of new words more quickly and exactly than those who use a paper dictionary. It is believed that an online dictionary is a useful tool in learning a foreign language. Li and Xu (2015) conducted that the bulky and outdated paper dictionary gradually replaces the online dictionary because of fast retrieval and less time-consuming. The foreign language learners have had an awareness of online dictionaries' weaknesses and strengths; they often use many online dictionaries to overcome every online dictionary's blemish (Jin & Deifell, 2013). Word Reference reported that online dictionary is the most regularly visited since learners can share and look for helpfulness with the proper usage of phrases and sentences in a social context and particular culture in online forums. This instance showed that foreign language learners knew how to use reference sources flexibly to get the best effect (qt. in Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In general, paper and online dictionary has its advantages and disadvantages and chooses which type depends on learners' needs and habits (Hulstijn & Atkins, 2015).

According to Filer (2017), today, technology information develops rapidly, many people have the advanced means of service to understand the new word or use. Chen and Dziemianko (2010) claimed that many people use online dictionaries and print dictionaries to understand the meaning of a new vocabulary. And this is arguably really important from the author's point of view. In addition, the author also affirms the essential role of dictionaries in three fields, such as form, meaning, and use. However, there is no denying that electronic dictionaries are also limited to screen size than paper dictionaries (Koren, 1997). However, Tang (1997) found that people still like to choose electronic dictionaries over paper dictionaries because of some of their positive features. For example, learners can easily carry it anywhere. Besides, they can hear sample pronunciation from this modern medium. Especially at the same time, looking up words with large volumes will be faster and more convenient. (Dziemianko, 2010). Furthermore, Stirling (2003) mentioned that this method would help learners study earlier and more positively while discovering new vocabularies through the voice function of personal electronic dictionaries (qt. in Filer, 2017).

Like the purpose of the current studies, Kim (2003) researched the influence of computer dictionaries and print dictionaries on learners' L2 learning. This study was done by dividing 37 college students in Korea into two groups. Both groups will read and understand a short text; they will use a dictionary to look up and memorize the 14 required words. Collecting data after studying the searching and learning words through the dictionary of 37 Korean students, the results showed that when reading a short text, L2 learners tended to look up the computer dictionary higher than the paper dictionary. Research also shows that computer dictionaries help absorb new vocabulary better than a paper dictionary by guiding and attracting learners' attention to new vocabulary. Besides, we still can that the vocabulary retention rate of words that are looked up in a computer dictionary is not too different from those found in a paper dictionary.

Tulgar (2017) believes that using dictionaries is a particularly delicate problem for students of the Faculty of Foreign Language as it is generally expected that students here will truly be proficient in the language so they can hear, speak, read, and write. Therefore, technology development has influenced the students to use the dictionary to apply in learning. This study aims to clarify that university students of the Faculty of Foreign Language in

Turkey use their dictionaries and learn their favorite dictionaries. Twelve students used the dictionary, were invited to participate in the interview studies at the end of the term. Interviewing these participants was conducted individually and lasted about 20 minutes to ask them about their benefits, preferences, how often they viewed the dictionary, and what dictionaries they came to information (word meaning, pronunciation, grammar, etc.). The general results given after the study are that although most of the participants often use an online dictionary because it provides fast access in a short time, they also appreciate the benefits of a paper dictionary as it contains more information than an electronic dictionary.

Similar to this survey, Yuzhen (2012) tried to analyze the habit of dictionary use in learning L2 vocabulary of a learner's reading context. It pertains to learners using English-Chinese bilingual dictionaries to complete their difficulties with the new words. This study also involves the random acquisition of vocabulary from English-major students at Chinese universities. The survey participants were asked to read a passage in English. They completed the task with one of three supports: a paper dictionary, an online dictionary, or no access to any dictionaries. After they finished, they were asked to take a surprise memorization test of any reading passages' vocabulary. After a week, the experiments were repeated. Research shows that using a dictionary facilitates good vocabulary understanding for learners and increases the ability to absorb random words. There are not too many differences between paper dictionaries and online dictionaries, but online dictionaries show an advantage in retaining vocabulary.

Aust, Kelley & Roby (1993), in a similar survey, invited 80 university language learners to participate in a survey which compares the use of paper dictionaries and one of the online dictionaries based on frequency participation, learning time, the effectiveness of the dictionary, and the ability of users to understand. The result is that online dictionary users are more likely to understand more definitions than regular dictionary users. Also, the advisory rate for online dictionary users is higher than for paper dictionaries. Also, Zarei & Gujjar (2012) also conducted a study investigating the ability to support EFL learners to learn the vocabulary of both kinds of dictionaries. Four groups of men and women were selected for the survey by vocabulary test when they use a dictionary. After that, the groups were evenly divided into two groups of one female and one male just using the online dictionary, while other groups (female and male) used only the paper dictionary. The results showed that the participant's gender did not affect the learners' use, but the online dictionary's contribution to vocabulary learning was considerably tremendous than that of the paper dictionary.

In a similar recent study, M. Mohamad, Rashid & W. Mohamad (2017) create that learners in foreign language classes often use the dictionary as a learning aid. Today, although there are many different types of dictionaries, online dictionaries are the most widely used. This study aims to find out the benefits of online dictionaries for ESL learners and the difficulties they encounter each time using them. Ten TESL tertiary students from a Malaysian public research university volunteered to become participants. During the focused interviews, the questionnaires, and the emails used for the research, results have shown that although the e-dictionary offers some benefits in terms of vocabulary enhancement for learners, ESL learners complete experience difficulties. This study shows that online dictionaries provide learners with the convenience of learning vocabulary. They can study at whatever place or the time they want, for example. Also, an online dictionary helps learners learn the correct pronunciation of words, vocabulary instructions, determine the origin of the words, and more clearly than paper dictionaries. The main difficulties of the commonly listed online dictionaries are restricted internet access, the definition of the vocabulary is incomplete, lack of examples, the website is not reputable enough, etc. This study directly impacts next to language teaching and learning when today's students use online dictionaries in their study a lot.

Many studies have investigated the attitudes of English teachers or students when they're using electronic dictionaries. Dashtestani (2013) studied both teachers' and students' views about using online dictionaries to learn English. The survey participants were asked to answer the questionnaires of 73 EFL teachers and 126 EFL students. In which, 66 teachers and 81 students participated in the next interview. The study's results showed that both EFL students and teachers have positive attitudes towards using online dictionaries. Besides, they also said that there are some limitations (a good example is that students will lose focus on learning due to electronic dictionaries on phones in class). This analysis shows that most Iranian EFL students prefer using online dictionaries on their mobile phones rather than using paper dictionaries.

As mentioned above, the former studies gained different results about using online dictionaries versus paper dictionaries. The combination of traditional and digital dictionaries greatly benefits learners when it comes to bringing about high effectiveness in checking the words' definitions (Daisy Zou et al., 2017). She also argued that although they have their characteristics, they share equally important value on English usage. According to Truong (2012), the most obvious difference between online and print dictionaries is represented. While paper dictionary only provides learners with fixed definitions, the online dictionary also gives suggestions on relating words to expand their vocabulary with the uploaded audio. The visual clues also have a crucial role in boosting learners' motivation and enhancing study quality.

2.1 Research Gap

It is clear that there are a large number of researches have been carried out to clarify the specific features of using online dictionaries versus using a print dictionary. However, there are still many gaps that have not been filled yet. One obvious matter we have to argue is which kind of dictionary suits English learners' levels. Different types of dictionaries are all designed to check the words' meanings; however, the presentation styles have significant differences in the various levels of English learners. Another crucial thing we need to do is find out how to fully take advantage of using each type of dictionary based on their owner's distinctive beneficial features. Although these dictionaries bring about equally important value to learners, using them correctly seems to benefit them greatly.

2.2 Research Questions

The study was conducted to validate the influence of paper dictionaries and online dictionaries on users. This study is designed to explore to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What are the people's perceptions of paper or online dictionaries using?
2. Is there any difference between using an online dictionary and paper dictionaries?

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research context & Sample

3.1.1 Research context

This survey was conducted at Van Lang University campus 1, where it specializes in training majors such as Law, Architecture, Foreign Languages, and Construction. To catch up with the era that is to integrate with the world, the school realizes the importance of learning foreign languages. So learning a foreign language and passing exams is one of the mandatory requirements to ensure the output for students. Depending on the student's major, each person is required to learn a foreign language in their curriculum with the professional subjects. Foreign language students study books edited by the Faculty's teachers, while other major students study the "Jetstream" textbooks of Jane Revell and Mary Tomalin, published in 2016. The goal of the curriculum is to ensure output for students and equip students with background knowledge of foreign languages so they can confidently go to work.

3.1.2 Population and sampling methods

In terms of finding subjects to serve for research, we focus on research subjects who are junior students of Van Lang University because they are the most convenient research subjects. Most researchers sampled based on accessibility, intimacy, as well as convenience at a given time or the willingness to join a certain group of people (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016, p.2). We selected the junior students because they are the same age, so they also have the same Research Methods subject as us, so they are easy to access, and they will be ready to participate in the survey. In addition, junior students have also entered the major, so it will be easy to differentiate their goals in using the dictionary. Three hundred junior students of Van Lang University are drawn from 600 students in the first semester to serve for research. They are junior students studying a language other than their native language (English, French, Chinese, Japanese, and so on), aged 20 to 25. At the time this study took place, they are or have learned another language. They have also read paper dictionaries or used online dictionaries to look up to their needs.

3.2 Research design

Type of research: We are going to conduct some surveys about using dictionaries to learn English among Van Lang University's students. The print questionnaires and some interview questions are used to get the learners' opinions or ideas about what kind of dictionary they usually use. The questionnaires are handed out to around 300 students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages. The survey is conducted within the university campus, and the collected data can be in both written form and recorded form.

Reviews of the research design or used theories: The research is followed by a range of questions from questionnaires to interview questions to collect more information. The research would be more objective and accurate. The research is designed following the form of a direct survey on a large number of students.

The reason that research design is the best: We need a lot of personal ideas to identify the trend towards using dictionaries in learning English. The more answers we get, the more accurate the survey is. By using the surveys, questionnaires, or quizzes, we can get information from many sources, but we can still save time because it does

not take much time to fill in the forms or answer the interview questions. Doing such a survey is also simple because of its flexibility when it comes to getting to know people's points of view about a specific topic. According to DeFranzo (2015), surveys can be performed in many forms, which enable conductors to gain information from various sources and enrich the paper.

Type of data used to answer the research questions: Recorded ideas or opinions, as well as written information from handed out forms, are used as ingredients in the research. All collected da ta is used and analyzed carefully before being put in the research.

* Instruments

The crawl is based on the Google form tool. It has a built-in tool that calculates the results based on a pie chart and outputs each response percentage. There are a total of 21 questionnaires and are divided into two sections to clarify each research question. More specifically, questions 1-3 confirm whether the subject's information is relevant to the study. Questions 4-6 determine the subjects' perception of online and paper dictionaries generally. Question 7 identifies the specific reasons people buy and use that type of dictionaries. Questions 8-9 investigate object perceptions of research subjects regarding dictionary use in the university environment. Question 10 asks about the subject's view of the paper dictionary exclusion. Questions 11-12 ask about how often users use dictionaries and what types of dictionaries are often used by users. Questions 13-19 seek out users' opinions about specific aspects of the two dictionaries. Questions 20-21 explore the frequency of time that users spend using a dictionary.

3.3 The procedure of the study

Questionnaires will be shared out on Tuesday, 03.11.2020, for 200 students at Van Lang University, and we will also interview 15 students on Thursday, 05.11. 2020.

Questionnaires were collected on Friday 06.11.2020 and interviewed on 05.11.2020. Fifteen students will be interviewed in Vietnamese, and this recorded by a mobile phone. Then, it will be translated into English.

4.   Findings and Discussion

4.1 The demographic data of the participants

Participants were junior students of Van Lang University at the first campus 1. 300 students were selected randomly from a total of junior students of campus 1. There are four faculties: Faculty of Law, Faculty of Architecture, Faculty of Construction are three faculties according to the common English curriculum of the whole school, and the Faculty of the foreign language department, students are divided into many different foreign language majors. In year 3 of the curriculum, most students have begun to have access to specialized knowledge.

Percentage of faculties

- Faculty of Foreign Language
- Faculty of Architecture
- Faculty of Law
- aculty of Civil Construction

51.70%
19.30%
16.70%
12.30%
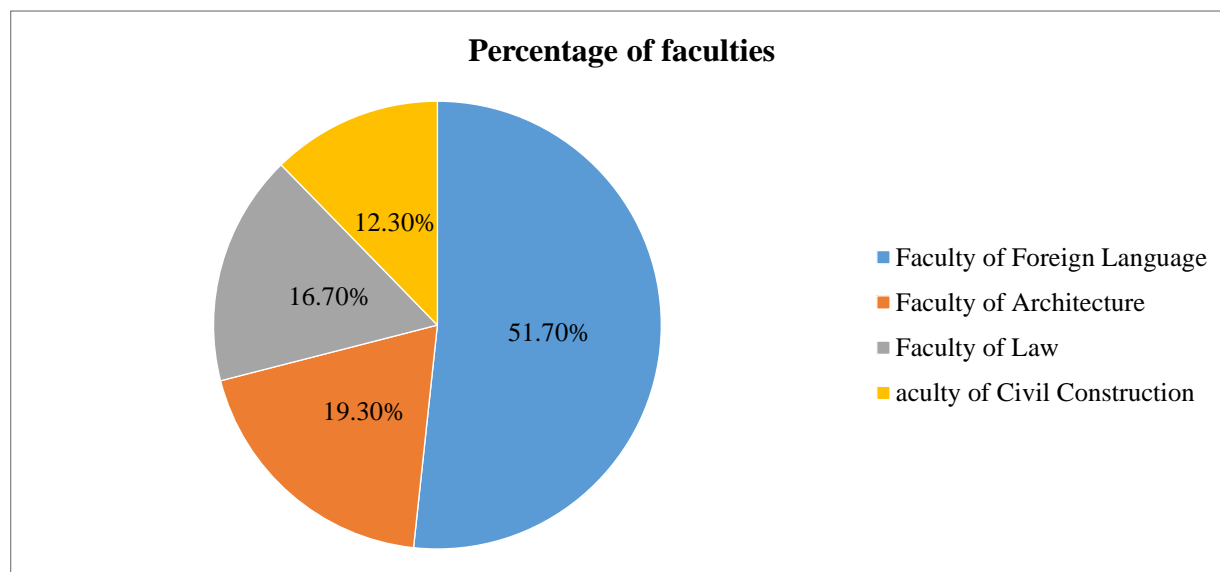
Based on the data obtained from the survey, 51.7% of them belong to the Faculty of Foreign language, 19.3% were students of the Faculty of Architecture, 12.3% belong to the Faculty of Civil Construction, and 16.7% were students of the Faculty of Law. The difference is because the amount of foreign language students is more than the other.

4.2 Research Questions 1: What types of dictionaries do university students prefer?

Table 1: The users' general perception about the usefulness.

	Online dictionary	Paper dictionary
Usefulness (on the scale 1-5)	4.58	3.6

Table number 1 shows the respondents' perceptions about the helpfulness of the online dictionary (OD) and the paper dictionary (PD). According to the table, the usefulness of an online dictionary (4.58) seems to overwhelm a paper dictionary (3.6).

Table 2: The perception of the student about the dictionary at VLU.

	OD		PD	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Popular in VLU	282	94%	18	6%
Supported to maintain	287	95.7%	13	4.3%

The table also shows that a large number of students support maintaining online dictionaries on the university campus (94%), while the number of students supporting paper dictionaries in the same environment only accounts for a small number (6%). When asked about the popularity of two types of dictionaries, the online dictionary seems to be more common with 287 responses (95.7%), while only 13 people (4.3%) vote for the popularity of paper dictionaries. As we can see from the table above, the online dictionary receives bigger support and popularity than the online dictionary when it comes to research at Van Lang University.

4.3 Research Questions 2: Is there any difference between using an online dictionary and a paper dictionary?
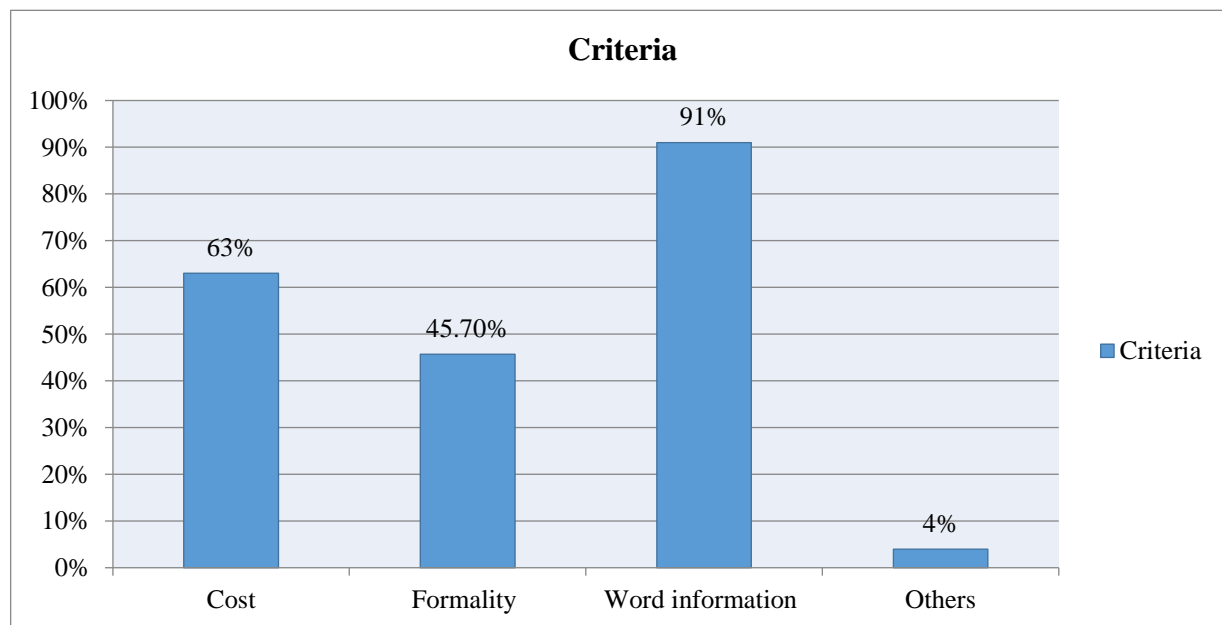
Chart 1: Criteria

The chart above shows the factors that users consider when it comes to using a dictionary. Besides cost, formality, and word information, other factors influence people's decisions on choosing a dictionary.   It can be seen clearly from the chart that word information has the biggest influence on people's decisions when they pick a dictionary (91%) and it is perhaps the most important thing when it comes to deciding which one to buy. Cost is the second thing people considering as another key thing to buy a dictionary (63%). The differences between prices of dictionary can have a big impact on people's buying decisions because they want to buy something useful at reasonable prices. Another factor that students really care about when they decide to use a dictionary is formality

(45.7%). People also have many other choices about which factor influences their decisions on buying dictionaries, but it only accounts for a small proportion (4%).

Table 3: The users' perception about the importance of dictionaries.

	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Important	292	97.3%	8	2.7%

The table above shows the results concerning people's opinions about the importance of the two types of dictionaries and whether we should eliminate the paper dictionary. The collected data reflects that many students recognize the importance of dictionaries in their lives (97.3%) while others (2.7%) refute it.

Table 4: The users' perception about eliminating paper dictionaries.

	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Eliminating PD	144	48%	156	52%

A number of users agree on eliminating paper dictionaries for their own reasons (144). At the same time, a few more students disagree with the idea of removing paper dictionaries from the education environment. It can be seen that respondents' opinions vary significantly; however, no one can indeed deny the role of the dictionary, and the paper dictionary is still strongly supported to thrive.

Table 5: Users' review of the aspects of a dictionary.

	OD		PD	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Preference	284	94.7%	16	5.3%
Check	283	94.3%	17	5.7%
Time-saving	289	96.3%	11	3.7%
Economical element	289	96.3%	11	3.7%
Presentation style	274	91.3%	26	8.7%
Portability	290	96.7%	10	3.3%
Pronunciation improvement	289	96.3%	11	3.7%
Effect	288	96%	12	4%

The table above shows the feedback about two types of dictionaries on some specific areas, namely: preference, check, time-saving, economic element, presentation style, portability, pronunciation improvement, and effect. First, many respondents prefer online dictionaries (94.7%) to paper dictionaries (5.3%) because the online dictionary is more common and easier to use. Next, when being asked about which type of students usually use to check new words' meanings, the online dictionary also gets more responses (94.3%) than the paper dictionary (5.7%). What is more, time-saving is another area that being noticed about the characteristics of these two types of dictionaries. The online dictionary appears to be more time-saving (96.3%) compared to the paper dictionary (3.7%). Besides,

the online dictionary also has a reputation for being more economical (96.3%) because people do not have to pay any fees to use the service while using paper dictionaries charges users a lot more money.

Furthermore, many more people (91.3%) have voted for online dictionary presentations because it is easy to study and enables users to check meanings easily. On the contrary, only a small number of students vote for the paper dictionary's presentation style (8.7%). Moreover, the collected data shows that an online dictionary is more portable (96.7%) thanks to the advanced apps, whereas only ten people (3.3%) believe that a paper dictionary is portable. When it comes to improving pronunciation, an online dictionary seems to be more advantageous (96.3%) because learners can enhance their pronunciations through audio. Finally, it is undeniable that using an online dictionary is more effective than a paper dictionary for all the reasons mentioned above.

The below chart shows the frequency of dictionary use among respondents at Van Lang University. Of all the students questioned, 41 people (13.7%) reported that they use dictionaries almost every day for checking and learning new words' meanings. Another 22 (7.3%) said that they use a dictionary sometimes. Many students (79%) admitted that they only use a dictionary when they are in need, such as to prepare for exams, homework, or when they're in special situations. So we can see that using a dictionary regularly has not been a study habit among VLU students yet.
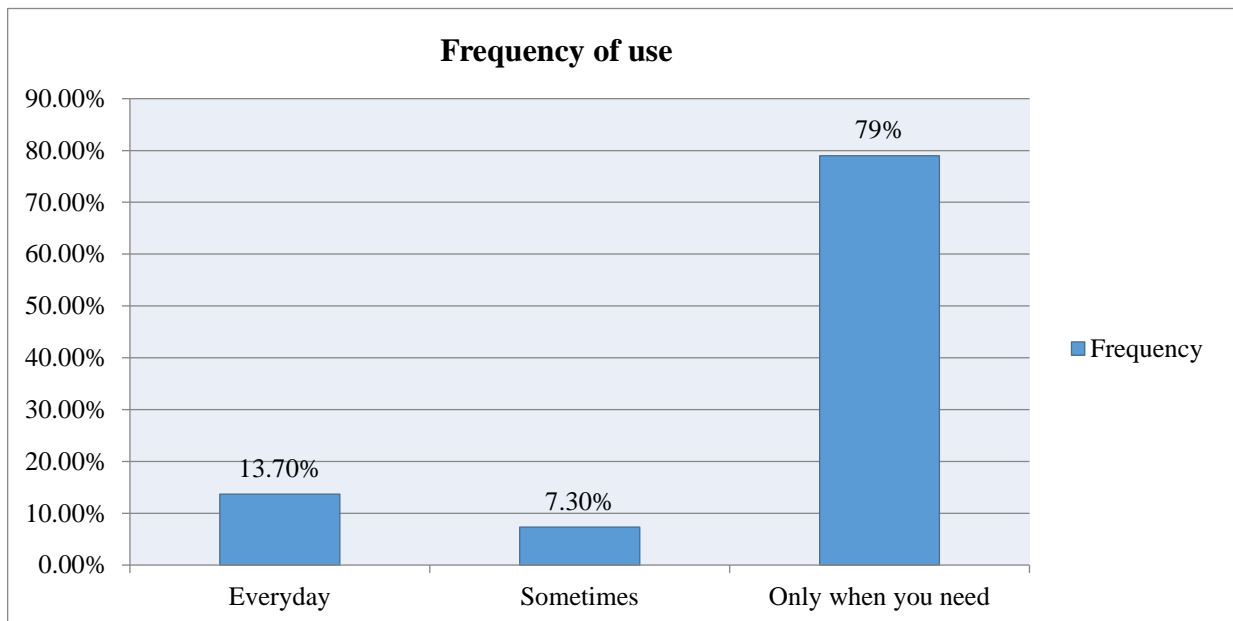
Chart 2: Frequency of use

The chart below indicates the amount of time that users usually spend on a dictionary. It is clear that people usually spend around 15 minutes to more than an hour using the internet (from 6.3% to 7.7%). A large number of others admitted that the amount of time they spend using a dictionary depends on the number of words that they need to check (79%). From all the data above, it is clear that people's opinions about using dictionaries vary on their purposes and circumstances.
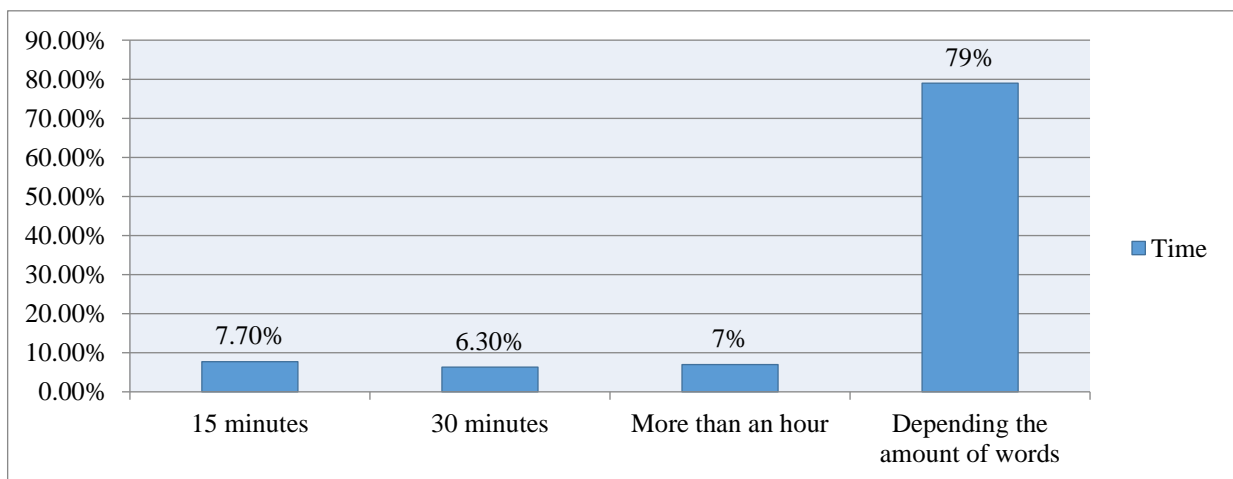
Chart 3: Time of use.

4.4 Discussion

This study had the same results as previous research results of Rundell (2014) when it showed that both types of dictionaries have different pros and cons in understanding, receiving, and storing vocabulary. Besides, the capacity of the online dictionary is more effective than one of the paper dictionaries. More importantly, this study shows that online dictionaries provide learners with the convenience of learning vocabulary, such as studying wherever or whenever they want. Simultaneously, the online dictionary helps learners learn the correct pronunciation of words, vocabulary guidance, determine the origin of vocabulary, and so on, which more clearly than the paper dictionary. Since then, it shows that using the dictionary facilitates the learners' understanding of the vocabulary and increases the ability to absorb random words. There are not too many differences between paper dictionaries and online dictionaries, but online dictionaries show the advantage in terms of vocabulary retention. According to Tulgar (2017), after the study, most participants often use online dictionaries because it can determine all information they need in a short time; moreover, they recognize the usefulness of paper dictionaries. According to Yuzhen (2012), the main difficulty of the commonly listed: online dictionaries is restricted internet access, incomplete word definition, lack of examples, insufficiency of website reputation, etc. (a good example would be a student distracting from learning due to the use of electronic dictionaries on the phone in class). This research directly influences the teaching and learning of languages as students nowadays use online dictionaries to study a lot.

5. Conclusion

This study aims to show the advantages of online dictionaries and paper dictionaries in the current era through assessment of consumers, particularly students K.24 of year 3 in the Faculties of Law, Construction, Architecture and Foreign Languages from Van Lang University in Ho Chi Minh City. The researcher test to recognize which type of dictionaries will be chosen while the user wants to look up its meaning. Would students like to choose electronic dictionaries or paper dictionaries for their learning purpose? The survey revealed that although electronic dictionaries and print dictionaries are beneficial to students, most of them like to easily select electronic dictionaries as a modern tool to look up new vocabularies. Many students felt that it is convenient and useful when applying online dictionaries, which can create a new application for learners' pronunciation. This is not available on paper.

However, paper dictionaries' important role is not still denied because some students believe that paper dictionaries help explain exactly the word's meaning. Besides, because most students like to choose online dictionaries, this study encourages learners to equip with several modern tools. It can be a tablet or a smartphone to serve in maximizing the effectiveness of learning new words through the online dictionary. This will definitely help Van Lang students improve their pronunciation skills shown in that when students check the meaning of a word, they also understand their correct pronunciation. This is a different point with print dictionaries. This encourages many students to prefer electronic dictionaries to paper dictionaries for their learning in foreign languages. In the future, we hope that we can expand the participants and scope of research with a larger number in all different faculties at Van Lang University. This will give the study paper exact results and show how to choose a suitable form for students while using dictionaries for a foreign language in the 4.0 era today.

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English language-learning environments in COVID-19 era

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Abstract

No doubt that English education is a complex process, and its successes depend on many variables. Of these, English language-learning environments for regular practice are commonly accepted as a prerequisite in the contexts of English as a foreign language (EFL). Unfortunately, the questions of what English language-learning environments exactly are and how these are to be implemented have not been well addressed. The present paper reviews the literature on the concept of English language-learning environments and identifies approaches for successful applications of those environments for English language education. The present paper contributes to the growing body of literature on foreign language education and draws special attention to English language teaching theories (ELT).

Keywords: EFL contexts, English-language environments, technology-based approach, English language learning

INTRODUCTION

In today's second and foreign language classrooms in South East Asia, the main purpose of teaching and learning is to develop the learners' communicative proficiency in the target language (TL). The field of English language teaching (ELT) has been witnessing considerable changes and developments in its theories and practices. These attempts involve investigating solutions to raise the effectiveness of English education and to keep up with the rapid developments of society. In addition to issues such as the teaching methods, content, activities, and teaching materials, it must be said that the implementation of English language-learning environments requires appropriate teaching approaches which facilitate opportunities for the learners to immerse in the English language inside and outside classrooms.

The questions of how to effectively create an English language-learning environment have not mostly addressed. As an attempt to highlight special attention to the crucial understanding of methods in the teaching process, the present study proposes brief explanations on the English language-learning environment and identifies critical relationships between basic components, finally ending with pedagogical applications of its theories into the English language instructions as a foreign language (EFL). In response to society's rapid development, a shift away from the disciplinary knowledge, which is not persuasive and evident enough, toward applications of the interdisciplinary knowledge to solve systematic and complicated problems. Similarly, the author proposes a preliminary model of the English language-learning environment structures based on an analysis of the critical theories concerning ELT theories, sociolinguistics, social psychology, and systematic theories.

RATIONALE

Theories of English language-learning environments, which have been developed throughout the history of language education worldwide since the 1970s, are commonly known as an emphasis on the use of language inside and outside classrooms. It is widely acknowledged that there are two kinds of linguistic environments – formal linguistic environments and informal linguistic environments. As distinguished by Krashen (1976), the use of active language happens irregularly in the formal environments (classrooms), as opposed to the informal environments, in which the active language is regularly used in the concepts of English as a second language (ESL) [8].

It would be wrong to state that the classification as mentioned above is entirely appropriate to a variety of today's English language teaching and learning contexts. In other words, it is essential to make a distinction between the ESL contexts and the EFL contexts or other contexts, for each case, the context in which the teaching takes place is very different, requiring differences in materials, syllabuses, and methodologies (Carter & Nunan, 2001) [3]. In the ESL

contexts including the United Kingdom, the United States, or countries in Africa (i.e., Nigeria and Zambia), as mentioned by Ellis (1994), English plays an institutional and social role in the community (e.g., its functions as a recognized means of communication among members who speak some other language as their mother language) [6]. On the contrary, EFL is used in contexts where English is neither widely used for communication nor used as the medium of instruction (i.e., Brazil, Japan, Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam) [6]. For the outside-classroom environment creating, learners use English in real-life situations in which they set themselves demanding goals and express English purposely and meaningfully. Nevertheless, it isn't easy to establish the outside-classroom environment in the EFL contexts because the learners mostly do not need to use English in socio-communicative situations (frequently use mother language instead).

In most EFL contexts, including Vietnam, similarly, learners have fewer opportunities for English practices (focusing mainly on learning activities inside classrooms), even having no in some cases, the English instructions are only implemented in mother language (L1). Despite spending much time learning English, there is a mismatch between the ability in English inside classrooms and the use of English in real-life communicative situations. It is increasingly important that the English language-learning environments play an essential role in the success of English teaching and learning in the EFL contexts.

ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Based on the analysis mentioned above, a "closed-English ecology" conceptual model was empirically designed to account for the English language-learning environment settings (Figure 1). In this conceptual model, the two main components of the English language-learning environments are the inside-classroom and outside-classroom environment creating. To be more specific, creating an inside-classroom environment is the implementation of teaching approaches that enthusiastically stimulate classroom interactions to use English as much as possible. Depending on particular contexts, the outside-classroom English language-learning environments can be created by facilitating much-needed conditions, especially social life-illustrating situations for repeated English practices beyond classrooms.
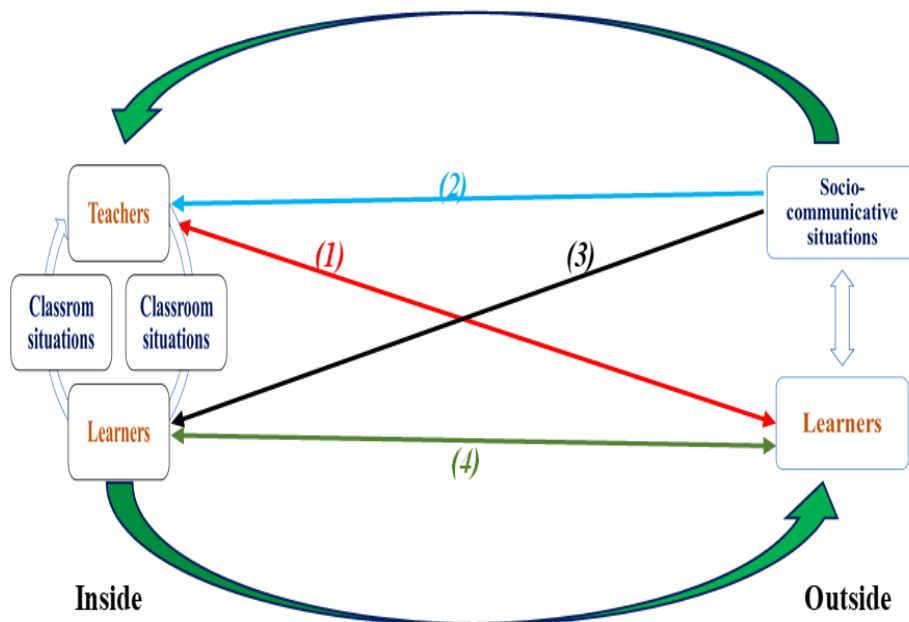

Figure 1: The structure of the English language-learning environment

(1) The interactions between teachers and learners inside and outside classrooms

The inside-class interactions

In English classrooms, explanations of classroom interactions here focus primarily on the *purposeful* use of the English language from the teacher and learners, at least in the teacher's questions or feedback and the learners' responses through classroom situations (Figure 2). In this regard, Tsui (2001) proposes that the effectiveness of the classroom situations (a means of classroom interactions) is reflected in how the teachers create opportunities for learners to engage in the production of English [12]. To be more consistent with the English language-learning environment's notions, classroom situations are considered classroom tasks and learning activities for learners to communicate in English with the teachers or other learners interactively.
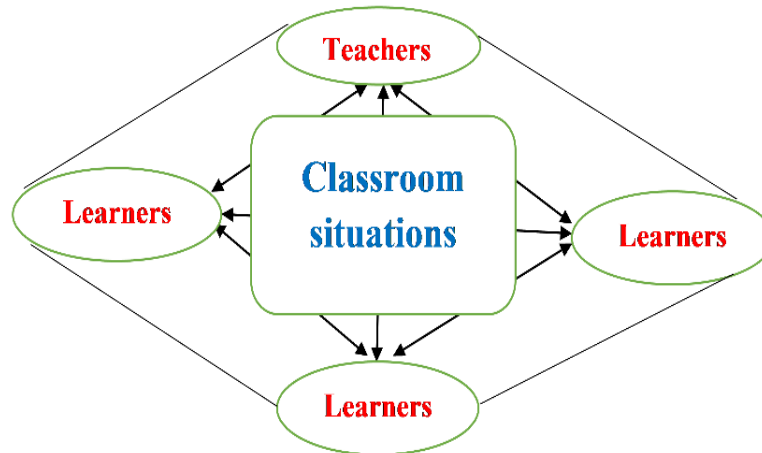

Figure 2*: The illustrations of inside-class interactions

Relating to the effectiveness of classroom interactions, it is essential to discuss the roles of the learner's willingness to interact or collaborate. This is particularly due to the fact that the learners only interact with others in classrooms or social life on the condition that they have certain purposes or needs. Many important arguments suggested by the literature propose that when teaching structures meet the learners' expectations or enable learners to be more active in their learning, the teaching will be more effective (Dörnyei, 1998; Tudor, 1996) [5] [13]. Furthermore, the learners' willingness depends on either internal factors (i.e., genders and ages, the characteristics, knowledge background, language backgrounds including the level of English, personal backgrounds, motivations, or expectations) or external factors (i.e., learning environments, similarities in cultural backgrounds of partners, or teaching approaches). More importantly, the increase of teacher-learner interactions (especially young learners) relates to the teacher's styling identity. Based on the teachers' characteristics or social-life backgrounds (the social-psychological approach), the teacher's styling identity might include "open-minded styles" and "close-minded styles." For the teachers with the open-minded styling identity, it is believed that their interactions with learners may be open and friendlier, as opposed to the close-minded styling identity ones. Depending on the local contextual details, however, the teachers' styling identity contains different considerations, whether positives or negatives.

To conclude this extensive discussion, it is important to design appropriate classroom situations to promote the use of English as much as possible effectively. For learners' background diversity, it is required that many reviews of different aspects relevant, the social-psychology included, have strong influences on the interactions between the teacher and learners or among groups of learners inside classrooms. In other cases, the teacher is involved in an integral part that provides learners with opportunities for developing positive self-images and raising their willingness to interact in English with others.

Another aspect worth mentioning is that the English language-learning approaches' effectiveness is also dependent on the teachers' professionals. Based on real-life classroom observations, the teacher stimulates the use of English inside classrooms, especially instructing learning activities, supporting the learners as language resources, or encouraging learners to produce English in the teaching process. In English proverbs, it is often said that "*Nothing can succeed without the help of the teacher*", compared to a Vietnamese proverb "*Không Thầy đố mày làm nên*". In a study conducted in the Vietnamese context, Canh and Renandya (2017) found that teachers with high proficiency are more confident in the use of target language and develop more interesting and engaging classroom causing target language and developing proficiency in English and their understanding of ELT methodologies impact little or much on the teaching process's success.

The outside-class interactions

For the success of the English language-learning approaches outside class, it is vitally important to establish a friendly learning environment for English practices. To meet the objective, the teacher must be in the role of an instructor or a co-learner who provides learners with advanced necessities for regularly practicing English outside classrooms and inspires them to be more active in the learning process. Of these necessities, the teacher frequently engages learners in learning tasks or required-suitably projects in which they are able to recall and apply linguistic competencies (i.e., vocabulary, lexico-grammar, or grammatical structures) in the production of the four-English skills. It seems understandable that the teacher should be a source of motivation for continuously enhancing English competencies outside classrooms.

(2)-(3) The effects of socio-communicative situations

In this review, the socio-communicative situations are defined as real-life opportunities for learners to transfer what they learn in lessons to the daily use of English (both oral and written production). Not surprisingly, the socio-communicative situations are affective variables associated with the use of English from the learners outside classrooms. These situations mostly remain in the community where members speak English as a mother language (L1), a second language (ESL), or a "lingua franca" (English is considered a common language in a multilingual community where the people speak many languages, for example, European communities).

Despite having many different arguments, the globally rapid spread of English has remarkably changed English's status in many parts of the world. It is estimated that over 100 countries (e.g., China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt, and Brazil) where English is widely taught as a foreign language (Crystal, 2016) [4]. The EFL learners are likely motivated by the so-called means for integration, of which English is considered an international language. The primary purpose of learning English from the EFL learners is to be more proficient in the four-English skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing), which help them meet the current labor markets' requirement. It might make learners focus on the learning process and enormously engage their purposes in the high efforts to learn English.

In addition to making sure that the teaching approaches for setting inputs (linguistic competencies) are comprehensive, similarly, those for the output of English (communicative competencies) are lively and purposeful. Regarding the discussion, "communicative competence may be defined as the ability to function in a truly communicative setting – that is, in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors" (Savignon, 1972, as cited by Hadley, 1993) [7]. For the successful settings of the dynamic exchanges between the input and output, the teacher appropriately selects more purposeful learning resources and design authentic activities with intercultural contents approachable in socio-communicative situations. A reasonable reason is that the learners are frequently motivated by some common topics related to their hobbies or interests and their available understandings. As pedagogical practices, the teacher needs to regularly update the methodology suited to the rapid development of society so that they can select appropriate socio-communicative situations for demonstrating in English classrooms, which are more responsive to the learners' diverse backgrounds (e.g., genders and ages, knowledge backgrounds, backgrounds of English ability, or cultural backgrounds).

(4) The use of English inside and outside classrooms from the learners

Understandably, the paramount important purpose of the existence of any languages on our planet is for the people in the society to carry out socio-communicative functions. No exception in this review, especially English, is more and more important in globalization and integration today. As highlighted above, learning and teaching aim to effectively use English in real-life social situations (both oral or written production). Therefore, the flections on the learners' English use inside and outside classrooms are considerably used to evaluate the effectiveness of the English learning and teaching process. Specifically, when learners express themselves in English meaningfully and interactively in real-life situations, the English learning process's effectiveness is recognized.

APPROACHES FOR CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Before discussing how to create a linguistic environment inside classrooms effectively, it has been claimed that the practices of English depend on the proficiency of the learners (from the beginners to the advanced learners). Pedagogically, the inside-class English language-learning approaches are to motivate the use of English inside classrooms, which starts with developing linguistic competence (i.e., vocabulary, lexico-grammar, or grammatical structures) and meaningfully produces English in the classroom situations (communicative competence). According to Krashen (1976), the contributions of classrooms as the formal English language-learning environments are to provide the language input (rule isolation and feedback) to activate the developments of language use [8]. Finding an agreement with Ellis's (2002) concepts of practice and consciousness-raising, in which "the learners are provided with opportunities to practice the structures, first under controlled conditions, and then under more normal communicative conditions" [6].

As mentioned previously, the use of English inside classrooms are stimulated by the purposeful interactions between the teacher with learners or among the learners. Consequently, the English language-learning approaches to productions of English need to be implemented in a class community (i.e., work in pairs, or working in small groups). In his history of language teaching, Webb (1982) observed that learner-learner interactions in group work outstandingly expand the learners' talking time instead of only demonstrating what they have learned [14]. In some cases, roleplays are effective in creating needed opportunities for practices of English inside classrooms. Relatively few empirical studies conducted to investigate the effectiveness of roleplays in teaching English in Vietnam; as explained by Nguyen (2019), role plays and dramatizations enable learners to use English in a funny and interesting way when illustrating communicative situations related to their lives (i.e., greetings, booking rooms in a hotel, clothes, and weather) and gradually develop the learners' fluency in English [9].

On the other hand, the effectiveness of activities based on interpersonal skills (i.e., small groups or pairs) requires a highly well-prepared process from the teacher. These well-established stages are not only in preparing learners for group work but also in designing appropriate learning tasks and monitoring what learners are doing in class. More importantly, small-group work learning tasks need to be sufficiently open-ended and challenging to engage learners in higher-order thinking without being too confusing. In a series of classroom observations, Battistich et al. (1993) propose that the use of group work is negatively related to achievement if group interaction is disrespectful or unequal [1]. In a classroom, some learners, in this case, have some difficulties interacting positively with others due to a lack of the social skills necessary (i.e., team-working skills or communicative skills) and diversity of social background. To deal with these problems, learners should be explicitly trained in communicative skills, namely paraphrasing or listening to other people's ideas before using small group work.

In addition to the mentioned-above activities, discussion in a group or whole class settings actively promotes learner-learner interactions inside the class. In day-to-day practice, however, the discussion needs to be carefully prepared and usually needs to follow on from some prior activities such as a previous lesson on a certain topic. In this sense, the teachers should enable learners to prepare their own ideas for a particular topic before the lesson. Subsequently, the teachers need to clearly set out the purpose of the discussion from the start to keep it focused and to the point. During the discussion, the teacher needs to respond to the learners' ideas in such a flexible way as to encourage them to clarify and be more conscious of their thought processes.

APPROACHES FOR OUTSIDE-CLASSROOM PRACTICE

It is well-known that a cutting-edge difference between the EFL contexts and the other contexts, including ESL contexts or native English contexts, is that the use of English as a means of communication irregularly happens in social-life situations. As a consequence, the English language-learning approaches are to generate much-needed conditions in which learners are able to apply linguistic competence to meaningful productions of English in both oral and written outside classrooms. To help students to transfer what they learn to real-world situations, applied activities should be more authentic or as close to real-world experiences as possible. It is vitally significant for the teachers to flexibly take advantage of onsite environments when hands-on practice needs to match real-world scenarios and engage multiple senses (e.g., face-to-face interaction with people or hands-on interaction with physical objects).

Actions for the aforementioned purposes, using group-work settings outside classrooms, improve learners' interactions and engagements with ongoing English practices. One of these learning types, project-based learning (PBL), being a student-centered form of learning that involves students spending sustained periods of study time exploring and attempting to solve real-life problems, is an appropriate choice for this situation. As a matter of fact, applying project-

based activities into English teaching facilitates opportunities for learners to engage what they learn in real-world situations outside classrooms. Nevertheless, project-based learning also contains some problems in teaching and learning English. For example, the question of how to effectively individualize participation or learning outcome evaluations needs to be considered carefully when applying project-based learning approaches.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Today's communication needs are more and more expanding over the borders of each nation because of globalization. Of these demands, cultural understanding or academic exchanges between domestic learners and international learners are increasingly becoming necessary. In other words, there are the existences of purposeful interactions between the communities around the world. To successfully engage these interactions in the English classrooms, applying advancements of technology is a reasonable consideration. As technology innovations rapidly expand the universe of possibilities in many areas, online technologies facilitate closer connections among learners of English around the world. Based on social networks' advancements, learners of English advantageously make communication with native speakers in purposeful situations.

Furthermore, continual advancements in technology and Internet connections possibly offer EFL learners enormous opportunities to approach the near-native learning environment. These resources are useful for the teacher to select authentic materials with intercultural content. Easily observed in real-life situations, learners are extremely interested in trendy events on social networks (e.g., Facebook, Zalo, or native English Vloggers on Youtube). In some cases, the teachers could guide learners on using available learning resources, enabling them to develop self-directed learning skills at home in unstressed ways. Reinders and White (2010) commented that technology is applied to individualize the language learning process and offers learners language learning opportunities outside the classroom as well [11].

Regards creating the English language-learning environments for the regular practice of English in the contexts of teaching English as a foreign language, Nguyen (2020) suggests a conceptual framework for integrating technology into the communicative language teaching activities to motivate learners to speak English (Figure 3). From the findings of his empirical study, integrating computer and smartphone assistants into communicative language activities (i.e., roleplays and dramatizations, project-based activities, and opinion-sharing activities) enables learners to interact with the English language with variously interesting hands-on activities both inside and outside the classroom and slightly enhances the learner's performances in English speaking [10].
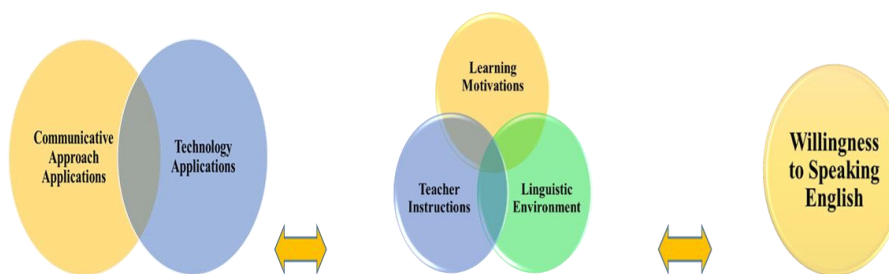
Figure 3: Conceptual framework for integrating technology into the communicative language teaching activities to motivate learners to speak English

CONCLUSION

It must be concluded that the English language-learning environment is repeatedly defined as the implementation of appropriate teaching approaches that enthusiastically promote the regular practices of English from learners. It is a prerequisite in English contexts as a foreign language (EFL). In light of the views expressed in the present paper, the concepts of the English language-learning environments in EFL contexts differ from the ones in the ESL concepts. In most EFL contexts, opportunities for using English occur regularly in classrooms (formal language environments), compared with the ESL contexts, "a distinction must be made between informal environments in which active language use occurs regularly and those in which language use is irregular" (Krashen, 1976, p.157) [8]. From theories to practices, this paper respectively extends understanding of what English language-learning environments are or how to model the structures of its components. To illustrate this, the author reviews a variety of concepts and draws a

model of the English language-learning environments for the acquisition of English in EFL contexts. The model of the English language-learning environments exactly explains what main components and their roles are, or what the teachers and learners do in the English acquisition process. Furthermore, the author reveals some suggestions for successful applications of its theories in real-life practices. It is hoped that the present paper extends the literature review in the field of English language teaching and draws special attention to the importance of the English language-learning environment for English acquisition, besides the focus on theories of ELT methodology from ELT scholars around the world.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. **Nguyen Van My** is an early researcher in language acquisition and language studies and an English and Russian teacher as foreign languages. He received formal training in teaching English and Russian as foreign languages at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Vietnam. His current research interests include language teaching methodology, curriculum developments, technology in language teaching, learner motivations, and language assessments. His research interests are reflected in his publications in the areas of *English language teaching and technology* and *language assessments.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Developing Bottom-up Listening Skills in a Google Classroom-based EFL module

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Abstract

The influence of a mini EFL listening module of bottom-up activities on learners' listening ability and students' views on using Google Classroom is used as a tool for language learning and teaching. The students were 100 first-year EFL students at Hanoi. The teaching practice of EFL listening has not well addressed bottom-up listening skills (Seigel & Seigel, 2015). Moreover, autonomous listening is not very well focused in current pedagogy (Field, 2008). This study was conducted to investigate Pedagogical University 2. The module was developed on the Google Classroom platform, which incorporates listening activities on different bottom-up skills. The students completed the assigned bottom-up listening activities on the platform every week over a period of 10 weeks. The data were collected from an online survey (n=100) and a dictation pre-test, and a dictation post-test (n=100). This conference paper reported the results drawn from the survey data with 100 students. The results showed that the module improved students' bottom-up listening skills and positively affected their autonomy. The study suggests that EFL teachers should be more aware of the importance of bottom-up activities and allocate adequate time for them in listening courses, especially for low-level learners. Furthermore, the study indicates that Google Classroom, as a sample tool of technologies, can be employed with sound pedagogy to benefit students.

Keywords: EFL bottom-up listening, the use of technology, learner autonomy, Google Classroom, Vietnam.

1. Introduction

Listening has a crucial role in foreign language learning and communication (Vandergrift, 2015). It is the most frequently used language skill by language learners (Brinton, Snow, & Celce-Murcia, 2014) and consequently has an essential role in providing linguistic input and interaction opportunities for learners to acquire the language (Field, 2008). Thus, the development of L2 listening skills has a strong impact on the development of other skills (Rost, 2015). However, listening has been "the least well taught" (White, 2006, p. 111). Listening has been the most neglected skill in the language classroom, and learners are not often taught how to listen effectively (e.g., Berne, 2004; Mendelsohn, 2006). Listening is often considered by language learners as the most difficult skill to learn, especially for those in the contexts where English is a foreign language (e.g., Graham, 2003; Hasan, 2000). In Vietnam, EFL learners often consider listening as one of the most difficult skills, and they often ask for guidance in learning this subject (Vu & Shan, 2016).

Among different listening skills, bottom-up listening skills play a key role in helping students understand the listening input at the sound, syllable, word, chunk, syntax, and intonation levels. However, activities to enhance students' bottom-up listening skills have not received adequate attention in EFL listening instruction, especially for low-level students (Seigel & Seigel, 2015). Textbooks often have not reflected a systematic approach to develop listening skills (Hill & Tomlinson, 2013). They usually include limited types of texts and tasks and seem to include outdated materials. The reasons mentioned so far suggest that more attention needs to be given to the teaching of listening skills, specifically bottom-up listening skills. This study was conducted to investigate the influence of a mini EFL listening module of bottom-up activities on learners' listening ability and learner autonomy. The students

were 100 first-year EFL students at a public university in Vietnam. The module was developed on the Google Classroom platform, which incorporates listening activities on different bottom-up skills. The students completed the assigned bottom-up listening activities on the platform every week over a period of 10 weeks. The data were collected from an online survey (n=100) and a dictation pre-test, and a dictation post-test (n=100).

2. Literature review

2.1. English listening skills

2.1.1. Top-down and Bottom-up processing in EFL listening

Top-down and bottom-up listening are two important approaches that L2 learners need to employ to understand listening input comprehensively. In a top-down listening approach, learners use background knowledge about the topic of listening to understand its meaning. Bottom-up skills or decoding skills are the skills that students need to use to decode the listening input at the smallest units of information, such as detecting, identifying, and distinguishing the sound, syllable, word, chunk, syntax, and intonation levels from which the meaning of the listening input is understood (Field, 2008). The bottom-up listening skills are important for beginning learners because of their limited language repertoire, which does not automatically process what they are listening to and understand the input message (Field, 2008; Siegel & Siegel, 2015). Therefore, learners need to rely on language elements such as sounds, grammar, vocabulary ... and then process those information units into a meaningful message. Depending on the purpose of listening (listening for the gist or listening for details) or the learner's ability (intermediate, advanced, or beginner), the learner can choose one or combine two approaches to the listening process. The combination of the two listening approaches will help them improve their English listening skills effectively.

2.1.2. The teaching of EFL listening skills

In recent years, the literature on listening instruction indicates a greater focus on the process approach (Ellis, 2003; Field, 2003, 2008, 2012; J.C. Richards, 2006, 2008; Rost, 2015). This approach compensates for the limitation of the comprehension approach, which has paid little attention to difficulties that learners may experience while they are listening to certain segments of listening texts (Field, 2008). It focuses on the subskills listeners need to acquire to understand listening texts.

There have been some attempts to provide comprehensive taxonomies of such subskills, such as those of J.C. Richards (1983) and Field (2008). The recent one by Field (2008) classified subskills according to decoding processes and meaning-building processes, which listeners draw upon to arrive at a full understanding of texts. According to Field, in order to improve language learners' ability to decode linguistic input, teachers can introduce subskills tasks focusing on single different aspects of listening such as lexical segmentation, the recognition of recurrent chunks, intonation patterns, turn-taking signals, linkers, and patterns of logical argument. This approach to listening instruction is supported by the fact that language listeners' major reason for breakdowns of understanding is lexical segmentation (Field, 2003; J.C. Richards, 1983, Rost, 2015) and their ability to cope with linguistic decoding plays an important role in the listening performance (Lynch, 2009). Examples of subskills related to decoding processes at the word level can be recognizing variant forms of words, using awareness of word frequency, and distinguishing known and unknown words (Field, 2008, p. 336). It is also emphasized in this approach that learners should be equipped with subskills for meaning-building processes. These skills help listeners draw on their outside knowledge and the message from the text to make sense of the meaning of what is said (Field, 2008; Richards, 1983). Examples of subskills related to meaning-building processes at the word level can be narrowing word sense to fit the context, dealing with word ambiguity, and inferring the meaning of unknown words (Field, 2008, p. 338).

In response to the call for more attention to the instruction on bottom-up listening skills, some researchers have conducted study to investigate the effects of bottom-up listening activities on students' listening abilities (Al-Jasser, 2008; Field, 2008; Goh, 2000; Siegel & Siegel, 2015; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Data from Goh's study suggested that lower-level students became more confident at phoneme, word recognition, and segmentation problems. Field (2008) found that students having bottom-up listening skills instruction could decode listening input more accurately and automatically. In another study, Vandergrift and Goh (2012) pointed out that listening activities focusing on bottom-up skills raised students' awareness of the spoken language's pronunciation. Siegel and Siegel (2015) showed that explicit instruction of bottom-up skills positively affected most of the students when they had higher scores on the dictation and listening proficiency tests. Despite the importance of bottom-up skills instruction, there remains a lack of evidence on the practical classroom context. This indicates a need for further investigation of how direct instruction on bottom-up listening skills can help students' listening competence in L2 classrooms.

2.3. The use of technology for language teaching and learning

Technology has been considered an essential tool in language teaching and learning. A growing body of research has shown that teachers and students have a positive view of the use of technologies in language teaching and learning (e.g., Chapelle, 2001; Levy, 1997). Many studies have provided evidence showing positive effects of technology use in language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The effects include increasing levels of learner autonomy, motivation and self-confidence, development of communicative competence, and improvement of linguistic proficiency (Dina & Ciornei, 2013; Kim, 2013; Yunus, Nordin, Salehi, Embi & Salehi, 2013).

Google Classroom has been around since 2014 and has become one of the most well-known learning management systems (Albashtawi & Bataineh, 2020). This free and user-friendly application integrates with other Google services such as Google Drive, Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Slides. It has many functions that help educational institutions simplify teaching and learning. Students can join a class when provided with a login code or automatically added by the class's teachers. Teachers can assign homework, share materials, track learning progress, grade students' work, or provide comments (Sukmawati & Nensia, 2019).

To date, some studies have investigated the effectiveness of the use of Google Classroom for learning and learning (e.g., Albashtawi & Al Bataineh, 2020; Duong, Hoang, & Mai, 2019; Markham & Peter, 2003; Islam, 2008; Sukmawati & Nensia, 2019). Advantages of Google Classroom include helping students develop and organize their work to learn English effectively; increasing students' motivation of online learning; providing instant notifications of assignments and deadlines; easily uploading and downloading materials; being available on different electronic devices; improving EFL students' reading and writing performance and facilitating learner autonomy.

Taken together, the evidence reviewed here suggests a crucial role for the instruction on bottom-up listening skills and for the integration of technology into language teaching and learning, i.e., Google Classroom in this case. The next section presents the methodology used for this study.

3. Methods

The study aims to examine Vietnamese EFL students' views on the influence of a mini EFL listening module of bottom-up activities on EFL learners' listening study and their views on the use of Google Classroom as a tool for the listening module.

The listening module was a part of Listening Speaking Course 1, which used the Skillful Foundation textbook. As a part of the course, the listening module was conducted in a period of ten weeks. It incorporated

listening activities on different bottom-up skills, which are listening for "s/es" ending sounds, connected-speech, "ed" ending sounds, elision, contraction, weak/stressed forms. In each lesson of the module, the teacher gave the students background knowledge about each skill and asked them to practice it by doing some mini-exercises. The activity, on average, was completed within 15 minutes. By the end of each lesson, the students were assigned some bottom-up listening activities as homework on the Google Classroom platform.

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the study was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of the listening module on EFL students' listening study?
2. What are the students' views on the use of Google Classroom as a tool for the listening module?

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. It collected data through an online survey and a pre-test and post-test with EFL first-year students at Hanoi Pedagogical University 2. In this paper, the results drawn from the online survey data are reported. The online survey questionnaire included two parts that asked the participants about their views on the influence of the listening module on their study of listening skills and the use of the Google classroom as a tool for the listening module. The survey was sent to the participants at the end of the listening module, and it took the students about fifteen minutes to complete. There were 100 students responding to the survey, and the quantitative data from closed questions and qualitative data from open-ended questions were descriptively calculated and thematically analyzed, respectively.

4. Results/Findings and discussion

4.1. Research question 1: Students' views on the impact of the listening module on EFL students' listening study

The students expressed their appreciation for the module as it developed their bottom-up listening skills. The two benefits that the students mentioned the most are improving basic listening skills and increasing motivation to learn. Here are some examples of the students' comments:

It helps my listening skills better and better. Now I can hear the words that I was not able to hear before. And it provides me useful information about how English is naturally spoken.

Listening practice from the basic steps helps me to hear clearly and clearly. It provides the foundation for me to level up my listening skills.

I am now more familiar with phonetics and can recognize exactly what English words are spoken.

My listening skills are better day by day. The module makes me feel excited and has motivation when I learn English listening skills.

It helps improve my listening skills, and I have the motivation to study harder.

About the bottom-up skills that the students reported improving the most, listening for "s/es" ending sounds and listening for connected-speech ranked the first and the second in the list at 98 and 78, respectively (see Figure 1).
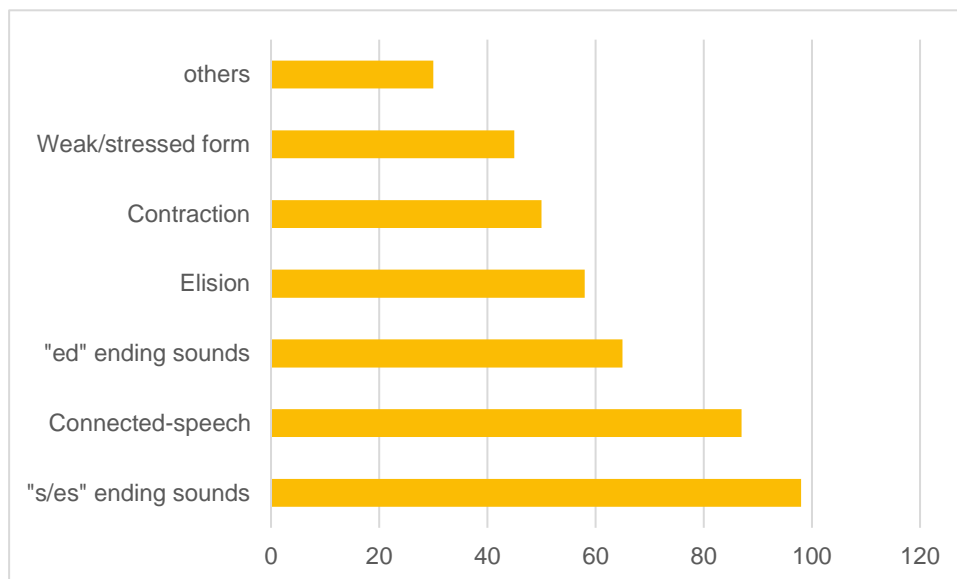
Figure 1. Bottom-up listening skills that the students reported improving

The students also became more aware of "ed" ending sounds, elision, and contraction when 65, 58, and 50 of them reported gaining better ability to listen for these sounds. The figures are illustrated with the students' comments as the followings:

Before, when I heard, I could not detect the s/es ending sounds and how to recognize connected speech. However, after taking this module, I can notice them and know how to practice them every day.

I can realize the ending sounds that I often missed before.

I never heard "elision" before. I think I've understood it, and I always try my best to practice elision. So did connect- speech. It helps me improve my English, including my listening skills and speaking skills.

I understand different sounds, and after practicing, I can hear those sounds in the conversation confidently.

Having seen the positive effects of the practice of bottom-up listening skills, all of the respondents stated that they would apply what they learned from the module to future practice of listening skills. For example, two students said:

I will spend about 30 minutes a day practicing basic listening skills to improve my listening ability.

I will apply the basic listening skills I have learned into my listening practice. For example, I will listen to videos from basic to advanced listening to recognize connected sounds or elisions.

The results support evidence from previous observations (e.g., Field, 2008; Goh, 2000; Siegel & Siegel, 2015) that explicit instruction of bottom-up listening skills helped to develop learners' listening ability.

Another recurrent theme in answers to the survey was that the module had effects on learner autonomy. The respondents reported that their autonomy in learning changed in different ways (see Table 1).

Table 1

Students' perspectives on the effects of the listening modules on learner autonomy

N	Students' perspectives on the effects of the listening modules on learner autonomy	Number of respondents
1.	I can find learning materials independently	95

2.	I feel more active and motivated to learn listening skills	89
3.	I can access learning materials anytime, anywhere	78
4.	I am aware of the objectives of listening tasks posted on Google classroom	75
5.	I feel more curious when searching web-based online listening resources	74
6.	I can select and implement appropriate learning strategies	57
7.	I am able to formulate my own learning objectives	54
8.	I can monitor my own learning	37
9.	I can monitor and evaluate my own use of learning strategies	34

Among many benefits, the students emphasized that being able to find materials independently (95%), feeling motivated to learn listening skills (89%), and accessing listening materials anytime, anywhere (78%) are the three most influences of the module to their autonomy. For examples, they commented that:

> This module helps me find materials that are reliable and suitable for my level.

> I can study anytime, anywhere with my phone or laptop.

> Online lessons are more interesting than lessons on books. Thanks to online lessons, I am able to practice anytime and anywhere.

Besides, the students found the module useful. Seventy-five respondents commented that they became more aware of listening tasks' objectives, and seventy-four of them felt more curious when searching web-based online listening resources.

> There are interesting exercises that the instructor uploads to Google Classroom, and from them, I self-study further information on the internet.

> In the past, I did listening exercises without caring about how they help my listening ability. But thanks to the module, I understand the reasons why I should take specific listening exercises.

These findings suggest that the listening module increased the time on task for students. They may be explained by the fact that the listening module was designed to facilitate learner autonomy. Every week, the students were provided with theoretical knowledge of the linguistic features of spoken English. In class, they practiced listening exercises to train their ears to specific features. For example, they were listening for contractions, elision, connected speech. After the lesson, the students were required to do their homework by doing more exercises and find out further natural spoken listening input, which had the linguistic features they learned in the class. The activities that the students were required in autonomous learning include data storing, voice recording, shadowing, dictating, designing listening exercises. By doing those assignments, they spent more time looking for suitable listening input and listening to them.

Furthermore, thanks to the features of Google classroom, the students could access materials every time and everywhere. This finding agrees with other studies (Nguyen, 2015a, 2015b), which indicated that convenience and authentic learning materials as the advantages of using technologies for language learning.

Another benefit that the students perceived having gained from the module is that they were able to select and implement appropriate learning strategies and formulate learning objectives. This view was echoed by fifty-seven informants, for example:

> The module is designed with specific topics so I can plan my studies easily.

> During self-study, I can realize the problems and find the right way to study. I am able to set learning goals and complete assignments.

I can find more online exercises to work on my weaknesses in my spare time.

While preliminary, this finding suggests that the listening module helps raise students' awareness about the specific bottom-up listening skills they need to work on. Accordingly, they can set learning goals to improve their weaknesses. This study confirms that learner autonomy is associated with learners' ability to handle and program their learning (Holec, 1981; Benson, 2001). Indeed, the participants in this study became more independent learners who started initial steps to take control over their learning.

4.2. Research question 2: Students' views on the use of Google Classroom as a tool for the listening module

The respondents found Google Classroom a user-friendly tool for their study (see Table 2). Ninety-six of them mentioned that Google Classroom was easy to use, and eight-nine respondents found it convenient because it is available on a smartphone mode as well.

Table 2

Students' perspectives on the use of Google Classroom as a tool for the listening module

N	Students' perspectives on the use of Google classroom as a tool for the listening module	Number of respondents
1.	Google Classroom is easy to use	96
2.	Google Classroom application is available on my smartphone	89
3.	I can upload materials easily	79
4.	I am timely notified of any assignments and announcements	76
5.	I can keep records of my work	75
6.	I can log in to Google Classroom anytime, anywhere.	60
7.	I can track the progress of assignments	57
8.	I can have feedback on the assignment	45

For example, one student said, "Google Classroom is very useful. With a smartphone, I can do many things on it with convenience."

Other features of Google Classroom that many students reported useful for their study include allowing materials to be uploaded easily (n=79), notifying assignments and announcements (n=76), keeping records of students' work (n=75). Examples of the students' comments as the following:

I love when Google Classroom reminds me of homework and deadlines. Because there is a lot of homework from different courses to do in one week, it is easy to forget. Thanks to this, I have done all my work on time.

It is very easy to use, and it works well to combine classroom learning and self-study.

Instant notifications and forum exchanges make study easy.

This study supports evidence from previous observations (e.g., Albashtawi & Al Bataineh, 2020; Duong, Hoang, & Mai, 2019) that information technology, more specifically Google Classroom, can enable language learners to flexibly and conveniently learn and acquire knowledge.

In addition to the supporting features for language learning, the students mentioned two features of Google Classroom that they had challenges during their study. The first feature mentioned by fifty students is related to the unavailability of Google Classroom when there is no Internet connection. For example, one student said, "*when traveling on the bus or on the road, if the phone does not have an Internet connection, you cannot listen to audio files.*" The other feature is the limitation of teacher-student interaction on Google Classroom. Fifty students reported that Google Classroom was still not so good at facilitating different modes of interaction. For

example, two students said:

> Google Classroom does not allow teachers and students to interact and discuss directly but can only teach and learn through preloaded document files on the application.

> I do not want my private messages to my teacher to be seen by other classmates all the time.

As Google Classroom is a free learning management system, it might not have all functions as other commercial ones. However, an implication of these results is that Google should improve Google Classroom features to meet teacher's and students' needs.

Taken together, the results indicate that the listening module has helped the students develop their basic listening skills and learner autonomy. For the participants in this study, they found Google Classroom a useful tool for their listening module. The next chapter moves on to discuss the significance of the findings and the implications for practice.

5. Conclusion

This present research study's main aim was to design a listening module to train EFL students on bottom-up listening skills and investigate students' views on its impact on their listening study. The second aim of this study was to examine the students' perspectives on the use of Google Classroom as a learning tool in the listening module. The participants, on the whole, demonstrated a positive attitude to the module. They reported that the module improved their bottom-up listening skills, especially "s/es" ending sounds, connected speech, "ed" ending sounds, and elision. The majority commented that the listening module also developed their autonomy in learning. After taking the module, most students reported having more confidence in finding listening materials and having more time on listening tasks. Finally, the overall response to the question about the use of Google Classroom for language learning was positive. The students found Google Classroom useful and convenient. However, two concerns were expressed about the unavailability of its functions when used without the Internet connection and about its limited functions to facilitate interaction among students and teachers.

These results were very encouraging; however, the generalizability of these results is subject to certain limitations. This study's scope was limited in terms of time and resources so that not all the bottom-up listening skills were introduced in the module. There should be more time for students to practice, and further modules should be developed to continue training EFL students on other skills such as listening for assimilation, intonation, resyllabification, the chunk of language, accents, prefix, and suffix. Another issue that was not addressed in this study was whether the practice of bottom-up listening skills would improve students' listening ability. Further research could be conducted to determine the listening module's effectiveness on students' listening ability by triangulating the survey results with pre-test and post-test data and interview data.

Despite its exploratory nature, the present results are significant in at least three major aspects. The study adds to our understanding of the importance of bottom-up listening skills for EFL learners, especially for beginning learners. It is suggested that teachers consider integrating bottom-up listening exercises in the teaching suitable to their own teaching context and learners. Training should also be provided to both teachers and students to maximize the effectiveness of teaching and learning bottom-up listening skills, which are the foundation for students to develop their listening ability in general. In another aspect, this study has contributed to the rapidly expanding field of learner autonomy. The study indicates that students will be able to enhance their learner autonomy and the twenty-first century's competence if they are guided and nurtured. It is thus recommended that courses can be designed to organize activities to develop learners' responsibility intentionally. Finally, this study strengthens the idea that technology, for example, Google Classroom, can be used to assist students' language learning. In contexts where facilities and resources are limited, a free but user-friendly learning management

system is still a good choice. However, it is important to note that technology needs to be employed with sound pedagogies if it aims to foster language learning.

Acknowledgment

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Vocational English Teachers' Challenges on Shifting Towards Virtual Classroom Teaching

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Abstract

The Covid19 pandemic has brought significant influences on every aspect of our lives and society. With the determination to keep learning continued during Covid19, education itself has innovated remarkably to adapt to the lockdown situation in many regions in Asia. Among those, shifting from traditional face-to-face classrooms into online learning has been considered the ultimate solution with tremendous approvals from all stakeholders. However, at some vocational institutions, the shifting to virtual classrooms has plenteous challenges to all involved partners. Since teachers are the keys to effective implementation of this shifting during Covid19, it is crucial to understand their challenges to the shifting towards virtual classroom teaching. This paper aims to investigate the attitudes of the English teachers in some vocational colleges in Vietnam and their challenges for transferring their face-to-face classrooms into online ones. This research collected the data from a questionnaire survey to 45 vocation English teachers at five vocational colleges and in-depth interviews with nine teachers. The findings would be presented to firstly identify the vocational English teachers' attitudes towards shifting to the virtual classroom. This research also revealed some challenges of teaching online classroom from the teachers' voices, such as students' and teachers' technology-competences, students' motivations, students' technical support, teachers' experiences, teachers' willingness, and institutions' purposes and strategies. Some practical suggestions will be presented for teachers on how to face and solve these challenges, specifically during and post Covid19 period.

Keywords: challenges, online teaching, virtual classroom, Covid19, teachers' attitudes

1. Introduction

The outbreak of the Covid19 pandemic has been causing anxiety, fear, and various concerns for people all over the world. Every aspect of human life has been seriously affected due to the difficulty in controlling the outbreak from its spread throughout the world. The World Health Organization (2019) has enforced some recommendations to implement strict regulations, such as social distancing and physical distancing, working from home, or even lockdown situations for many countries in the world. According to UNO (2020) report, the Covid19 outbreak has suffered the most massive disruption of education systems in history, which has caused influences on appropriately 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents. Ninety-four percent of the world's students, up to 99 percent in low and lower-middle-income countries in the world, have been greatly affected by the school closure situation.

Vietnam has not been an exception. As the consequence of the Covid19 pandemic lockdown, Vietnamese education witnessed the school closure for nearly three months, from February to May 2020. To cope with the lockdown situation, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) made an agreement of "suspending school,

not stopping learning" during the first period of the epidemic. As a result, more than 100 higher education institutions in Vietnam opted for online teaching and learning, in which private universities account for 70% (MOET, 2020). Changes and determinations in learning systems push schools to shift their traditional teaching mode into basically online education, such as e-learning, correspondence education, flexible learning, and massive open online courses. The adaption of fully online teaching and learning is a new experience as well as a significant challenge to all the education stakeholders at all levels, from administrators to teachers and students. There is no doubt that not all the schools at all levels were well- prepared for this transformation, even private universities. Hence, there are serious concerns about this hasty change in terms of adapting, implementing, and shifting effectively online learning to reduce the impacts of the Covid19 outbreak on education systems. It is legitimate that any education changes before were carefully planned, long-term invested, and evidence-based; this on-the-spot adaptation caused by a health emergency (Hodges et al. 2020) seems to be predominant.

Meanwhile, teachers, as the spearhead of the change from traditional face-to-face classrooms into online teaching and learning, must be able to be immediately prepared for this shift to an online environment with all the practical and technical obstacles this mode of delivery entangles, and often without technical support (Hodges et al. 2020). A teacher has to face and conquer all the challenges present in online teaching and learning responsively to assure continuous learning to achieve the targets set (Aliyyah et al. 2020). Therefore, the question of how teachers perceive and overcome their challenges in online teaching implementation to master the specific situation of the Covid19 outbreak comes to the fore.

Although there has been a rise in research on how the Covid19 pandemic has changed the education systems, there is still a dearth of research exploring teachers' attitudes and challenges toward their immediate transferring into virtual teaching, especially in developing Asian countries like Vietnam. Hence, this study investigates the teachers' attitudes towards their compulsory changes in teaching delivery and the challenges they faced during their shifting to the online environment from traditional ones. This paper reports on a survey of vocational English teachers in five vocational colleges in Vietnam with an attempt to identify the obstacles faced by English teachers during their dramatic shift in the delivery mode of teaching and learning in the unavoidable situation of the Covid19 epidemic.

2. Literature review

2.1. Online learning and teaching

The term "online learning" has been universally used but not with the same meaning. With this research's aim, online learning was identified as learning that is mediated by the Internet. This identification is considered as much broader than "network meaning"- which focuses on the connections and interactions of teachers and students (Banks et al. 2003; De Laat et al. 2007) – in terms of specificity shortage. Online learning is known to emphasize Internet-based courses provided synchronously or asynchronously with the use of different devices. Students can be offered the possibility of anywhere, anytime learning and interacting with instructors and other students (Singh & Thurman, 2019). While a synchronous learning environment is structured for students and teachers to attend live lectures with real-time social interactions (McBrien et al.,2009) and instant responses (Littlefield, 2018), asynchronous learning is established to learn indirectly with the independent learning approach. As cited in Aliyyah et al. (2020), some subject matter is designed and demonstrated on Learning Management System (LMS) on Moodle, or email systems, blogs, online discussions, videos, and other platforms (Ko & Rossen, 2017; Ogbonna et al., 2019; Papachristos et al., 2010; Sturm & Quaynor, 2020; Tarman, 2020). Students can have access to the teacher synchronously, asynchronously, or both (Hunter & St. Pierre, 2016; Inoue, 2007; Richardson et al., 2020). In this study, online learning is indicated as a teaching and learning environment in which (1) the learner is not

face-to-face with the teacher, (2) the learner uses some technology devices to access the learning resources and materials, (3) the learner interacts with the teacher and other students via some applications, and (4) the learner is certainly supported (Anderson, 2011). Specifically, during the lockdown situation of the Covid19 pandemic, with the implementation of virtual education, such basic online platform needed is described where there would be possible video conference from 30 to 50 attendees, students can discuss with the stable Internet connection, lectures and other soft resources can be accessed with mobile phones, not just laptops, and assignments can be taken (Basilaia et al., 2020).

On the other hand, the school closure confronts all the stakeholders in education systems with an entirely new situation (Huber & Helm, 2020). The continuity of teaching and learning could only be implemented throughout new means of delivery. While for students, online learning could have opted as a piece of cake, for teachers, this transition to online teaching means various requirements for their new adaptation and implementation (Eikelmann & Gerick, 2020). Even though this crisis forced the institutions, which had been early reluctant to change, to accept modern innovation and technology in education, all the institutions would be confused with plenteous online pedagogical approaches and had to select the appropriate one for their own contexts. In the research conducted by Honey et al. (2014), it is claimed that in order to accomplish the positive results in association with teaching technology, the types of interactions among teachers, students, and technologies must be clearly understood. This means that the level and methods of achieving quality results of online teaching are differed and affected by factors related to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competence and practices in education before, during, and after the Covid19 epidemic. Duraku and Hoxha (2020) demonstrated that teachers' perspectives on pedagogy had been confirmed to make an impact on the level of technology integration in the teaching settings. Teachers also hopefully play a remarkable role in the implementation success of online learning. Therefore, teachers are under pressure to prove their teaching methodology and ICT competence amidst the paramount conversion.

2.2. ICT transformation in the education system

The 21st century has been testifying the widespread ICT transformation process in all aspects, particularly in the education system (Law, Pelgrum & Plomb, 2008; McFarlane, 2019). ICT has been acknowledged for its benefits in numerous studies (Usun, 2009; Prestridge, 2012; Hasan et al., 2015; Nhu, Keong, & Wah, 2018; Bilyalova, 2017), especially its application is believed to change students' learning style to be more independent and flexible. This would lead to the change of what students need to learn, how students learn, and how teachers teach. ICT is also considered as the crucial factor for quality higher education (Liebenberg, Chetty, & Prinsloo, 2012) because of its ultimate facilitation for teaching, learning, and other research activities. However, the benefits of ICT are not always understandable since its application achievement depends on various factors such as infrastructure, strategies, support, a number of ICT integration activities, and especially teacher's competencies in applying ICT (Raman & Yamat, 2013; Prestridge, 2012; Wei et al., 2016).

The shift of transferring teaching and learning into online teaching obliged by Covid19 Pandemic has become an indispensable part to persist continuous learning for all students at all levels. With the assistance of ICT, teachers would be the main agent to be expected to transit their mode of delivery even they obtain good ICT skills or not. This becomes a compulsory burden on the teachers' shoulders. In the same line with Shulman (1987), teachers must draw on this sphere of professional knowledge and knit it into sufficient cohesion and skills to master the challenges of teaching.

2.3. Challenges on shifting classrooms into the online learning environment

Before the Covid19 outbreak, there have been many studies addressing the challenges related to the introduction and application of online learning. Evidence has proved that online learning initiatives have failed because of the unpreparedness and inexperience of institutions and their divisions (Aydın & Tasci, 2005; Borotis & Poulymenakou, 2004). In addition, Watkins et al. (2004) presented the difficulty in transferring online learning due to the people's attachment to the existing pedagogies. Meanwhile, Carr (2000) and Maltby & Whittle (2000) showed students' negative attitudes towards online learning because of their results and motivations. Other research has expressed the challenges at the institutional level about the support, structures, or strategies when applying online learning (Graham, 2012; Hoang, 2015) and the concerns about the technical reliability, workload issues, student outcomes in the new environments (Bacow et al., 2012; Bolliger & Wasilik, 2009; Betts & Heaston, 2014). Data from several previous studies indicated that teachers had to face various challenges during their online teaching. While Keeton (2004) identified teachers' positive attitudes towards virtual learning, Prestridge (2012) and Wei et al. (2016) raised their concerns about the teachers' lack of technology competence to teach online effectively.

During the Covid19 pandemic with lockdown situation and school closure, it has been clear that the education system is prone to external dangers (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). For Ribeiro (2020), this digital transition of teaching delivery came with certain logistic challenges and attitudinal modifications. Serhan (2020) presented the students' negative attitudes towards Zoom application. Moreover, students' challenge of no Internet access during this pandemic was demonstrated in the research by Fishbane and Tomer (2020), which implied that students at low economic contexts are most exposed to fall behind to interact with others online learning. While Biswas (2020) argued about Skulmowski (2020) in terms of students' obstacles in technical operation, he revealed in his findings that students have challenges in the lack of a good learning attitude, motivation, or good learning environment during this time. Besides, completely online teaching would require critical planning and investments from all stakeholders. Even though many institutions had plans for applying online learning during the pandemic, there has been only applied predominantly on smaller cases than a worldwide crisis as Covid19 pandemic. It raises the question of the purposes and strategies of institutions in the agreement of online teaching transformation.

For teachers, the doer of this shifting, there exist many problematic issues concerning their transforming teaching approaches to the extents of their attitudes, experiences, and competencies. However, it is apparently believed that this must be the teachers' duty and responsibility even the teachers had challenges on their network connections, technology competence, students' performance, and institutions' support (Lestiyanawati & Widyantoro, 2020; Mishra, 2020; Basilaia et al., 2020; Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Bao, 2020; Akyıldız's, 2020).

Therefore, there has been a shortage of research on teachers' challenges in this urgent transition, which drives this research's significant contribution.

2.4. Vocational education and training

Among all types of the education system, vocational education and training (VET) have been an important subset for decades since the need for new skills expanding in the labor market after the industrial revolution could not be satisfied by the traditional education system (Benovat, 1983; Grubb, 1985). VET has been operated besides academic and general education to implement school tracking practices and curriculum differentiation. In recent years, VET has been favored as the sole choice of low-performing students to study at the lower level of educations than universities and academies (Brunello, 2004; Hanushek, Schwerdt, Woessman, & Zhang, 2017; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2006). The fact that students and teachers at the VET system have been considered as much more

difficult to adapt or apply innovations than academic education is based on the school tracking practices of different ages, school preferences, and theoretical programs. VET has turned into a type of education that has been paid less attention and investment than other academic and general education.

During the crisis of the Covid19 pandemic, like all kinds of education types, VET also has to face with challenges of retaining continuous learning, and the shifting into online learning would become the ultimate solution for them at this time. During the transition, the teachers at VET would also encounter challenges for implementing effectively. Therefore, the research would be conducted to explore the teachers' attitudes and their challenges on this transition from traditional face-to-face classrooms to virtual ones.

2.5. Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of the study, two following research questions would be addressed in this paper:

a) What are the vocational English teachers' attitudes towards the shifting to online teaching during the Covid19 pandemic?

b) What are the challenges the vocational English teachers faced during their shifting to online teaching?

3. Methods

3.1 Pedagogical Setting & Participants

This research subjects were 45 English teachers at five different vocational colleges in the north of Vietnam. Due to the limitation of time, resources, and lockdown situation, our research questionnaire was distributed randomly to English teachers at five colleges based on the respondents' convenience. The participants in our survey consist of 18 English teachers at Hanoi College of Economy and Technology, eight teachers from Vietnam- Hungary Industrial University, six teachers at Sao Do Vocational College, nine teachers at Hanoi College of Commerce, Economy, and Technology, four teachers at Viet Tri-College of Foods and Industry. These vocational colleges were in the same context settings. They are public colleges in and around the capital of Vietnam, providing both technical and economic courses for students after high school graduation. The size of these colleges is between 1000 and 2000 students. All of the colleges have been operated for more than ten years. Before the Covid19 pandemic, these colleges were reported as using traditional face-to-face teaching pedagogy. Hardly did the teachers apply ICTs into their teaching. However, due to the status of school closure for spread restrictions of Coronaviruses, these colleges have been forced to implement the night shift of the teaching delivery mode into completely online teaching, which has surely put their teachers under pressure and challenges.

All of the 45 teachers participating in the survey are full-time English teachers among the ages of 25-50 with at least three years of teaching experience. It was surprising that 19 of them (42,2%) had been applying ICTs in their teaching before the Covid19 pandemic to some extent. Among 45 participants, the number of female teachers is 39, accounting for 86,7%. Only 6 teachers (13,3%) are male, which supports the trend that it is more popular for the female than male to get involved in teacher education course (Ricohermoso, Abequibel, & Alieto, 2019; Alieto, Devanadera, & Buslon, 2020; Torres & Medriano, 2020). Besides, nine of the surveyed teachers engaging in the interviewing part were selected randomly from the survey questionnaire participants.

3.2 Design of the Study

This study aims to investigate the vocational English teachers' attitudes and their challenges in teaching through online mode of delivery shifting from traditional face-to-face during the Covid19 pandemic in Vietnam. This study was conducted based on quantitative and qualitative methods. The priority was given to the quantitative method with a statistic survey research design and supported by the qualitative method's interview results.

Data collected from the questionnaire delivery to 45 vocational English teachers were analyzed with SPSS software. There were 23 items in the questionnaire formulated using the 5-point-Likert-scale to express the degree of agreement and disagreement from strongly disagree to agree strongly. The questionnaire comprised 21 multiple choice questions together with two short-answer questions divided into three parts. Part 1 consisted of five questions to find out the respondents' background information. Meanwhile, Part 2 with 15 questions was formed to explore the teachers' attitudes and challenges on shifting to online teaching. Two short-answer questions in Part 3 aimed to figure out the teachers' own experience on online teaching and their willingness to use online teaching after the Covid19 pandemic. The questionnaire was arranged based on the literature relevant to the purpose of the research. The questionnaire was formed on the platform of Google Forms and distributed through its link to participants. In order to obtain more precise results, the questionnaire was written in Vietnamese to make sure of the respondents' clear understanding. A short but concise explanation about the nature of the study was also given at the beginning of the questionnaire. The responses were analyzed quantitatively using percentages of those who responded. Also, to ensure that surveyed respondents provided honest answers, we conducted the survey anonymously and did not seek names and other information that may reveal respondents' identities. The collected responses in Vietnamese were later translated into English by one of our researchers.

Interviews are used to gain more detailed information about personal feelings, attitudes, and opinions of the participants that questionnaires cannot elicit (Opdenakker, 2006). The interviewees in this research were selected randomly. All the questions used in the interviews were to support the information achieved from surveys.

3.3 Data collection & analysis

The online survey on Google forms was uploaded and sent on July 31, and the researchers received 45 responses by August 30 when the link was closed. A total of 45 responses were valid.

For interviews, due to the Covid19 pandemic, each interview was carried out via phones or Internet–based applications like Zalo, Facebook messenger, and Zoom separately. Before answering the interview questions, the purpose of the study was carefully explained. These in-deep interviews were conducted in Vietnamese – the interviewees' native language- and recorded. Then, the recordings were transcribed and analyzed thematically with the help of the researchers' colleagues who had great language competence of IELTS 8.0.

Data collected from the online survey were coded and analyzed with SPSS software for descriptive and inferential analysis. Once the questionnaire data were computerized, the findings were tabled as frequencies of responses and percentages. Meanwhile, the interviews were qualitatively analyzed to figure out the teachers' perspectives towards their shifting to online teaching as well as deeply scrutinize their detailed challenges in their transition.

4. Results/Findings and discussion

This section presents the results of the analysis data collected from survey questionnaires and interviews concerning the vocational English teachers' attitudes and challenges on their shifting from traditional face-to-face teaching to online teaching due to the Covid19 pandemic, together with the discussion with the view to answer two research questions.

4.1. Teachers' attitudes towards shifting to online teaching

The responses from the first five questionnaire items in Part 2 were coded and analyzed from the spreadsheet. Table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of the data.

Table 1

Respondents' attitudes towards the shifting to online teaching delivery

	Variables	SD	D	N	A	SA
6	I like using online teaching during the Covid19 pandemic.	0 (0%)	2 (4,45%)	2 (4,45%)	33 (73,3%)	8 (17,8%)
7	I generally have positive attitudes towards online teaching.	0 (0%)	2 (4,45%)	2 (4,45%)	37 (82,2%)	4 (8,9%)
8	I think that online teaching is useful for my teaching.	3 (6,7%)	2 (4,45%)	2 (4,45%)	34 (75,5%)	4 (8,9%)
9	I am required to shift to teach online.	0 (0%)	3 (6,7%)	3 (6,7%)	30 (66,6%)	9 (20%)
10	I am willing to use online teaching	1 (2,2%)	3 (6,7%)	1 (2,2%)	33 (73,3%)	7 (15,6%)

As shown in Table 1, 91,1% (accounting for 41 respondents) showed their agreements and strong agreements on their favor of using online teaching during the Covid19 pandemic. The number of teachers confirming their positive attitudes towards teaching online was more than 90 percent. This result showed the same findings as to the results in Keeton (2004) about participants' moderately favorable attitude toward virtual teaching. This result would be implied in Keeton (2004)'s explanation that teachers' positive attitude towards online teaching will support building a positive online classroom and motivate students beneficially in their online learning.

In addition, in terms of the usefulness of online teaching, 38 respondents (84,4%) reported their agreement that online teaching is useful for their teaching. Besides, for their compulsory shifting, 39 respondents (86,6%) expressed that they were required to transfer their mode of delivery into online teaching mode when three of them (6,7%) disagreed that it was compulsory to change their teaching mode. Meanwhile, the number of investigated teachers confirmed their willingness to use online teaching was 40, accounting for 88,9%, and four of them (8,9%) showed disagreement about their willingness to apply online teaching. This finding is consistent with that of Mishra (2020) within the same context during the Covid19 phase, the online teaching mode of education is useful from teachers' perspectives. Therefore, it can be managed as a transition mechanism.

When being interviewed, the interviewees disclosed that they deeply understood the transition to online teaching was somewhat unavoidable and necessary during a hard time of lockdown situation.

> *"I myself believe that online teaching during the school closure time due to lockdown situation was really helpful and necessary. I think this is the only and foremost way to keep students learning and teachers working with the feeling of mentally balanced and safe" (T#4)*

> *"I know that online learning is very useful to students and teachers, but I haven't had a chance to apply it. Now, I have to do it as a requirement, and I am willing to do it." (T#7)*

These positive attitudes towards the online teaching model showed that most of the vocational English teachers were fully aware of the usefulness of online teaching during the lockdown period. Most of them agreed that online teaching would be the ultimate solution for teachers as great support.

4.2. Teachers' challenges on their implementation of shifting to online teaching

Even though the investigated teachers showed their positive attitudes towards the transition to online teaching, there have been plenteous challenges that teachers had to face during their shifting to teaching online revealed from the findings of this research. They ranged from teachers' intrinsic challenges to the extrinsic challenges from students and institutions as listed in the issues of teachers' willingness, teachers' technological competence, their experience, the students' technological competence and support, students' motivations, institutional purposes, and strategies in the online learning transition. All of these aspects will be reported and discussed specifically below.

4.2.1 Teachers' intrinsic challenges

The challenges arisen from teachers themselves were reported as in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Respondents of teachers' challenges to online teaching transition

	Variables	D	N	A	M
11	I can teach online effectively.	11	7	27	3.4
12	I am good at using technology in my teaching.	26	12	7	2.3
13	I have a good Internet connection for my online teaching.	23	5	17	2.7
14	I can manage my virtual classrooms well.	25	7	13	2.6
15	I don't have much workload with online teaching.	30	3	12	2.4

Table 2 provides the results obtained from the survey questionnaire's descriptive analysis from item 11 to item 15. This table is quite revealing in several ways.

Firstly, regarding teachers' self-reports about their confidence in effective online teaching, while 27 (60%) of the respondents indicated their agreement and strong agreement that they could teach online effectively, a minority of the participants (24,4%) showed that they were not confident in their teaching online and 7(15,6%) reported their honest thought to their teaching online effectively or not. This finding was relevant to the interview results when the respondents were asked about how they were confident in their teaching online. Five of them commented that at first, they were not confident at all because they were required to shift to online teaching right after one week, but later, when they engaged in teaching online, they not only became confident in online teaching but also developed their teaching online more effectively.

Secondly, in terms of technology competence, the majority of 26 participants (57,8%) indicated that they did not have good technology competence while only a minority of 7 teachers (15,6%) believed in their good technology competence. The result is significant at the number of teachers uncertain about this issue which accounted for more than one-fourth of investigated teachers. Strong evidence of this finding was found in the interview part when T#2 revealed: "Since we were required to use ICTs, some applications, some tools in our online teaching but actually, we didn't know how to operate them properly and how to match them well in our lesson plan. We know, but it doesn't mean we use it well. Hence, I don't think my technology competence is fairly good". This result revealed

the significant challenge for teachers was the technology competence, which was in a strong relationship with the findings in Prestridge (2012) and Wei et al. (2016).

As mentioned in the literature review part, one of the core challenges was the infrastructure, the physical facilities to implement the transition to online teaching, which could refer to the Internet connection. The finding reported that more than half of respondents (52%) confirmed they did not have a stable Internet connection during their online teaching, while 17 of them (37,7%) showed their safe feelings about this issue. One main reason for unstable network connection was described in the interview: if the online meeting of more than 30 students was synchronous, the teachers had to spend much time handling the in-and-out loggings suddenly of the students and teachers themselves. Besides, they were so annoyed when they couldn't interact with their students due to pausing or flickering, or buzzing problems. Teachers also commented that if they wanted to upload videos or audios for their students to practice, they had to wait for such a long time. And during the lockdown period, it was difficult for them to get out and find somewhere with a more stable Internet connection. This result supports evidence from the findings in Mishra (2020) that unstable network connection was the core challenge to online teaching. In addition, the significant finding also resulted in the finding of virtual classroom management. Only 13 (28,8%) of the teachers found that they could manage their virtual classrooms, while more than a half of them (55,5%) find this management towards disagreement. With the reason of unstable Internet connection and not good at technology competence, teachers found themselves struggling in managing their virtual classrooms.

> *I really find it difficult to read the face and mood of my students through the screen of my laptop. Even I gave the requirement of turning their cameras and voices on during my online classes, many of the students only did it when I reminded them again and in a short time. This really made me annoyed and did not know how to control my students' attendance" (T#8)*

This finding was unexpected and suggests that there would be clear guidance and instructions for teachers in the way they monitor the classroom virtually, and students' conditions would be improved for them to learn online.

Finally, one of the intrinsic challenges noted for teachers was the heavy workload they had to face during online teaching. While one-third of the investigated teachers indicated that they had much work to do with online teaching, only 12 of them (18,8%) thought the online teaching did not concern about their workload much. This finding was specifically explained in the interview when most of the informants claimed they had to do much more work with online teaching than face-to-face teachings, such as redesigning exercises, activities, and assignments to upload them to the virtual classrooms, preparing much more online resources and materials for their students, giving comments on the students' assignments, guiding and supporting students in their doing exercises, online interactions, and even technical support. This result was found to be completely different from the benefits of online teaching in reducing workload for teachers with the support of technology as mentioned in Anderson (2011) and Basilaia et al. (2020).

4.2.2. Teachers' challenges from students and institutions

Besides struggling with their own challenges of technology competence, virtual classroom management, more workload, unstable network connection, teachers had to overcome other remarkable challenges risen from students and institutions, as specifically mentioned below as students' attitudes and motivations to learn online, students' technology competence, institutional purposes, and strategies of online teaching. Table 3 showed descriptive data about these aspects.

Table 3

Respondents of teachers' challenges to online teaching transition

	Variables	D	N	A	M
16	My students are motivated to learn online.	5	4	36	3.9
17	My students like learning online more than face-to-face.	20	3	22	2.8
18	My students are good at technology.	16	5	24	3.3
19	My students get technical support from technicians and teachers.	25	7	13	2.6
20	My institution announces the purposes and strategies of online teaching.	4	1	40	3.4
21	My institution has a clear guideline of shifting to online teaching for teachers.	20	3	22	3.5

Regarding students' online learning, several prior studies noted the importance of their positive attitudes, underlying motivation, technical competencies (Mishra, 2020; Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Bao, 2020; Akyıldız's, 2020). In this study, as can be seen in Table 3, approximately 80% of the investigated teachers confirmed that their students were believed to obtain motivation on their learning online. The interviews also revealed that the students told their teachers that they found learning online more motivated and flexible than face-to-face classes as they could attend their classes anywhere, anytime. It was really a good choice for students to enrich their knowledge and resources to learn online. This finding is contrary to previous studies of Akyıldız's (2020), which claimed isolation, less motivation, and online learning engagement among students. This finding also went beyond stakeholders' expectations of students at the VET education system as VET students were considered less motivated than academic education.

Moreover, the number of respondent teachers who claimed their students' preferring to learn online was slightly more than the number of disagreements on this issue with 48,8% and 40%, respectively. Meanwhile, more than half of surveyed teachers (53,3%) showed their belief in students' good technology competence, while 35.5% of them thought that their students were not good at technology. Besides, the technical support for students was reported as less than 55.5% of the respondents believed that their students did not obtain technology competence.

Much more information was disclosed in the interviewing part. Most of the interviewees (seven out of nine) shared their ideas that their students were a really challenging factor in their online teaching implementation when they had to stop their lectures from dealing with much of the students' interruptions due to their lack of knowledge of technology and skills. Even the teachers had to explain and provided the course code number time by time for students. Additionally, students were reported that they could get only support from their teachers when they had any obstacles with technology. There was hardly any support from a technician or other departments in their colleges. This can be referred that the interaction and communication between teachers and students were ultimate and close.

However, preparation for shifting education outside of traditional face-to-face classrooms in response to the Covid19 outbreak requires thought, coordination, and careful decision making (Simamora, 2020). The two questions of the questionnaire were adopted to figure out the institutional supports for online teaching. In the aspect of a formal announcement, most of the teachers (88,9%) clarified that they were announced about their institution's

purposes and strategies for online teaching transition. Specifically, almost all the teachers interviewed expressed their increasing awareness of purposes and strategies for continuous learning among MOET's institutions. However, to some extent, nearly half of them (49,3%) can get clear guidance about the shifting plan, and 44,4% confirmed there were little guidance and support from the institutional level. When being asked about this challenge, six out of nine informants confessed their expectation that they would be provided more training workshops on how to teach in an online environment effectively, what kinds of ICTs they should use for their teaching, assessing, and even monitoring their virtual classes before transferring to online teaching. They admitted that actually, they had to research the answers to the problems by themselves while they were teaching online. This may explain their not confidence in teaching online effectively. This result further supports the idea of Johnson et al. (2020) in terms of giving the suggestion that should identify a need for assistance related to students' support and guidance for working from home.

Two last questions of the questionnaire were raised to explore the teachers' experience of online teaching and their willingness to use online teaching after the Covid19 pandemic. It was surprising when all the respondents (100%) confirmed that they had never applied online teaching before the lockdown situation due to their facilities and existing traditional pedagogies in their institution. They had no idea of changing their teaching mode from face-to-face teaching to online one. Over half of those surveyed reported that they would consider applying online teaching after this crisis period with some sharing as follows.

> *"Oh, yes. After this school closure time, I will apply online teaching because some of my online activities have been performed better online than face-to-face. So, if I apply it in my classroom later, my students can be more motivated and eager in my lessons." (T#9)*

> *In this time, I learn how to use many ICT applications and tools such as Google Classroom, Quizizz, Kahoot!, Mentimeter,... which I think will surely benefit my teaching later, whether it is online or face-to-face. Besides, I can use these tools again and again for other classes to practice. (T#1)*

5. Conclusion

In summary, most of the results of this research were consistent with previous studies in the literature on vocational English teachers' attitudes and challenges they are facing while shifting their teaching mode of delivery into online teaching, including the teachers' technology competence, their virtual classroom management, heavy workload, students' motivations in online learning, students' technology competence and technical support, together with the institution's purposes and strategies of online teaching implementation.

Specifically, there are similarities of positive attitudes towards online teaching between this research and those prior studies of Keeton (2004) and Mishra (2020), even though this research revealed amazingly that teachers were under the compulsory circumstance to shift their teaching delivery to online mode. This result may explain the relatively good awareness and understanding of these investigated teachers during the outbreak of Covid19 and the closures of schools.

Moreover, the internal challenges discovered in this research were in accordance with recent studies indicating that during the online teaching transition, teachers had obstacles to technology competence, virtual classroom management. However, it is surprising that the challenge of heavy workload found out in this research has not been before described as the challenge in online teaching. This inconsistency may be due to the immediate transition requirement, making teachers confused and unprepared for their teaching transfer. This finding has important implications for developing teachers' professional skills, especially in technology competence, so that they can be accustomed to any unexpected situations.

In the meantime, this study supports evidence from previous observations (Mishra, 2020; Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020;) in terms of challenges related to students' technology competence, students' perspective towards online learning, and technical support that students gained during their learning. These findings suggest that to shift to online teaching effectively, the teachers should pay attention to the students' technology competence and encourage and support students with their technical problems in time. In contrast to early findings, however, hardly any challenge of students' motivation for online learning was detected. This result may be explained by the fact that students find themselves flexible and enjoyed their new mode of learning, which permits them to learn anywhere, anytime. This would support the students to get the balance between learning and staying safe during the crisis of Covid19.

On the other hand, the decision-makers are always between supportive and challenging to the doers. It could be an extreme lack if the research did not mention the institutional roles in transferring the delivery mode of teaching and learning. The finding of this research revealed that most institutions issued their announcement about online teaching, their purposes, and strategies to all the teachers but only nearly half of them attached their guidance for this online teaching transition with little support provided for teachers. A possible explanation for these results may be the lack of adequate time and effort in an attempt to calculate and prepare all the issues that arise in the shifting period. It is, therefore, likely that teachers would expect to be provided with more specific guidance and timely support for the effectiveness of their shifting. Organizing training workshops and seminars would be considered reasonable solutions for teachers who are updating new ICT and practicing their technology competence.

On the other hand, several limitations of the present study point to the need for further research on this topic. Firstly, because the study was conducted with a limited number of participants in only VET contexts, the challenges may not be generalizable to various academic or general education system settings. Secondly, the research relied mainly on the participants' self-reported data regarding their attitudes and challenges in shifting to online teaching. Other stakeholders were not examined. Therefore, future research would be implemented to explore the other stakeholders' perspectives and challenges during the shifting period. Further, due to time constraints, the present study only concentrated on determining the challenges that teachers faced during their online teaching transition. Further research should be undertaken to investigate the performances of the teachers during their online teaching implementation.

In conclusion, the present study contributes to our understanding of teachers' attitudes and challenges in transferring to online teaching in the vocational education system in Vietnam during the Covid19 pandemic. Besides, obtaining data on the challenges of online teaching during the sudden Covid19 outbreak would also be valuable for teachers and institutions who are seeking to plan and prepare for future crises.

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Developing English-Speaking Skills through Socratic Questioning in Online Synchronous Learning

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Abstract

Online synchronous learning is a digital teaching platform that supports learning in the time of the pandemic. However, it provides less speaking participation for students. This study explores the effectiveness of Socratic questioning in developing students' English-speaking skills during their online synchronous class. This study used the Pre-experimental - one-group pretest and posttest design. Thirty-five (35) students who were asked for their consent participated in this study. The study was conducted in one of the classes in Purposive Communication in a private college in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines, for the first semester of the AY 2020-2021. The instrument used in assessing students' English-Speaking Skills is the Student Oral Observation Matrix (SOLOM), taken from the Riverside County Seal of Multiliteracy (2008). The study used Paul's (2001) model of Socratic questioning. Based on the findings, through the lens and principles of reasons, Socratic questioning helped improve students' English-speaking skills in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension. The result of this study confirms Paul's (2001) model of Socratic questioning, stressing that by working through an organized procedure of framing questions during discussions and other oral-related activities, learners are disciplined and trained to speak and reason. This finding, therefore, calls for the need of teachers to utilize Socratic questioning in their online synchronous learning to develop student's skills in speaking, which in turn enliven their active participation in the virtual class.

Keywords: *English-speaking Skills, Socratic Questioning, Online Synchronous Learning*

Introduction

COVID-19 pandemic brought a sudden impact and took a toll on all schools' educational processes and services across the globe. It brings challenges to the academic community to redesign and realign its operation systems on instructional delivery (Adedoyin and Soykan, 2020; Kaur, 2020). Teachers from primary up until they graduate level have had to switch and adapt to different distance education forms. Among these other educational platforms of distance education is online learning.

Indeed, online learning is no longer a new trend in education. Many schools across the countries have had this mode of learning even before the advent of the COVID 19. The mushrooming of online education at present has just become a worldwide movement for education due to the declaration of COVID-19 as a global health crisis. In online learning education in the time of the pandemic, educational institutions used either synchronous and asynchronous digital teaching (Karatas and Tuncer, 2020; Farros, Shawler, and Gatzunis, and Weiss, 2029). These two basic types of digital teaching are commonly used by schools to support learning.

Acknowledging the need of students to continue learning amidst pandemics, online education learning is seen to be the viable way for continuing education which also helps to put a curb on the spread of COVID-19. Weighing the benefits of online education learning for students to be independent and collaborative (Berge, 2000; Parker and Gemino, 2001, Chan et al. 2009), another equally severe outcome of the existing online education that has received little attention is the declined opportunity for students to improve their speaking proficiency (Tanian and James, 2002). Being an English and communication teacher and the dean of a college in a private tertiary school in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines, the researcher has observed this phenomenon where students during their synchronous classes are reluctant to express their thoughts and opinions during lectures and other online learning activities. It is also observed that when their teachers are asking them, the substance of views is not clear and coherent. The ideas being expressed are likely unstructured and unparalleled to what is being asked from them. Some of them are shy and would not say a word due to the difficulty of using appropriate English words. Others, too, are translanguaging using the Cebuano Visayan Language when they are answering and questioning during their virtual class so that their ideas can get across to their teachers and classmates, respectively. This phenomenon was also observed and reinforced by other previous studies even

before the pandemic where online education is already existing and offered in school (Arnold, 2007; Tanian and James, 2002; Skinner, 2009).

Although these setbacks in speaking may be attributed to some reasons, the present study seeks to develop the students' speaking skills through Socratic questioning in asynchronous learning. The objective, therefore, is to introduce Socratic questioning as an approach to teaching, thereby aiming not to strike fear in the hearts of students so that they may articulate intelligibly their thoughts guided with their beliefs that do not withstand scrutiny. Hence, the conduct of the study.

Statement of the Problem

1. What is the participants' level of English Speaking Skills before and after the intervention considering the following:

  1.1 pronunciation;

  1.2 vocabulary;

  1.3 grammar;

  1.4 fluency; and

  1.5 comprehension?

2. Is there a significant difference in students' performance in Socratic Questioning before and after the intervention?

Methods

This study used the Pre-experimental - one-group pretest and posttest design. Using this design, the students were assessed in their English-Speaking Skills during pretest and posttest. The intervention of Socratic questioning was given after the pretest and before the posttest to compare the difference of scores and to see the improvement of students in speaking English. Before the conduct of this study, the thirty-five (35) students were asked to participate. The study was conducted in one of the Purposive Communication classes in a private college in Cagayan de Oro City for the first semester of the AY 2020-2021. These students were selected as the participants of the study as they are the current students being handled by the researcher himself. Also, the

nature of the participants' subject in the researcher's class is communication. This impels the researcher to choose these participants as they have already prior knowledge of speaking. The instrument used in assessing students' English-Speaking Skills is the Student Oral Observation Matrix (SOLOM), taken from the Riverside County Seal of Multiliteracy (2008). A fellow inter-rater was also requested during the assessment of students English-speaking skills to ensure the objectivity of the assessment. The study employed Paul's (2001) principle of Socratic questioning using the following processes: questions for clarification, questions that probe assumptions, questions that probe reasons and evidence, questions about viewpoints and perspectives, questions that probe implications and consequences, and questions about the question. The Socratic question as the intervention was allotted for eight weeks. Such categories for questioning do not necessarily follow a pattern as students' responses are leading to another category of questions that the researcher is determining. To implement the Socratic Questioning, the researcher being the teacher himself, conducted the following tasks every week during the synchronous learning: planned the sessions every synchronous session always to have the significant questions that provide structure and direction to the lesson; crafted questions to be clear and specific to students learning; maintained silence and wait for at least 5-10 seconds for students to deliver their response to the question; kept the discussion focus; followed-up students verbal responses and let them elaborate their thoughts and ideas; used probing questions for reasons and evidence, and summarized what has been discussed. Descriptive statistics such as mean distribution were used to measure the students' English-speaking skills and T-Test to measure their performance in implementing Socratic questioning in the virtual class in Purposive Communication.

Results and Discussions

Table 1 shows the mean distribution of students' level of English-speaking skills before and after the intervention. As gleaned above, student participants' responses in English-speaking skills showed the homogeneity of their responses, as indicated in the standard deviation of 0.49 from both pretest and posttest. This entails that they had similar responses to the indicators. In the pretest, the result indicated that comprehension (3.73), grammar (3.28), fluency (2.78), pronunciation (2.71), and vocabulary (2.59) of participant's areas in English-speaking skills are rated as good. A rating of good from these areas means that participants manage to understand

most of what is said at a slower than normal speed although repetitions are observed, frequent errors of grammar and word order occasionally obscure the substance of what the student participants intend to mean from their answers, speed and fluency are strongly affected by language problems which made them have occasional word fillers when talking, pronunciation problems necessitate concentration and occasionally lead to misunderstanding, frequent use of wrong terminologies in English are also observed during the one-on-one virtual informal interview.

Table 1.
Mean Distribution of Students' Level of English-Speaking Skills Before and After the Intervention

English Speaking Skills			Pretest	Posttest
		Mean	2.71	2.78
		SD	.044	.046
	Pronunciation	**Description**	**Good**	**Good**
		Mean	2.59	3.73
		SD	.031	.047
	Vocabulary	**Description**	**Good**	**Very Good**
		Mean	3.28	3.33
		SD	.083	.086
	Grammar	**Description**	**Good**	**Good**
		Mean	2.78	2.88
		SD	.046	.037
	Fluency	**Description**	**Good**	**Very Good**
		Mean	3.73	3.93
		SD	0.47	.053
	Comprehension	**Description**	**Good**	**Very Good**
		Mean	3.02	3.33
		SD	0.49	0.49
	Overall	**Description**	**Good**	**Good**
Legend:	*4.51-5.00* *Excellent*	*1.51-2.50* *Fair*		
	3.51-4.50 *Very Good*	*1.00-1.50* *Poor*		
	2.51-3.50 *Good*			

Moreover, an improvement in student participants' English-speaking skills is observed after being subjected to Socratic questioning. This improvement is evident in the participants' posttest rating, where vocabulary (3.73), fluency (2.88) and comprehension (3.93) were rated as "Very Good" after the implementation of the intervention. Although the two areas, such as pronunciation (2.78) and grammar (3.33), are rated as good, it also shows an improvement as revealed in their mean rates. Hence, the overall mean also increased from pretest (3.02) to posttest (3.33).

Table 2.

Result of the Test of Difference in the Students' Performance of Socratic questioning Before and After the Intervention

Dependent Variable		Socratic Questioning			
		Pretest	**Posttest**	**t**	**p**
English Speaking Skills	Overall Mean	2.97	3.33	8.391*	.000
	SD	.049	.049		

Significant at 0.05 level.

Table 2 presents the score difference of the student's performance of Socratic questioning before and after the intervention. The figures reveal that participants being subjected to Socratic questioning strategy (t=8.391, p=.000) is significant to their English-speaking skills before (2.97) and after (3.33) the intervention. This improvement in students' performance confirms the researcher's observations in his virtual class during synchronous learning with his students where before the intervention, the students are just likely expressing few sentences when they are asked with their ideas; their pronunciation is likely to be not spontaneous as sound patterns from their Cebuano Visayan Language are traceable, their grammar is likely unstructured where the use of tenses and subject-verb agreement are sporadically erroneous which makes their verbal responses unintelligible, and they have had the tendency to shift from their native language for them to express their ideas and content fully. These observations were then improved when the researcher utilized the Socratic questioning as a strategy and approach when discussing his lessons. Accordingly, during the Socratic questioning implementation, the researcher lets his students be actively engaged in his discussions by asking them a question from the beginning, middle, and ending of the lecture, which requires each of them to generate answers. Also, Socratic Questioning is employed during students' speaking-related tasks such as reporting, oral recitations, oral revalidation, interviews, picture analysis activity, impromptu and extemporaneous speeches. With these tasks, students were required to share to class their viewpoints of the lesson, after which the teacher posed questions that let them elaborate their ideas to keep focused on their elements of thought, systems of thought, and standards of thought. These processes were facilitated using open-ended collaborative discussions and dialogues where students are responding with a shred of textual pieces of evidence and references to support their point or thesis. Likewise, they were as well provided with examples and deep discussions to bring in them the thinking of the standard of Paul's (2001) model on the principles of Socratic questioning such as questions for clarification,

questions that probe assumptions, questions that probe reasons and evidence, questions about viewpoints and perspectives, questions that probe implications and consequences, and questions about the question. Follow-up questions are employed to cross-check the depth of their verbal responses. This was nonetheless used to measure the students' expressive language of speaking, particularly on its relevance, fairness, clarity, and precision, to name a few. With the implementation of Socratic Questioning for eight weeks, students' active engagement in synchronous learning is evident. During synchronous learning, the researcher observed that students are now conscious of their pronunciation and correct grammar usage. They listened well to the teacher and would have to ask back when they seemed not to understand the lesson during the discussion. They, too, are now asking back the teacher when they are not able to understand the question being asked from them, which calls then for the teacher to rephrase and paraphrase the question for clarity and intelligibility. It was also observed that when they are asking back their teacher, they wanted to have an assurance that they had comprehended the question raised to them.

Furthermore, during speaking related activities, it was also confirmed by the researcher that they are likely to substantiate their ideas by only talking to what is being asked from them. In a nutshell, this modelling of practice in soliciting verbal responses to students supports Copeland (2005) and Paul's assertion (2006) espousing that these activities fueled with the approach of Socratic questioning bring students an in-depth examination and understanding of their ideas and content on how they rationalize and respond to questions. Ross (2003) further explains that these activities, such as mentioned above, captured the Socratic method's very essence in examining the values, principles, and beliefs of students to let them be expressive orally.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Evidently, Socratic questioning helped improve students' English-speaking skills such as pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. The result of this study confirms Paul's (2001) model of Socratic questioning, stressing that by working through an organized procedure of framing questions during discussions and other oral related activities, learners are disciplined and trained to speak and reason. This finding recommends that teachers, when having a synchronous meeting with their students, may have to utilize Socratic questioning to develop student's skills in speaking and enliven their participation in online learning.

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