

Teaching and Learning English Online At Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration– Problems and Solutions

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Abstract

In order to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning English online for students at Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration(TUEBA), this study investigated the problems that lecturers and students have when teaching and learning English online. 300 second-year TUEBA students and 8 English lecturers from the university were the respondents of the study. The design of the study was based on a quasi-experimental approach. Two groups of students were formed: an experimental group and a control group (150 students in each group). The questionnaires for lecturers and students, as well as the pretest and posttest, were used to collect the data. After identifying the problems, the study suggested possible solutions to improve the quality of online English teaching and learning.

Keywords: *teaching English online, learning English online, TUEBA*

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I. Introduction

Since it connects people and organizations all across the world, English has long been regarded as an international language. English is a helpful language for communicating information and locating documents. The importance of English in our nation is growing along with the processes of globalization and modernisation.

In order to give society high-quality human resources, Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration, a famous higher education school, always stays in front of trends. contribute to the nation's economic progress. As a result, training quality is always given the highest emphasis. High standards are always set by the school for the standardization and updating of training programs, topics, and methodologies. However, given the Covid-19 epidemic's emergence and other highly complex changes, the process of teaching and learning in general, and the process of teaching and learning English in particular, also faces numerous challenges. The institution quickly transitioned from in-person teaching and learning to online teaching and learning to safeguard the safety of lecturers and students. In contrast to face-to-face instruction, the teaching and learning process also faces some challenges and constraints because online teaching and learning are still relatively new. In particular, interactions between lecturers and students are rather restricted, and discussions, group projects, and other learning activities encounter numerous challenges when put into practice. That is the reason why the research team conducted this study.

II. Theoretical background

The elements influencing learners' learning motivation and receptive ability during the online learning process have been examined by Okada and Sheehy (2020), who have also proposed strategies to encourage learners' motivation and enhance the quality of learning.

In a survey they performed, Mukhtar et al. (2020) noted that one benefit of online learning is that it has promoted student-centeredness. Only lecturers have brought up the restriction that they can only impart and assess knowledge. Online instructors are unable to evaluate their students' understanding because there is no rapid feedback.

According to Dang (2021), the success of online education depends on many factors: Technical infrastructure conditions; Management capacity, teaching organization of administrators and teachers; Student learning capacity, in which effective online teaching strategy of teachers is a significant factor.

Phan (2021) said that with traditional teaching, planning can be done for each lesson because the teacher is the moderator and the teacher. Through direct interaction with students, teachers can manage and master teaching hours. However, with online teaching, we need to have a master plan for the whole course

because learners can learn through the system on their own and related to technology issues, so it is necessary to organize the course in a way that is appropriate for the course. Consistency from making requirements, and learning instructions to the arrangement, layout of content, use of technology, and testing methods.

III. Research Methodology

The research was designed based on the quasi-experimental method. The participants consisted of 8 English lecturers and 300 sophomores at TUEBA. The students were divided equally into two groups, experimental and control groups (150 participants in each group).

Data collection instruments included lecturers' and students' questionnaires, pre-test, and post-test. Based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis, the data were presented descriptively.

IV. Findings and Discussions

4.1. The problems that students at TUEBA have when teaching English online

4.1.1. Student's problems when learning English online at TUEBA

Firstly, it could be stated that technology did not prevent the students at TUEBA from learning online, as more than 50% of them assessed themselves at very good and good levels of using online learning applications. Focusing while studying online is the toughest challenge for students. In particular, only 14.3% of students claimed they had no trouble studying, while 60.3% of students reported having trouble focusing when learning online. The second challenge is scheduling study time. In particular, only 15% of the students who were polled reported having no trouble organizing their online study time. Nearly 50% of the students experience this challenge. Additionally, 43.3% of students had trouble grasping the technologies and techniques used in online learning.

4.2. The problems that students at TUEBA have when teaching English online

25% of the lecturers struggle to get students involved in class discussions, plan and run online courses, grade assignments, and provide students with timely feedback. Another 25% of academics said they found this assignment to be extremely challenging. The creation of relevant online lecture content for different skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, etc.) for learners is difficult, according to 50% of the lecturers who responded to the study.

The attitude and independence of the students when learning online are another challenge. In general, instructors found that students weren't as engaged in online learning as they had anticipated. As a result, 75% of lecturers claimed that students did not actively engage in interpersonal interactions or group discussions. The data collected also showed that more than one-third of the lecturer assessed their students at a "not self-disciplined" level. The rest of the lecturers thought that their students' self-discipline is at level 3 (normal).

4.3. The effectiveness of applying online applications into English lessons

Firstly, the researchers let students to do test No. 1 to identify their current English levels.

Based on the factual conditions, the group made plans and proposed several methods to improve the quality of online teaching and learning to apply to the experimental group. To increase the interaction between teachers and students, the team decided to apply some applications in learning activities to encourage students to interact with the lecture and actively learn. The recommended teaching process includes the following:

1. Warm-up: starting the lesson with activities related to vocabulary. (Recommended activities include Vocabulary Wheel, Word Scramblenator, Hot Seat, Circle it, and Network Group)
2. Conveying knowledge: Personalizing the transmission of knowledge by reducing lecturer-talk-time. Instead, teachers use provoking questions, organizing the class into small groups for students to find out and answer on their own. Keeping students focused by organizing surveys, assessments, voting (via the Mentimeter app or Google Forms), and short Q&A (via the online app's chat box).
3. Organizing tests, assessing students' understanding of the lesson, or encouraging students to interact with the lecture through games. (Recommended apps include Kahoot!, and Quizzes)
4. Assessing and testing students' level at each stage (using Microsoft forms, and Google Forms).
5. Exchanging and assigning tasks to individuals/groups of students through class management applications (Google Classroom)
6. Encouraging students to actively self-study, explore and hone their knowledge by teaching through projects. (Recommended apps: Canva, Microsoft Powerpoint, Sway)

Teachers guide students before applying these applications to learning activities to ensure that students are no longer surprised in applying the above applications.

After the time of treatment, the team conducted test number 2 at the end of the period. The results of test No. 2 were collected, analyzed, and compared with test No. 1. Through these results, the research team made conclusions about the effectiveness of the applied methods.

Table 1. A comparison between the pre-test and post-test results

	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Experimental group	Control group	Experimental group	Control group
Mean score	5.3	5.3	6.3	5.7
Highest score	8	8	9	8.5
Lowest score	3	3	4	3.5

The statistics in table 1 showed that before treatment, the students in both groups are at the same English level. After 8 weeks, the test scores of both groups were improved. The experimental group, however, outperformed the control group in terms of correlation, with a higher mean score. The difference between the mean scores of the experimental group's post-test and pretest was 1.0 points, compared to the control group's change of only 0.4 points. The greatest and lowest scores also differed from the control group by 0.5 points. This demonstrates the efficacy of the research team's suggested approach.

V. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

TUEBA still has a lot of challenges regards to teaching and learning English online. Students lack sufficient knowledge of time management, online learning strategies, and retaining focus while studying. Lecturers found it challenging to motivate, involve, evaluate, and swiftly provide feedback to students. Additionally, they had problems with low levels of student engagement in active learning.

The efficiency of teaching and learning English online could be greatly enhanced by the usage of online teaching resources in various portions of a class.

5.2. Recommendation

In addition to preparing themselves with online teaching strategies for English, lecturers should encourage group projects, set up conducive learning environments, and design lectures that are highly interactive. To enhance the caliber of lectures and raise student participation, lecturers should also understand and use information technology. Utilizing project-based learning, game-based learning, and individualized ways when transferring knowledge to students can help to increase their drive to study. In order to motivate students to actively study and enhance self-discipline and self-study, instructors should also be flexible with evaluation techniques and assessment forms according to the characteristics of online learning.

Students must increase their learning self-discipline and efficiently plan their study time and environment. To avoid lowering the quality of learning, it is essential to take part in online learning seriously and refrain from using unrelated network apps. It is advisable for students to be open, speak up, and provide suggestions to the lecturers so that they can quickly modify the learning activities to fit their needs and circumstances. Additionally, in order to get over obstacles, students should increase sharing, interchange, talk about online learning techniques with peers, and look for and use solutions from reliable sources.

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