

Blended Online Learning: Perceptions and Experiences of EFL University Students and Teachers

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Article information	Abstract
<p>Article history: Received: 30 Jan 2021 Accepted: 5 Apr 2022 Available online: 8 Apr 2022</p> <p>Keywords: Blended online learning (BOL) Perceptions and experiences of EFL university students and teachers English as a foreign language (EFL) English language teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic English language teaching in higher education</p>	<p>During the COVID-19 pandemic, in which social distancing has become the norm, blended online learning, which consists of two main components: namely synchronous online instruction through a virtual conferencing platform, or live virtual classroom (LVC), and asynchronous online learning through a learning management system (LMS), has largely replaced face-to-face classrooms. After 2,217 EFL freshmen and 16 EFL teachers at a public university in Thailand participated in blended online learning instruction in a foundation English course in the first semester of academic year 2021, their perceptions and experiences regarding the instruction were investigated using online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was employed to obtain empirical information from the participants. The findings obtained from the questionnaires (590 voluntary students and 12 voluntary teachers) and semi-structured interviews (15 voluntary students and 5 voluntary teachers) indicated that blended online learning was appropriate and beneficial in EFL classes for the undergraduate students and could support the social distancing measures put in place due to COVID-19. While there are some limitations, inconveniences, and challenges related to blended online learning, it has been demonstrated to be effective in improving students' English ability while saving time and expense by eliminating the need for travel to the university and providing flexibility regarding the time and place of learning and teaching. Implications and recommendations for blended online learning and its two main components were also concluded from the findings and are discussed in the study.</p>

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the trend of English language teaching in higher education has been shifting from strictly traditional face-to-face (F2F) course delivery methods to the integration of computer technology and the Internet (Şahin-Kızıl, 2014), a trend often referred to as blended learning (BL), to advance the quality of education (Kouara, 2016). Since the outbreak of Coronavirus or COVID-19 in late 2019, the learning and teaching of most courses in educational institutions around the world has been inevitably affected. This includes English language teaching. Under these circumstances, online learning has become a major component of education in one form or another (Radha et al., 2020). Just as the 'work from home' principle led workers no longer

going into offices, 'study from home' changed the learning platform from traditional F2F classrooms to online ones, bringing a variety of instructional approaches into online learning to maximize learning outcomes. Blended online learning (BOL) has become one of the most popular "new normal" instructional approaches being implemented in online classrooms during the pandemic (Lapitan Jr. et al., 2021; Mu'ayyadah & Sahiruddin, 2020). Unlike BL, which is an integration of the F2F classroom and online learning, the BOL model combines online F2F synchronous learning through web conferencing applications (e.g., Zoom, Cisco Webex, and Google Meet) with asynchronous virtual learning to optimize instruction (Fadde & Vu, 2014).

As it has in other countries, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand has impacted various aspects of Thai life, including education ("Cabinet Approves Plans", 2020). As a result of the "stay home and stop the virus for our nation" policy launched by the Thai Government on 17 March 2020 (Patcharanaruamol et al., 2020), social distancing measures have been applied in all facets of society, including for students and teachers. This greatly limited the ability of teachers and students to meet and conduct academic activities in the F2F classroom. As the pandemic stretched into August 2021, the start of a new academic year, Thai university freshmen would be exposed to new environments, fellow students, study venues, and, of course, learning approaches—all taking place online.

At one public university in Thailand, a foundation EFL course was offered to freshmen in the first semester of academic year 2021 using the BOL model (Power, 2008, p. 510) as the main means of instruction for the first time. Many first-year university students in Thailand would not have been accustomed to blended (online) learning as most high schools in Thailand still use the traditional chalk-and-board F2F classroom lecture method (Watanapokakul, 2018). After the students and the teachers participated in the BOL instruction for the full semester, their perceptions and experiences regarding BOL were investigated and are discussed in the present study. The findings from this study can benefit a number of stakeholders such as students, teachers, and course coordinators as well as those involved with other undergraduate EFL courses who would like to effectively and efficiently implement BOL in their classes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Blended online learning

With advances of the Internet and computer network systems, there has been significant development in innovative instructional delivery methods (Erarslan & Topkaya, 2017; Fadde & Vu, 2014). One of the areas which the implementation of new technology has positively influenced is blended learning (Tandoh et al., 2014). There is no one single definition of blended learning (BL) that researchers agree on (Kouara, 2016; Şahin-Kızıl, 2014; Su, 2019), but the common concept of BL highlights the collaboration of F2F instruction with a web-based online approach (Graham, 2013; Oliver & Trigwell, 2005). Blended online learning (BOL) can be seen as an emergent variation of Blended Learning (BL) (Fadde & Vu, 2014; Mu'ayyadah & Sahiruddin, 2020); however, BL and BOL offer different learning experiences. BL is a combination of traditional F2F classroom instruction and asynchronous online learning through a learning

management system (LMS), while BOL is completely online learning, mixing synchronous online instruction through a virtual conferencing platform, known as a live virtual classroom (LVC), where student-teacher interaction occurs, and asynchronous online learning (Fadde & Vu, 2014). Synchronous, asynchronous, blended, and blended online learning all have their own strengths and weaknesses, which Fadde and Vu (2014, p. 35) summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Perceived strengths and weaknesses of online and blended learning modes
(Fadde & Vu, 2014, p. 35)

Delivery Mode	Strengths	Weaknesses
Asynchronous (LMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner access independent of Time and Place • Organization of content • Critical thinking in discussion forums (High efficiency) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of spontaneous interaction • Lack of immediate feedback (Low engagement)
Synchronous (LVC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner access independent of place • Some F2F presence (audio and video) • Permanence (can be recorded) • Classroom-type technology (Higher engagement than LMS, lower than F2F) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires meeting at same time • Depends on learners' installed base of computer equipment and connection • Requires skill to run meetings (Lower efficiency vs. LMS, higher efficiency vs. F2F)
Blended learning (F2F + LMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner access partially independent of time and place • Technology aids to support live meetings • F2F allows for personal responses and relations (High engagement, high effectiveness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can lead to excessive work for learners and instructor • Still requires on-campus participation (Low efficiency)
Blended online learning (LMS + LVC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner access independent of place • Adds presence vs. LMS • Spontaneous thinking in LVC • Critical thinking on LMS discussion forums (More engaging than LMS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partially dependent on time • Susceptible to technical difficulties • Needs an event producer • May reinforce direct instruction methods (Less efficient than LMS)

In accordance with Fadde and Vu's concept (2014) of synchronous and asynchronous instruction for BL and BOL, Power (2008, p. 510) proposes a "blended online learning environment design model," using the relative position of blended online learning (See Figure 1). Along the x-axis, there are two spheres: on-campus design & delivery of instruction and online design & delivery of instruction, while, on the y-axis, there are two main spheres: synchronous, faculty-led instruction and asynchronous, system-managed instruction. The traditional, faculty-led, on-campus learning, usually synchronous, (in the bottom left-hand corner) is juxtaposed with

asynchronous online learning (in the top right-hand corner). Blended learning is considered a bridge of both domains. However, blended online learning can be seen as a bridge between synchronous and asynchronous modes of instruction of online design and delivery. In other words, blended online learning is completely online instruction using both synchronous and asynchronous modes together with faculty-led and system-managed forms of learning environment.

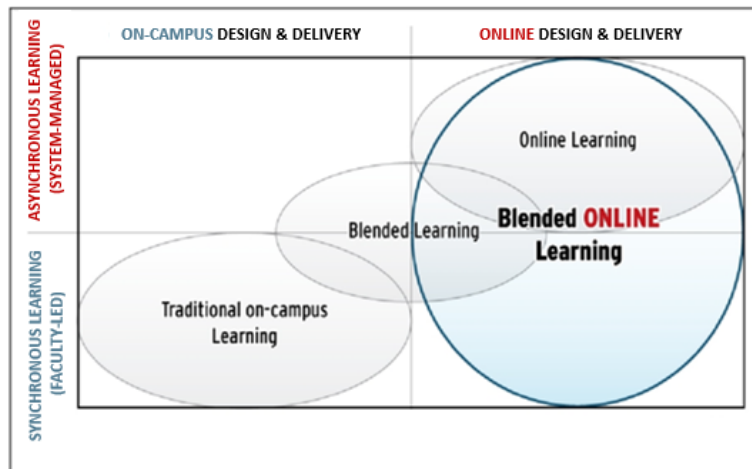


Figure 1 The relative position of blended online learning, adapted from Power (2008, p. 510)

Related previous studies

With the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in late 2019, educational institutions immediately needed a new instructional method that could support social distancing. BOL became an emergent solution (Fadde & Vu, 2014) and one which has become widely adopted globally (Mu’ayyadah & Sahiruddin, 2020). Although, between 2019 and 2021, many institutions employed the BOL instruction, few studies regarding the use of BOL were conducted during this period. One study by Mu’ayyadah and Sahiruddin (2020) explored the effect of using BOL during the COVID-19 pandemic on development of Indonesian students’ language skills, gathered students’ perceptions regarding its benefits and limitations, and offered recommendations for using BOL. The findings revealed the effectiveness of BOL in improving not only the students’ English skills (i.e., listening, reading, and vocabulary), but also their internet and computer skills and self-paced learning ability. However, the findings also revealed some of the main drawbacks of using BOL such as technical problems and unfamiliarity with learning in a BOL class. Apart from English language instruction, other subjects also implemented BOL in their classes. For example, Lapitan Jr. et al. (2021) investigated the opinions of Chemical Engineering students enrolling in *Physical Chemistry 1* and *Analytical Chemistry* at the University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines regarding the five-component BOL strategy, referred to as Discover, Learn, Practice, Collaborate, and Assess (DLPCA), during the COVID-19 lockdown. The findings showed the effectiveness of BOL in increasing the students’ learning pace. Also, the students shared some of the problems they had with both synchronous online learning (e.g., the effectiveness of student-instructor engagement and large class sizes) and asynchronous online learning (e.g., internet connectivity and clarity of the delivery of the content by the teacher)

which can be adapted in designing BOL classes. Furthermore, Ota et al. (2018) surveyed undergraduate nursing students' attitudes towards blended online learning in a rural university in Australia. Their findings, based on information from online questionnaires, showed that the students struggled with inaccurate expectations of workload and technical problems in the online modules, while opinions regarding flexibility and learner autonomy were inconsistent.

There have been some additional studies investigating the effectiveness and students' perceptions of the individual components of BOL. For instance, Karaman et al. (2013) found that the key components that influenced the effectiveness of virtual learning were good planning, interactive activities, and good technical support. Also, the findings suggested some important instructional techniques for LVC, which were students' active participation, summarization of materials, attraction of students' attention, and high association with real life.

For asynchronous e-learning, Rohman et al. (2020) explored students' perceptions regarding implementing online learning at Universitas Islam Raden Rahmat (Unira) Malang in Indonesia. The students had largely negative perceptions towards online learning. Although they agreed that online learning was the right approach during the COVID-19 pandemic, they felt that it was implemented without proper planning, causing it to be overly complex, unengaging, and less effective. Also, most students complained about being overloaded with assignments and having unstable and expensive internet service. Abbasi et al. (2020) examined medical and dental students' perceptions towards e-learning during the COVID-19 lock down at Liaquat College of Medicine and Dentistry in Pakistan. The results showed that most students did not prefer e-learning, and that e-learning had less impact on students' performance when compared to the F2F classroom. They also reported that e-learning provided the students with limited student-teacher interaction. In contrast, students in Radha et al.'s study (2020) showed a great interest in using and positive opinion regarding the e-learning programmes for academic purposes during the COVID-19 outbreak. However, many students still preferred F2F learning or traditional learning to e-learning.

It is apparent that most studies have focused on exploring the effects of using BOL and students' attitudes towards it; on the other hand, teachers' attitudes towards BOL have not been fully investigated. Also, there have been few studies regarding implementing BOL in Thai EFL classrooms in tertiary education. Therefore, apart from examining the perceptions and experiences of Thai EFL undergraduate students regarding the BOL instruction, those of Thai EFL teachers will be explored in this study as well.

Research questions

In order to investigate the students' and the teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding BOL, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the students' perceptions and experiences regarding BOL in an EFL undergraduate class?
2. What are the teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding BOL in an EFL undergraduate class?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was based on an explanatory sequential mixed methods design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The quantitative data were collected using questionnaires, and the qualitative data were then collected using semi-structured interviews to obtain explanations of the initial quantitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Participants

The participants of the study consisted of two groups: first-year undergraduate students and EFL teachers. First, a total of 2,217 students who enrolled in a foundation English course, namely *English Level 1*, were from a public university in Thailand, consisting of 13 faculties, 3 provincial campuses, and 2 colleges, as well as another 2 institutes. They were mixed together and randomly divided into 40 sections. Thus, each section consisted of approximately 55 students with mixed English abilities. Since only those students who had Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET) scores in English—a national test for the university admission—of less than 61 out of 100 points were required to enroll in this course, their English ability ranged from beginner to intermediate levels. The other group of the participants consisted of 16 teachers of the *English Level 1* course—8 full time and 8 part time. They were all Thai nationals who had at least 5 years of experience teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) at the tertiary education level. All of the 2,217 freshmen and 16 EFL teachers served as the participants of the study, but participation in the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews was voluntary.

After the online questionnaires were distributed to the participants, 590 students (26.61%) and 12 teachers (75%) completed and returned the questionnaires. Of the student respondents, 127 were male (21.53%), 451 female (76.44%), and 12 unspecified (2.03%). The breakdown of the student respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Number of student respondents

Groups	Lists	N	%
Faculties N = 446 (75.59%)	Nursing	109	18.47
	Science	72	12.20
	Public Health	57	9.66
	Medicine Ramathibodi Hospital	53	8.98
	Engineering	45	7.63
	Medical Technology	23	3.90
	Environment and Resource Studies	21	3.56
	Medicine Siriraj Hospital	20	3.39
	Physical Therapy	15	2.54
	Social Sciences and Humanities	15	2.54
	Information and Communication Technology	9	1.53
	Pharmacy	4	0.68
	Veterinary Science	3	0.51

Groups	Lists	N	%
Provincial campuses N = 95 (16.10%)	Kanchanaburi Campus	68	11.53
	Nakhonsawan Campus	16	2.71
	Amnatcharoen Campus	11	1.86
Colleges N = 41 (6.95%)	College of Sports Science and Technology	38	6.44
	Ratchasuda College	3	0.51
Institutes N = 8 (1.36%)	Praboromarajchanok Institute	5	0.85
	HRH Princess Chulabhorn College of Medical Science	3	0.51
Total		590	100

As for their English ability based on their O-NET scores of English, most respondents (82.2%) were at the lower-intermediate to intermediate levels. Most (75.7%) had experienced in learning English of more than 10 years, and 68.3% had at least one year of English language online learning experience.

For the EFL teacher participants, there were twelve respondents: four male (33.3%) and eight female (66.7%). Seven (58.3%) were part-time teachers, while the other five (41.7%) were full-time teachers. Eleven respondents (91.7%) held a Master's degree, and only one respondent (8.3%) had a doctoral degree. All of the teacher respondents had more than five years of English language teaching (ELT) experience and had at least one year of online teaching experience.

Implementation of BOL in *English Level 1*

The Power's blended online learning environment design model (2008) was used as the core instructional model in the *English Level 1* course, which focused on integration of the four English skills, grammar, and vocabulary in the context of daily language use. The course consisted of 15 weeks. Each week, the students joined a 2-hour live virtual classroom (LVC)—synchronous online instruction through an online conferencing application (e.g., Zoom, Cisco Webex, and Google Meet)—and had another 2 hours of asynchronous online learning through a learning management system (LMS). The main textbook for the LVC session was *Smart Choice Level 3 (4th edition)* (Wilson & Savage, 2020) from which Units 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 were taught to the students. As for the LMS, the students studied through the university's online course management system, called MUX. The content of the MUX for *English Level 1* came from two main sources: Smart Choice Online Practice (Units 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and Smart Choice Bonus units) and online learning units developed by a team of EFL teachers in the Faculty of Liberal Arts. There were altogether 15 online units in MUX for the students to study. The content in the MUX included reading, speaking, listening, writing, grammar, and vocabulary exercises. For each MUX unit, students had to complete the exercises with correctness of more than 60% in order to earn a sufficient score for exercise completion, and the students could redo the exercise as many times as they wished. The total score of the 15 MUX units accounted for 9% of their performance evaluation. The other components were the Share & Talk project (85%) and class participation (6%).

Research instruments

There were two main research instruments: the questionnaires and the questions for semi-structured interviews. They were developed for the students and the teachers to elicit their perceptions and experiences regarding BOL and its two main components, which were used throughout the semester. All of the research instruments were developed based on the concepts of Power's blended online learning environment design model (2008).

1. Questionnaires

For the students, the questionnaires contained 2 parts. The first part consisted of 5 closed-ended questions asking about their demographic information and English language learning background. The second part consisted of 3 sub-parts asking about their perceptions and experiences regarding (1) the overall BOL, (2) LVC, and (3) LMS, used in *English Level 1*. Each of which contained 13 five-point Likert-scale questions.

In line with the student questionnaire to a certain extent, the teacher questionnaire also contained 2 parts. The first part consisted of 5 closed-ended questions asking about their demographic information and teaching background. Part two was quite similar to that of the student questionnaire.

2. Semi-structured interview questions

To elicit more in-depth information on perceptions and experiences regarding BOL, the questions of the semi-structured interviews for both students and teachers were developed in line with the questionnaires.

For the students, there were seven open-ended questions as follows:

1. What do you think about studying English online?
2. Do you prefer studying English online or in a face-to-face classroom? Why?
3. What do you think about BOL? (Is it suitable for the *English Level 1* course during the COVID-19 pandemic? Why or why not?)
4. What are the benefits and obstacles of BOL?
5. What do you think about the session of LVC?
6. What do you think about the session of LMS?
7. What are some suggestions regarding BOL used in this course during the COVID-19 pandemic?

For the teachers, there were seven guided questions as follows:

1. What do you think about teaching English online?
2. Do you prefer teaching English online or in a face-to-face classroom? Why?
3. What do you think about BOL? (Is it suitable for the *English Level 1* course during the COVID-19 pandemic? Why or why not?)

4. What are the benefits and obstacles of BOL?
5. What do you think about the session of LVC?
6. What do you think about the session of LMS?
7. What are some suggestions regarding BOL used in this course during the COVID-19 pandemic?

All research instruments were validated by five experts in the fields of English Language Teaching and Curriculum Design using the Content Validity Index (CVI), where the Item-level Content Validity Index (I-CVI) ≥ 0.79 and the Average Scale-level Content Validity Index (S-CVI/Ave) ≥ 0.9 (Shi et al., 2012), to determine the content validity of the research instruments. The S-CVI/Ave values of the student questionnaire, the teacher questionnaire, the student semi-structured interview questions, and the teacher semi-structured interview questions were 0.90, 0.98, 0.93, and 0.95, respectively. Revisions were made based on the experts' comments regarding typographical errors, word usage, misleading questions, and redundant questions. After that, a pilot study was conducted with 30 randomly selected students and 6 teachers to determine the reliability of all research instruments and the feasibility of some important components of the full-scale study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to calculate the internal consistency coefficients of the student questionnaire and the teacher questionnaire, which were 0.90 and 0.85, respectively, showing good internal consistency (George & Mallery, 2003, as cited in Wadkar et al., 2016, p. 116).

Data collection

Prior to conducting the study, this research proposal was sent to the university's Central Institutional Review Board for ethical approval in order to protect the rights and well-being of the research population and participants. Before starting the survey, all participants were provided with information on the research, and they had the right to leave if they were not comfortable with taking part in the study. The data collection was anonymous, and the responses from the participants were kept confidential and destroyed after the study was completed.

By the end of *English Level 1*, the links for the online questionnaires (via Google Forms) were sent to all participants, both students and teachers, in November 2021. At the end of the questionnaires, there was a question asking the respondents if they would like to participate in the semi-structured interviews to share more in-depth information regarding BOL by providing an email address before leaving the online questionnaire. Later, 15 students and 5 teachers were randomly selected from the volunteer lists to partake in the individual semi-structured interviews, using Thai language as a medium of communication through an online conferencing application (i.e., Zoom). Each interview took about 25-30 minutes and was recorded for further analysis.

Data analysis

1. Questionnaires

The findings from the questionnaires were quantitatively analyzed using the SPSS program (Version 26) to obtain descriptive statistics. The interpretation of the closed-ended questions used frequency and percentage to present the findings, while that of the five-point Likert-scale questions was based on the interval and description from Pimentel (2019, p. 188), shown in Table 3, and presented in mean scores and standard deviation (S.D.). Each item was rated based on a 1-5 point range of scores, representing 1 as strongly disagree or never, 2 as disagree or rarely, 3 as neutral or sometimes, 4 as agree or often, and 5 as strongly agree or always, respectively.

Table 3
Likert scale, interval, and description of five-point Likert-scale questionnaire

Likert scale	Interval	Description	Interpretation
5	4.20-5.00	strongly agree / always	Very high
4	3.40-4.19	agree / often	High
3	2.60-3.39	neutral / sometimes	Average
2	1.80-2.59	disagree / rarely	Low
1	1.00-1.79	strongly disagree / never	Very low

2. Semi-structured interviews

The data from the semi-structured interviews were qualitatively analyzed using thematic analysis (King et al., 2019).

FINDINGS

A weaving approach (Fetters & Freshwater, 2015, p. 210) was used to report the findings of the study theme-by-theme, using the quantitative data from the questionnaires, followed by the qualitative information from the interviews to support and explain the quantitative data. The findings are presented based on the perceptions and experiences of the students and those of the teachers.

Students' perceptions and experiences

The questionnaires elicited the students' perceptions and experiences regarding the BOL instruction, which were divided into three sub-parts: the overall BOL, LVC, and LMS. The findings from the 590 student questionnaires are presented in Tables 4-6.

Table 4
Students' perceptions and experiences regarding the overall BOL

Items	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. BOL is suitable for <i>English Level 1</i> in the COVID-19 situation.	3.69	0.89	High
2. BOL can help develop my overall English ability.	3.48	0.88	High
3. BOL can help develop my English writing ability.	3.25	0.95	Average
4. BOL can help develop my English reading ability.	3.49	0.96	High
5. BOL can help develop my English listening ability.	3.66	0.93	High
6. BOL can help develop my English speaking ability.	3.33	0.95	Average
7. BOL can help develop my English vocabulary ability.	3.43	0.92	High
8. BOL can help develop my English grammar ability.	3.41	0.96	High
9. The proportion of the BOL instruction used for <i>English Level 1</i> each week (2-hour LVC and 2-hour LMS) is suitable.	3.91	0.88	High
10. It is convenient to study English in a BOL class.	3.81	0.97	High
11. I enjoy studying English in a BOL class.	3.51	1.03	High
12. I like studying English in a BOL class.	3.37	1.07	Average
13. BOL benefits the instruction of <i>English Level 1</i> in the COVID-19 situation.	3.84	0.90	High
Total	3.55	0.97	High

Table 4 shows the findings of the students' perceptions and experiences regarding the overall BOL used in *English Level 1*. Most students agreed that BOL was beneficial ($\bar{x} = 3.84$), convenient ($\bar{x} = 3.81$), and suitable ($\bar{x} = 3.69$) for this course in the COVID-19 situation. Also, BOL could help them develop their overall English ability ($\bar{x} = 3.48$) and specific skills—i.e., listening ($\bar{x} = 3.66$), reading ($\bar{x} = 3.49$), vocabulary ($\bar{x} = 3.43$), and grammar ($\bar{x} = 3.41$), more than speaking ($\bar{x} = 3.33$) and writing ($\bar{x} = 3.25$). Moreover, they felt that the proportion of the BOL instruction used in the course was suitable ($\bar{x} = 3.91$).

Extract 1

"BOL made my life more convenient. I could study right away after waking up without having to put on a student uniform, and I didn't waste time and money traveling to the university."

(Student 4)

Extract 2

"BOL is the best solution for the COVID-19 situation when social distancing is needed."

(Student 10)

Although the students enjoyed studying in a BOL class ($\bar{x} = 3.51$) and felt it was convenient ($\bar{x} = 3.81$), suitable ($\bar{x} = 3.69$), and beneficial for this course ($\bar{x} = 3.84$), their preference for BOL was only at the average level ($\bar{x} = 3.37$).

Extract 3

"At first, I wasn't accustomed to this kind of online learning. It took a few weeks to adjust and familiarize myself with it. Also, I encountered some technical problems while studying English Level 1 online e.g., poor internet connections and electrical short circuits. These sometimes frustrated and caused me to be unable to do well with the lessons."

(Student 5)

Extract 4

"I prefer studying in a face-to-face classroom to an online one because students can interact with both teachers and friends, and some activities like role-plays aren't practical for online classes and are time-consuming."

(Student 9)

Extract 5

"I am easily distracted when I study online at home. My mom always calls me, and my cat always wanders around. I can't resist playing with him. I prefer studying in a real classroom. My home has no classroom vibe."

(Student 6)

To sum up, the students' perceptions and experiences regarding the overall BOL were at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.55$). Although most students enjoyed studying English in a BOL class and felt that BOL was convenient, suitable, and beneficial for them since they could study anywhere and save time and money on traveling, some did not like BOL due to the technical and the internet problems, unfamiliarity with the type of instruction, lack of interaction and practicality of doing some activities, and distractions when studying at home.

Table 5
Students' perceptions and experiences regarding LVC

Items	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. LVC is suitable for <i>English Level 1</i> in the COVID-19 situation.	3.92	0.91	High
2. LVC can help develop my overall English ability.	3.60	0.87	High
3. LVC can help develop my English writing ability.	3.29	0.97	Average
4. LVC can help develop my English reading ability.	3.57	0.90	High
5. LVC can help develop my English listening ability.	3.70	0.90	High
6. LVC can help develop my English speaking ability.	3.09	0.92	Average

Items	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
7. LVC can help develop my English vocabulary ability.	3.48	0.89	High
8. LVC can help develop my English grammar ability.	3.45	0.91	High
9. The session of LVC lasting 2 hours per week is suitable.	3.99	0.89	High
10. Studying English in the session of LVC is convenient.	3.87	0.93	High
11. I enjoy studying English in the session of LVC.	3.67	1.01	High
12. I like studying English in the session of LVC.	3.56	1.05	High
13. The session of LVC benefits the instruction of <i>English Level 1</i> in the COVID-19 situation.	3.88	0.89	High
Total	3.62	0.95	High

Table 5 reveals the students' perceptions and experiences regarding the session of LVC. The students accepted that the use of LVC was suitable ($\bar{x} = 3.92$), beneficial ($\bar{x} = 3.88$), and convenient ($\bar{x} = 3.87$), and the number of LVC hours per week ($\bar{x} = 3.99$) were suitable for them. Furthermore, they felt that LVC could help them develop their overall English ability ($\bar{x} = 3.60$) and some English skills—i.e., listening ($\bar{x} = 3.70$), reading ($\bar{x} = 3.57$), vocabulary ($\bar{x} = 3.48$), grammar ($\bar{x} = 3.45$). Also, the students enjoyed ($\bar{x} = 3.67$) and liked ($\bar{x} = 3.56$) studying English in the session of LVC.

Extract 6

"2-hour synchronous online instruction is perfect. It isn't too long, and the students aren't exhausted."

(Student 3)

Extract 7

"Although we learned through an online conferencing application, I could still ask the teacher right away when I didn't understand the content or had some questions."

(Student 2)

Extract 8

"In my class, the teacher often used an application called Padlet when teaching grammar points. She used Padlet when she asked us to create sentences using the grammar point we had learned. We could see our sentences and meanwhile listen to the teacher's feedback. It was fun, and I felt safe and comfortable when responding to the teacher through this application."

(Student 4)

However, the students generally felt that LVC could help them develop their writing ($\bar{x} = 3.29$) and speaking skills ($\bar{x} = 3.09$) less effectively than other skills.

Extract 9

"There were 58 students in my class. When doing a writing task, I had to wait for the teacher's comments as the teacher had to invite each student into the breakout room for individual consultation and feedback. This wasted a lot of time, and in some classes I hardly got anything from it. I think BOL is not practical for a writing class."

(Student 9)

Extract 10

"There were too many students in my class. I was afraid to speak English to my friends or teacher during the class. Also, I didn't want to turn on the microphone and say anything in English. I had no confidence and didn't want to lose face."

(Student 10)

In the interviews, the students brought up the limitations and obstacles of synchronous online instruction through a conferencing application.

Extract 11

"I didn't want to turn on the camera while learning online because my siblings and I studied online in the same room, and the room was very messy. Thus, I didn't like it or feel comfortable when the teacher told all of the students to keep the camera on at all times. I didn't want to lose face in front of so many classmates."

(Student 11)

Extract 12

"My synchronous online class started at 3:30 pm. It was very late, and I had been tired from studying since 8:00 am. I wish the class could start earlier so that I would be fresh and learn more effectively."

(Student 14)

All in all, the students' perceptions and experiences regarding LVC were at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.62$). The students enjoyed and liked studying English in the session of LVC. Besides, they felt that LVC was suitable, beneficial, and convenient for the course during the pandemic period and that it could help them develop certain English skills. However, they had some negative comments regarding class size, time-consuming activities, having to keep the camera and the microphone on, and the schedule.

Table 6
Students' perceptions and experiences regarding LMS

Items	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. LMS is suitable for <i>English Level 1</i> in the COVID-19 situation.	3.87	0.90	High
2. LMS can help develop my overall English ability.	3.61	0.91	High
3. LMS can help develop my English writing ability.	3.32	0.96	Average
4. LMS can help develop my English reading ability.	3.57	0.91	High
5. LMS can help develop my English listening ability.	3.67	0.93	High
6. LMS can help develop my English speaking ability.	3.26	0.99	Average
7. LMS can help develop my English vocabulary ability.	3.54	0.91	High
8. LMS can help develop my English grammar ability.	3.50	0.94	High
9. The session of LMS lasting 2 hours per week is suitable.	3.88	0.95	High
10. I feel it is convenient studying English in the session of LMS.	3.28	0.96	Average
11. I enjoy studying English in the session of LMS.	3.53	1.03	High
12. I like studying English through LMS.	3.58	1.04	High
13. The session of LMS benefits the instruction of <i>English Level 1</i> in the COVID-19 situation.	3.82	0.95	High
Total	3.57	0.97	High

Table 6 illustrates the students' perceptions and experiences regarding the LMS sessions. Most of the students agreed that LMS was suitable for this course during COVID-19 (\bar{x} = 3.87), beneficial (\bar{x} = 3.82), and enjoyable (\bar{x} = 3.53).

Extract 13

"I could do MUX anywhere and anytime. Also, I could watch the video clips as many times as I wished or repeated any parts that I wanted."

(Student 15)

Extract 14

"Asynchronous online learning helped me be more disciplined and responsible. I myself had to manage my time and learning schedule and prioritize the assignments I was required to do and submit."

(Student 8)

However, the students felt that LMS was less effective in helping them develop their writing (\bar{x} = 3.32) and speaking (\bar{x} = 3.26) skills than other English skills. Also, the convenience in using MUX was at the average level (\bar{x} = 3.28).

Extract 15

"Although there were some writing and speaking tasks in MUx, I needed some consultation during the writing process and really wanted to get immediate feedback from my teacher. For speaking, I also preferred some authentic tasks (e.g., dialogues with friends and group discussions), which were impossible on this platform to do."

(Student 1)

Extract 16

"The proportion of the scores from MUx, accounting for 9% of the total, was too small, compared to level of the students' effort."

(Student 12)

Extract 17

"I didn't like capturing the result of each MUx unit and submitting it to the teacher every week. I think the system should have been more user-friendly by automatically keeping the learners' score records."

(Student 5)

Extract 18

"The e-learning session confused me at first. I didn't know how to register and use MUx. The process to submit the MUx score results was complicated."

(Student 1)

Regarding LMS, the students' perceptions and experiences were at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.57$). The students agreed that it was suitable for the course and convenient in terms of using it anywhere and anytime. Also, they felt it could effectively help them improve their English skills, but less so for speaking and writing skills. The negative perceptions and experiences came from the system of LMS (i.e., lack of interaction and feedback on speaking and writing tasks, a small weight of the MUx score in the overall scheme, difficulty of score result submission, and unclear instructions).

Teachers' perceptions and experiences

The teacher questionnaires elicited their perceptions and experiences regarding the BOL instruction, and were divided into three sub-parts: the overall BOL, LVC, and LMS. The findings from the 12 EFL teacher questionnaires are presented in Tables 7-9.

Table 7
Teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the overall BOL

Items	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. BOL is suitable for <i>English Level 1</i> in the COVID-19 situation.	4.17	0.83	High
2. BOL can help develop the students' overall English ability.	3.67	1.15	High
3. BOL can help develop the students' English writing ability.	3.33	0.98	Average
4. BOL can help develop the students' English reading ability.	3.58	0.79	High
5. BOL can help develop the students' English listening ability.	3.67	0.98	High
6. BOL can help develop the students' English speaking ability.	2.92	1.16	Average
7. BOL can help develop the students' English vocabulary ability.	3.92	0.90	High
8. BOL can help develop the students' English grammar ability.	3.83	0.94	High
9. The proportion of the BOL instruction used for <i>English Level 1</i> each week (2-hour LVC and 2-hour LMS) is suitable.	3.08	1.24	Average
10. I feel it is convenient teaching English in a BOL class.	3.83	1.11	High
11. I enjoy teaching English in a BOL class.	3.17	1.03	Average
12. I like teaching English in a BOL class.	3.33	1.15	Average
13. BOL benefits the instruction of <i>English Level 1</i> in the COVID-19 situation.	4.00	1.13	High
Total	3.58	1.07	High

As seen in Table 7, the teachers accepted that BOL was suitable ($\bar{x} = 4.17$), beneficial ($\bar{x} = 4.00$), and convenient ($\bar{x} = 3.83$) for teaching *English Level 1* during the COVID-19 situation and felt that it could help develop the students' overall English ability ($\bar{x} = 3.67$) and specific skills—i.e., vocabulary ($\bar{x} = 3.92$), grammar ($\bar{x} = 3.83$), listening ($\bar{x} = 3.67$), and reading ($\bar{x} = 3.58$), at a higher level than writing ($\bar{x} = 3.33$) and speaking ($\bar{x} = 2.92$).

Extract 19

"Nowadays, technology plays an important role in education, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, BOL is the optimal option in the current situation."
(Teacher 1)

Extract 20

"I could save time, money, and energy on travelling to teach. With BOL, I could teach anywhere as long as an internet connection was accessible."
(Teacher 4)

Although they felt it was convenient to teach BOL classes, their preference ($\bar{x} = 3.33$) and enjoyment ($\bar{x} = 3.17$) regarding BOL were at the average level.

Extract 21

"I couldn't do some activities online as effectively as I did in a F2F classroom. For example, observing students while they did group work in breakout rooms was time-consuming and difficult to manage. Thus, I needed to adapt the activities and spend extra time."

(Teacher 5)

Extract 22

"I know that we are now in the era of technology, and online instruction is widely used. However, online teaching is complicated, especially for some teachers who are not tech-savvy."

(Teacher 3)

Moreover, some teachers did not think that the proportion of the BOL instruction (i.e., 2-hour LVC and 2-hour LMS) was appropriate ($\bar{x} = 3.08$).

Extract 23

"4-hour BOL should consist of 3 hours of LVC and 1 hour of LMS or contain only 4 hours of LVC per week by splitting it into two 2-hour LVC sessions so that the students can have more LVC hours learning with their teacher and practicing their English skills in the classroom activities. Even though it is through an online conferencing application, it is better than making them learn online by themselves."

(Teacher 1)

Extract 24

"Apart from LVC and LMS, live online tutoring by senior volunteers (years 2-4 students) should be added weekly in the BOL instruction for the students with low levels of English proficiency to join."

(Teacher 5)

To sum up, the teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding the overall BOL were at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.58$). The teachers accepted that BOL was convenient and beneficial for English language classes during the pandemic, but they were not satisfied with limitations of the online classroom, complications of technology, and the proportion of LVC and LMS.

Table 8
Teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding LVC

Items	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. LVC is suitable for <i>English Level 1</i> in the COVID-19 situation.	4.50	0.52	Very high
2. LVC can help develop the students' overall English ability.	3.92	0.79	High
3. LVC can help develop the students' English writing ability.	3.38	0.80	Average
4. LVC can help develop the students' English reading ability.	3.75	0.75	High
5. LVC can help develop the students' English listening ability.	3.92	0.67	High
6. LVC can help develop the students' English speaking ability.	3.08	1.00	Average
7. LVC can help develop the students' English vocabulary ability.	4.00	0.74	High
8. LVC can help develop the students' English grammar ability.	3.83	0.72	High
9. The session of LVC lasting 2 hours per week is suitable.	2.75	1.60	Average
10. It is convenient for me to teach English in the session of LVC.	4.00	0.95	High
11. I enjoy teaching English in the session of LVC.	3.42	1.16	High
12. I like teaching English in the session of LVC.	3.42	1.24	High
13. The session of LVC benefits the instruction of <i>English Level 1</i> in the COVID-19 situation.	4.17	0.72	High
Total	3.70	1.01	High

As seen in Table 8, the teachers agreed that LVC was highly suitable ($\bar{x} = 4.50$), beneficial ($\bar{x} = 4.17$), and convenient ($\bar{x} = 4.00$) for *English Level 1* during the pandemic period. Also, they agreed that LVC could help develop students' overall English ability ($\bar{x} = 3.92$) and skills, but they felt neutral about its use for writing ($\bar{x} = 3.38$) and speaking ($\bar{x} = 3.08$) skills. Moreover, they enjoyed ($\bar{x} = 3.42$) and liked ($\bar{x} = 3.42$) teaching English in the session of LVC. However, they felt neutral about the number of hours spent on LVC ($\bar{x} = 2.75$).

Extract 25

"Teaching writing and speaking skills was possible, but doing writing and speaking tasks and giving feedback on those tasks to the students were time and energy consuming, especially in a class of 55 students or more."

(Teacher 4)

Extract 26

"Two hours for LVC was not enough. There were a lot of content and tasks in the textbook. I'd rather every student partake in the activities and get feedback from the teacher and friends."

(Teacher 2)

In the interviews, some teachers mentioned that, in the LVC sessions, it was often a challenge to get the students to turn their cameras and microphones on.

Extract 27

“Students didn’t turn on the camera or respond verbally. I didn’t know if the students were studying with me or not. I felt that I was talking to the students’ photos on my computer screen rather than teaching.”

(Teacher 3)

To summarize, the teachers’ perceptions and experiences regarding LVC were at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.70$). Most teachers were satisfied with LVC. However, their concerns were about insufficient time, especially when giving feedback on writing and speaking tasks to the students, too many students in a class, and students’ tendency to turn the camera and microphone on their computers off.

Table 9
Teachers’ perceptions and experiences regarding LMS

Items	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. LMS is suitable for <i>English Level 1</i> in the COVID-19 situation.	3.58	1.16	High
2. LMS can help develop the students’ overall English ability.	3.58	1.00	High
3. LMS can help develop the students’ English writing ability.	3.33	0.89	Average
4. LMS can help develop the students’ English reading ability.	3.83	0.94	High
5. LMS can help develop the students’ English listening ability.	3.42	1.00	High
6. LMS can help develop the students’ English speaking ability.	2.25	1.29	Low
7. LMS can help develop the students’ English vocabulary ability.	3.92	0.79	High
8. LMS can help develop the students’ English grammar ability.	4.08	0.79	High
9. The session of LMS lasting 2 hours per week is suitable.	3.00	1.71	Average
10. The session of LMS is convenient for teaching <i>English Level 1</i> .	4.17	1.03	High
11. I have positive attitudes towards the session of LMS.	3.33	1.3	Average
12. I like the session of LMS.	3.25	1.36	Average
13. The session of LMS benefits the instruction of <i>English Level 1</i> in the COVID-19 situation.	3.50	1.38	High
Total	3.48	1.21	High

Table 9 shows the teachers’ consensus that LMS was convenient ($\bar{x} = 4.17$), suitable ($\bar{x} = 3.58$), and beneficial ($\bar{x} = 3.50$) for *English Level 1*, and could help develop students’ overall English ability ($\bar{x} = 3.58$), and some English skills—i.e., grammar ($\bar{x} = 4.08$), vocabulary ($\bar{x} = 3.92$), reading ($\bar{x} = 3.83$), and listening ($\bar{x} = 3.42$). However, they felt that LMS did not work effectively with teaching writing ($\bar{x} = 3.33$) and speaking ($\bar{x} = 2.25$).

Extract 28

"LMS couldn't provide the students with authentic tasks for speaking and writing because the system couldn't give immediate feedback on those tasks. Also, the system couldn't rate the students' speaking and writing abilities."

(Teacher 2)

Although they agreed that LMS made their teaching more convenient, their preference for LMS ($\bar{x} = 3.25$) and positive attitudes towards LMS ($\bar{x} = 3.33$) were at the average level. Moreover, they did not totally agree that 2 hours was suitable for LMS ($\bar{x} = 3.00$).

Extract 29

"Teachers couldn't know whether their students spent two hours on MUX or not. It depended heavily on students' responsibility in attending MUX. Moreover, the students' MUX scores might not reflect their real English language ability as they might copy their friends' assignments and submit them as their own work."

(Teacher 4)

Extract 30

"There should have been some activities in the synchronous online classes that relied on the content of each week's MUX lesson so that the students would be motivated to join MUX and provided with an opportunity to apply the knowledge from MUX to the classroom activities."

(Teacher 5)

Extract 31

"Although I wasn't required to teach in the e-learning session, the grading system of the students' MUX scores was complicated and not teacher-friendly. This heavily burdened and demotivated the teachers."

(Teacher 1)

To conclude, the teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding LMS were at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.48$). Although the teachers agreed that LMS was convenient, suitable, and beneficial for *English Level 1* in the COVID-19 situation, they thought it was inconvenient and not suitable for developing students' speaking and writing skills due to the system not being able to give immediate feedback on those tasks or being easily used for grading. Also, they also felt the content of LMS should relate to some of the activities in LVC each week.

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the findings, the discussion can be divided into two parts: the overall BOL and the two main components of BOL. The pedagogical implications and recommendations are also proposed in each part for students, teachers, and course coordinators.

The overall BOL

The findings show that BOL was considered an appropriate and beneficial solution for *English Level 1* during the COVID-19 pandemic, as it supported physical social distancing, and could help students improve their overall English ability. Although the views of both students and teachers regarding the overall BOL were at a high level, implications and recommendations can be made based on the feedback from the students and the teachers as follows.

First, as BOL was new for most students, an orientation should be provided to them (Abdous, 2019). A short online course orientation should be given to the students on the first class day to make them familiar and comfortable with the BOL instruction, including both LVC and LMS (Tipton et al., 2011). This can lessen students' frustration, facilitate their use of the system, increase their motivation, and finally promote successful learning (Erarslan & Topkaya, 2017; Selvi, 2010).

Second, the participants in the study, especially the students, were inconvenienced by technical difficulties. Some students had problems with internet access and connections and sometimes experienced power drops. Hara and Kling (1999) state that lack of access to the Internet and the necessary technology can frustrate and demotivate the students. Thus, recording LVC sessions and posting the videos in a virtual learning management system (e.g., Google Classroom) can help students revise their missed live lessons due to technical problems (Mu'ayyadah & Sahiruddin, 2020). Likewise, some teachers were challenged by the technology, and sometimes problems with computer technology caused confusion and inconvenience. Since the teachers will be confronted with technical challenges, they need to adapt their teaching knowledge and techniques. Using the Internet for attending webinars, online pedagogical training workshops, and watching teaching tips on YouTube can be helpful for the teachers in order to increase their knowledge of teaching technology (Khatoony & Nezhadmehr, 2020). Furthermore, technical equipment and support should be provided to both students and teachers to make it more convenient for them to use the system with less anxiety (Karaman et al., 2013), which will lead to the more effective and engaging BOL instruction (Fadde & Vu, 2014).

Third, most students felt that the proportion of the two components of BOL was appropriate, but about half of the teachers preferred to have more hours for LVC and reduced hours for LMS. However, according to Romeo and Barbera (2011), sufficient time for asynchronous e-learning should be allocated for the students to increase their willingness to study on their own time schedule. Consensus on this issue should be reached through a survey with both teachers and students to determine the most appropriate proportions of LVC and LMS. Also, the duration and scheduling of LVC must be carefully planned (Karaman et al., 2013), as some students mentioned in the interviews that their LVC class was in the late afternoon and their

fatigue affected their learning and participation. Failing to qualitatively measure learners' time-on-task, educational institutions may inadvertently waste the true knowledge asset of instructional time (Boisot, 1998). Thus, a precise LVC timetable should be carefully scheduled avoiding the evening time (Romeo & Barbera, 2011) when students' attention may wane, and e-learning time should be made flexible to suit the students (Arneberg et al., 2007).

Finally, since tutorial sessions can enhance low level students' confidence, provide pressure-free activities, and improve their English ability (Moncada, 2007), some teachers suggested that online tutorial sessions conducted by more senior students (years 2-4 students), called "near-peer tutoring" (Murphey & Arao, 2001, p. 3, as cited in Ruddick & Nadasdy, 2013, p. 29), be added as an optional component of the BOL instruction to help students with low English ability. Students from years 2-4 would be asked to volunteer to become near-peer tutors. Each week, online tutorial sessions and tutors could be scheduled using the core content from the textbook. The results of past studies (Lingley, 2017; Murphey & Arao, 2001; Ruddick & Nadasdy, 2013) show the effectiveness of near-peer tutoring in achieving the tutees' language-learning goals.

Two main components of BOL

There are two main components of BOL: (1) synchronous online instruction through a virtual conferencing platform, or live virtual classroom (LVC), and (2) asynchronous online learning through a learning management system (LMS). Each of which will be discussed as follows as they relate to this study:

Synchronous online instruction through a virtual conferencing platform

First, there was disagreement regarding the presence of the students on the screen. Some teachers wanted their students to have the camera on at all times, while many students considered it uncomfortable or inconvenient to do so. The teachers mentioned that they needed to see the students to facilitate participation and interaction, and so that they could monitor and observe the students while studying. In LVC, the teacher-student interaction is very important (Schullo et al., 2007); however, the students explained that their home surroundings could be noisy and distracting, so they were not comfortable turning on the microphone and camera. Since each student can adapt his/her own participation based on their preference for interaction modes and personal schedule (Fadde & Vu, 2014), the teacher may give them other options for responding to questions such as typing their answers or comments in the chat box (Buckley et al., 2021). Moreover, teachers may employ other online educational platforms such as Facebook in the BOL class for enhancing interaction and promoting digital community (Inpeng & Nomniam, 2020).

Regarding class size, students often felt awkward when speaking out and giving their opinions in the online class since there were so many students. They felt embarrassed when they did not perform well in expressing themselves. For the teachers, large classes presented challenges regarding classroom management, student engagement, and giving feedback on tasks (Glynn et al., 2021). For example, in group discussions, if a class consisted of 54 students, there would

be 18 groups of three students. When the students were split to work in groups in breakout rooms, the teacher needed to join each breakout room and give comments and feedback. This was considered inefficient when compared with doing group work in a face-to-face classroom where the teacher can walk around, observe students, and give comments that benefit all students at the same time, saving time and energy. Furthermore, large classes can also be burdensome for teachers when it comes to assessment and feedback on tasks, especially for speaking and writing tasks (Watanapokakul, 2016). Thus, the course coordinator should take the number of students into consideration for the effective LVC instruction (Karaman et al., 2013).

Asynchronous online learning through a learning management system

Regarding LMS, although e-learning can promote student autonomy and responsibility, some students did not pay full attention while participating in MUX and might have copied their friends' MUX work and submitted it to the teacher as their own. One factor that may demotivate students in asynchronous e-learning is the lack of the sense of "learning community" created in the classroom such as by interacting with and getting immediate feedback from their teachers and peers (Erarslan & Topkaya, 2017). Several students mentioned in the interviews that interaction and instant feedback for productive skills (i.e., speaking and writing) were hardly possible on this platform. Consequently, integration of multimedia should be implemented in the e-learning course to offer high quality interactive e-learning (Alsadhan et al., 2014).

Also noted was that the scores of the e-learning part accounted for only 9% of the total score for the course, which many students considered too little, and did not motivate them to put in much effort. Thus, it is recommended that the percentage score of MUX be increased. In addition, both students and teachers felt that the assessment of the e-learning system was inconvenient and impractical. The students did not like having to capture the picture of their MUX score of each unit and submit it to the teacher. Likewise, the teachers felt that checking the students' MUX scores from captured photos submitted through e-mails or Google Classroom was both impractical and time-consuming. It is recommended that course coordinators, computer programmers, and technicians set up a learning management system which allows both teachers and students to easily track students' work for each MUX unit with relevant details (e.g., students' information; scores; date, time, and duration of doing each task; and how many times a student attempted each task). According to the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), perceived ease of use is one of the two main components of users developing a positive attitude towards the use of technology. Therefore, when MUX requires minimal effort, the work of both students and teachers will be facilitated (Mukhtar et al., 2020), which can influence their motivation and intention to use the technology (Chen et al., 2013; Manowong, 2016; Zhu et al., 2013).

In addition, the content in each MUX unit should relate to the LVC lesson for that week. Some teachers mentioned that there should be an activity in LVC that uses the knowledge from the MUX that students have learned so that they could clarify understanding of difficult topics they studied asynchronously in videos (Lapitan Jr. et al., 2021) and apply what they learned from MUX to an authentic task while getting immediate feedback and evaluation from the teacher.

This is in line with a study of Karaman et al. (2013) that found that students prefer summary information in online lectures to be relevant to weekly asynchronous materials. The relevance of instructional components makes for more effective use of student online learning time (Ralston-Berg et al., 2015), and this can motivate the students to do MUX prior to attending LVC. This would also provide students with opportunities to practice speaking and writing skills with their peers and get immediate feedback and comments in LVC from their teachers, which would be difficult to do during the MUX session. According to Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), apart from perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness is the other main component for users' positive attitudes regarding the use of technology. When MUX is perceived to be useful for the students' learning, they are likely to have a positive attitude towards MUX and greater intention to use it (Teo, 2019).

In summary, the participants in the study accepted that BOL and its components were appropriate and beneficial to the EFL class for undergraduate students as it could allow for social distancing during the pandemic, enhance students' English ability, save time and expense for traveling to the university, and be flexible in time and place of learning and teaching, while also noting that the method had certain limitations, inconveniences, and challenges. To overcome those difficulties and achieve the effective BOL paradigm, all educational stakeholders need to collaborate and prepare well in advance (Nomnian, 2022). For example, both students and teachers need to be flexible, adaptive, and versatile to cope with the various components of the BOL instruction (Inpeng & Nomnian, 2020; Ota et al., 2018; Thornbury, 2016). Moreover, both students and teachers need proper training to be ready for the BOL instruction provided through course orientations and/or training sessions. For course coordinators, computer programmers, and technicians, careful planning, designing, and developing of a BOL course are important to ensure that the students and teachers have a smooth experience throughout the course (Ralston-Berg et al., 2015). Most importantly, a team meeting involving all stakeholders should be held at the end of the semester to obtain feedback for improving the BOL course.

CONCLUSION

In the study, the participants, consisting of university students and teachers, accepted BOL as an appropriate immediate instructional solution for conducting an undergraduate EFL course during the current COVID-19 situation. Nevertheless, they noted some limitations and challenges of using the BOL instruction. Although BOL has become the "new normal" for most EFL classrooms at the tertiary educational level during the pandemic, with further collaboration and preparation of the educational stakeholders (e.g., students and faculty staff, including teachers, course coordinators, and computer programmers and technicians), BOL can become "next normal" (Cahapay, 2020) for EFL classes in tertiary education in the post-COVID-19 era as well.

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