

The Feasibility of Foreign Language Online Instruction During the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Qualitative Case Study of Instructors' and Students' Reflections

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Abstract

This small scale case study aimed at identifying the feasibility of foreign language online instruction during the abrupt change of teaching mode toward online platforms. The feasibility in this study involves the practicality and the possibility of and the concerns about language teaching and learning foreign language online as reflected by the instructors and the students. One instructor teaching as well as two students majoring each of the eight foreign languages including English, French, German, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Khmer, and Vietnamese from an autonomous university in Bangkok, Thailand, voluntarily took part in this study. Data collected via semi-structured interviews and post-interviews written reflections indicated three levels of the practicality. The data showed the conditional likeliness of the possibility to carry on online teaching. The last finding presented concerns about foreign language online instruction. Further research is needed for a more complete understanding of the effects of online foreign language instruction in different social contexts.

Keywords: foreign language, online instruction, practicality

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In March 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of infected people globally reached 500,000 and death toll passed 25,000. (World Health Organization, March 27, 2020). The emergent situations accelerated every country's measures to deal with the frightening impacts. Education, as well as all segments in the world including all sizes of higher education institutes, was significantly affected (Hodges et al., 2020). From March to June 2020, a number of institutions in different continents began to announce the campus lock down and adopt alternatives to functioning the ongoing educational tasks.

In Thailand, by March 20, 2020, the total number of infected patients increased daily and reached 322 (World Health Organization Thailand, Marc, 2020). Abiding the measures for pandemic prevention issued by the government, all higher education institutions immediately adjusted instructional modes on March 17, 2020 to cancel face-to-face onsite teaching and learning (Mala, 2020). Abruptly, online teaching and learning as well as any 'work from home' formats were completely adopted during the urgent campus closure. It has been argued that unavoidable adjustments toward online courses in this manner might not be the same as online education, both theoretically and practically. Instead, it can be called emergency remote teaching adopted to substitute the regular format until the completion of the ongoing semester (Hodges et al., 2020). The major rationale for the immediate adjustment was students' and staff's health safety.

According to particular academic articles in education, any mode of teaching apart from in-class, face-to-face teaching and learning can utilize E-learning innovation as long as it facilitates smooth and effective lesson delivery. Hence, new modes of teaching can range from either online or offline to either synchronous or asynchronous platforms using software for distance communication. These include, for instance, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts Meet, Zoom Cloud Meetings, Line and Facebook Live.

At an autonomous university in Bangkok, Thailand, the compulsory changes into online teaching and learning were carried out until the end of the academic year in May 2020. Yet campaigns to implement online teaching still

went on even at the beginning of the new academic year, backed up by medical rationales regarding epidemiology. Also, the urge to maintain safety corresponded to a national strategy to boost technological development that includes the use of educational innovation. Both the medical and the strategic reasons paved the way to continue new normal in educational contexts.

Back to prior to the alertness of Covid-19 pandemic, online language teaching became more and more common worldwide, influenced by the development of technological tools in communication. For example In the U.S., from 2002 to 2008, the number of students enrolled in online language courses mainly offered by private institutes increased steadily and reached 25% of the number of courses offered (Blake, 2016). Also, commercial applications help boost the popularity of online language teaching and learning. These have resulted in various themes of online formats. As concluded by Blake (2011), online language learning tends to be the delivery format called computer-assisted language learning (CALL) that can be classified into tutorial CALL, computer-mediated communication, and CALL gaming. Nowadays, digital connection is a core part of everyone's life, and students seem to engage themselves in digital world. Language teaching and independent language learning can take place digitally to serve students' needs and interests. Not surprisingly, at a certain level, language lessons at present are delivered through digital applications and social media. A wide range of research topics on online language teaching are by no means popular. Similarly, principles and recommendations of how to effectively employ online instruction are abundant, but not specific to the contexts strongly affected by the sudden change.

Realizing difficulties in conducting online language teaching of teachers with limited experience in instructional technology, Compton (2009) synthesized skills needed for the new trend of using online tools to teach language. He discussed the synthesis and proposed a framework of three major areas of skills essential for each category of language teachers. These include skills in technology, pedagogy, and evaluation of online language teaching. The simplicity and complexity of each skill depend on three stages of skillful teachers including novice, proficient, and expert. For example, a novice teacher should be able to use available software to facilitate students' learning. A proficient teacher needs an ability to select technological tools and adapt the chosen platform as well as solving problems to ensure effective online learning. For an expert teacher, programming and constructing platforms for building language users' community is expected. In addition, each stage of teacher needs evaluative skills for both teaching and student learning on the basis of the complexity of technology used.

However, in many contexts during the transition from face-to-face instruction, online teaching and learning seemed to be brand new modes. Online teaching also affected new forms of learning activities, teaching strategies, and assessment. These abrupt changes have resulted in different outcomes. For example, a number of students preferred regular face-to-face learning in traditional classrooms, on a reason that they valued onsite social interactions. In contrast, the others were impressed by online learning due to exciting innovation integrated with the instruction (Bali & Liu, 2018). In addition, the latter did not see any differences of distance regardless of any mode. One remarkable finding was that students lacking self-discipline in learning management did not prefer online learning. It is recommended that instructors advise online learning strategies and motivate students to be acquainted with new learning modes of teaching and learning (Tichavsky et al., 2015).

Research on online and distance teaching experience has revealed that promoting social interaction and learning environment between instructors and students and among students is essential. For example, a good start of each lesson and course via instructors' skillful technological skills can lead to effective online teaching and learning, comparable to regular face-to-face lessons (Wright, 2014). Hence, to provide instructors with an opportunity to be associated with high-quality online teaching can upgrade online instruction and, in the meantime, increase motivation to teaching via online platforms.

Specifically, compared to other fields in pedagogy, second and foreign language learning is unique due to the complexities of language acquisition. That is, theoretically, second language acquisition fundamentally involves a wide range of factors including linguistic input, learners, interaction, learning environment, social contexts, and a lot more (Mitchell & Myles, 2001). These factors can be grouped into those on the learners, learning, and teaching that are interconnected. For teaching and learning, once the contexts change from onsite face-to-face classrooms to completely online platforms, other factors would be unavoidably affected. A study on the feasibility of online platforms reflected from students' and instructors' perceptions during the Covid-19 pandemic can provide more information that can be applied into language education and other related fields. Therefore, this study was conducted to answer the overarching questions as follows:

- 1) What are the instructors' opinions about direct experience teaching foreign language online?
- 2) What are the students' opinions about direct experience learning foreign language online?

- 3) What are the foreign language instructors and students' opinions about the possibility of online language teaching and learning?

1.2 Literature Review

Since the trends of online teaching became widespread in many institutions, a large amount of research have presented intriguing findings regarding the effectiveness, efficiency, and recommendations in different contexts. However, research on such themes in foreign language education is still limited. Published work in such field tends to be syntheses of language acquisition theories and the applications of instructional technology separately. The focuses lean toward teaching principles in general. For example, Tudini (2018) concluded that interactions with others using the target language as a medium enables can increase students' motivation in online learning. Therefore, online instructors should pay attention to content organization and appropriate learning activities that allow real time interaction. To accomplish this, the instructor needs to scaffold students individually to prevent unexpected learning and technological problems. Other recommendations include available resources and higher thinking process training that can lead to independent learning. During increasing roles of online teaching worldwide, language instructors still face obstacles that mainly dealt with the difficulties in getting students involved. Professional development on online learning was needed to provide instructors with innovative instructional strategies with a focus on individual learning (Philipsen et al., 2019).

So far, mixed research findings about the effects of online learning have been presented. Three major findings include (1) online learning yielding higher achievement than onsite learning (Bourelle et al., 2016), (2) face-to-face learning superior to online learning (Heppen et al., 2017), and (3) no significant differences between the two different modes of teaching and learning (Ni, 2013). For example, a comparison of students' Spanish learning achievement in two different contexts revealed no significant differences between online and face-to-face classes. However, the finding showed problems associated with students' unfamiliarity with interactions via online mode and learning environment of the online class (Enkin & Mejias-Bikandi, 2017). Undoubtedly, another study concluded from the instructors' viewpoints that the effectiveness of online teaching depends on learners' factors including technological skills, learning habits, learning discipline, motivation, and socioeconomic status (Gilbert, 2015).

In terms of students' perceptions in particular, at least two problems related to online learning were revealed: interaction and participation in each lesson and each student's learning strategies. These problems can be classified as 6 areas: class schedule responsibility, time management for group activity, cooperative learning, self-monitoring for shared responsibility with classmates, self-discipline that controls learning contribution and motivation, and socialization with classmates (Sun, 2014). Recently, Miyamoto and other co-researchers (2017) conducted a preliminary study on innovations and challenges in teaching foreign languages online. They concluded challenges perceived by instructors and students before offering recommendations on designing pedagogical innovations including utilizing appropriate technology, adjusting teaching practices, and constructing performance-based assessment. Remarkably, all of these practices and innovations should be guided by curricular needs and the flexibilities for independent learning.

The research findings mentioned above can be concluded that most research has focused on the effects of online teaching on students' learning achievement, instructors' opinions, and students' perceptions. Yet, so far, studies on the immediate shift of language teaching toward complete online platforms in March 2020 onwards due to the Covid-19 pandemic are scarce. With this scenario as a specific context of the case, this study aimed to fill in the gap.

2. Methodology

2.1 Context and Participants

Data for this study were collected in an autonomous university in Bangkok, Thailand. The 24 participants were 8 foreign language instructors from the Faculty of Humanities, 14 undergraduate and 2 graduate students. Each instructor was recruited purposively and represented each of 8 languages including English, French, German, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Khmer. Every instructor completely switched the instruction to online teaching for 7 weeks, starting from the 3rd week of March to the end of April 2020. Among the 16 students, 2 were graduate students taking Graduate English courses. Two undergraduate students majoring in each of the other 7 languages were also recruited purposively. They all had direct experience learning online during the peak weeks of strict measures for the Covid-19 pandemic prevention.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

This study adhered to Creswell and Creswell's (2018) description of qualitative research aiming at exploring rich

data of the phenomenon in natural settings. Data collection techniques consisted of semi-structured interviews and written reflections. Each student was interviewed once followed by submitting an open-ended written reflection on direct experience about learning language online immediately transitioned from onsite learning. Such interviews and written reflections with each language instructor were similar, except for the focus on teaching rather than learning. All interviews were recorded. Each interview verbatim, the first source of data, was transcribed and qualitatively analyzed. Open coding was primarily used to group key themes of the data, and axial coding was adopted to identify the connections of the coded themes. Then directed content analysis used to analyze all written reflections, the second source of data. The rationale for employing directed content analysis was the existence of theory in this field (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In the field of second language teaching and learning, there are a number of frameworks available to explain each phenomenon. Although this study aimed to uncover and explain foreign language instructors and students' opinions, perceptions, and thoughts about online teaching and learning, key factors related to this field served as fundamental elements of effective language instruction and language teachers' knowledge base. In addition, using the loose key elements and frameworks to roughly guide data analysis corresponded to the definitions and concepts of directed content analysis. Then the analyzed data were re-manipulated to provide answers to the research questions.

3. Findings

The findings in this study can be presented through 2 major themes: instructors' and students' reflections on teaching and learning foreign languages via online platforms during the Covid-19 pandemic. Under each theme, the reflections display three strands including the practicality of online language teaching and learning, the possibility of online teaching and learning, and concerns about the implementation of online instruction in foreign language education.

3.1 Instructors' Reflections

3.1.1 The Practicality of Online Language Teaching and Learning

All instructors explicitly agreed with the practicality of online language teaching and learning. However, the detailed meaning of practicality in all participants' opinions carried different degrees, on the condition of 'in case of no options available'. Divided into 3 levels, the first one can be viewed as 'high practicality' that includes both the instructors' preferences and the perceived effectiveness of teaching and learning a foreign language via online platforms. The second level is compatible to 'acceptable practicality' that refers to accepting the use of online teaching without any objection. The lowest level of practicality involves acknowledging the usefulness of online teaching despite a few weaknesses that hinder the optimum quality of teaching and learning.

For high practicality of online teaching, the instructors focused on the manageability of teaching. As long as they could continue teaching as scheduled, they believed online lessons were practical. As an instructor of German said, "No problem. I can handle my online teaching without any difficulties. I just arrange everything, making sure that my students are with me. That's it." Similarly, an instructor of French voiced his ideas that it was easy to switch to the online mode. He added that since online communication was part of everyone's daily life task, teaching and learning through Zoom, or Google Meet, and other platforms could add modern forms of interaction to French learning. Teaching French via online platforms seemed to be even more efficient and effective, during both delivering lesson and paying attention to any individual student. For example, pronunciation practice and oral drills were practical to both the instructor and students. He had a great favor of online teaching mentioning that, "I think I teach more actively and my students enjoyed interacting with me online." Both participants viewed online teaching as a really modern approach to language teaching. In addition, an Instructor of Chinese expressed her favor of online teaching, describing the benefits ranging from the momentum of each lesson to receiving students' participation and attention. She said that she witnessed livelier learning environments in all classes. The following excerpt also represents her preference of online teaching.

"I enjoy teaching Korean online. Nothing was missed at all because I still teach all language skills, even speaking. Both the one-on-one pattern of conversation between each student and me and small group speaking practice of 3 or 4 are very effective and fun."

In terms of acceptable practicality which is the second level, the instructors were optimistic about a sudden change they had never planned to face but seemed to be excited to try using distance learning at their and the students' convenience. They shared their abilities to conduct online teaching, with an aim to cover the syllabus but hesitated to compare and contrast the advantages of online over in-class instruction. As the Vietnamese instructor discussed in an interview, "It was practical, better than having no options to continue teaching." However, practicality depends on instructors' skills in using technological tools. For her adequate knowledge and experience utilizing social media, she was certain that teaching Vietnamese language online, with her students'

resource availability.

For the lowest level of practicality, the participants teaching English and Japanese shared similar viewpoints about some limitations. ‘Practicality’ in their responses means the completion of each lesson and course, based on the instructor’s responsibility. Despite accepting the practicality at a certain level, they expressed their concerns about avoidable drawbacks related to, in particular, with expected learning amount and students’ attentive behavior. The following excerpts showed the instructors’ uncertainties:

“While teaching, I believed that I covered what I was supposed to, but, as you may have encountered, many students were quiet. Their cameras and microphones were off.”

“Practicality is limited to my own teaching. For my students, it might be opposite.”

“The practicality of online teaching during no-option situation is unarguable. Please do not forget to assess student learning. There are a few limitations that we might fail to realize.”

3.1.2 The Possibility of Online Teaching and Learning

To extend beyond just the practicality of online teaching, the second phase of interview focused on the ‘what if’ post-Covid19 mode of teaching. Asked if it was possible to really carry on teaching foreign languages via online platforms, the majority of the participants seemed to juggle between for and against, supported by rationales. One of the participants explicitly supported the alternative mode, emphasizing the unavoidable change in language lesson delivery taken over by rapidly modern media. One preferred blended teaching and learning with online as a core mode. Another instructor accepted that online lesson was just an alternative to teaching when other modes cannot apply due to any circumstances. Once the normalcy returned, regular in-class instruction should resume. The other five instructors considered blended teaching as more appropriate. Seven out of eight participants expressed their approval of online teaching. It was possible to be adopted in the future, if necessary. However, if allowed to choose the preferred approach to teaching and modes of delivery, all 7 participants regard onsite face-to-face teaching as priority to create “a lively environment of language lesson.” As the Vietnamese instructor said, “After interacting with each other through Zoom until the end of the semester, I missed them and they missed their classmates. When we met in person, we hugged each other, with tears of happiness. Completing the course content is not difficult, but none of online connections can compensate lively environments.” Similarly, an instructor of English did not object to the possibility of online lessons, but the administrators, policy makers, and instructors should take a lot of impacts into consideration.

The possibility of online language teaching and learning, from almost all participants’ points of view, depends on students’ preferences, available resources, and definitely the university policies. As an instructor of Korean said, “Teaching online? It is possible if the students are okay with that.” Another instructor also emphasized more facilities that faculty of Humanities should have provided, ranging from well-equipped rooms and more tools that both the instructors and students can check out. Also a few more participants highlighted the university policies regarding the seriousness of online instruction. As one participant’s response: “If they seriously require the integration of online teaching, it must be implemented. Then we have to adjust the way we teach.”

3.1.3 Concerns About the Implementation of Online Instruction in Foreign Language Education

The participants’ opinions through both the interview responses and informal written reflections contain their concerns that can be grouped into 5 themes: language skills development, students’ inattentive behavior, instructors’ technological knowledge and skills, inequality and socio-economic gaps among students, and values about online courses.

The majority of the participants discussed concerns about the effectiveness of foreign language learning. The Japanese instructor noted in his responses that teaching online seemed ‘dry,’ and it was “difficult to motivate students to participate in communicative activities.” Online teaching blended with onsite face-to-face language practice was necessary for complicated processes of language learning. Four instructors highlighted a similar concern – language learning needs many things functioning concurrently, similar to integrated skills that come into play. In this regard, online teaching may have limitations.

Students’ low attention when being distant from the instructor’s observation was another concern. Almost all instructors noticed minimal students’ reaction and participation. The English instructor noted that “the microphones and cameras were usually off.” Without strict requirements to turn them on, the students preferred to be learn passively. For another concern voiced by the instructors, to implement online teaching competently required up-to-date knowledge about tools and applications. Hence, with limited knowledge and skills in technology, the teaching outcomes might be unsatisfactory. To ensure better quality of teaching via innovative tools, professional development emphasizing hands on training were highly recommended.

During interviews, concerns about students' readiness depending on socio-economic statuses were apparent. All participants mentioned about students' challenging factors that range from limited facilities, even mobile phones and computers, to their residence environment that hindered online learning. With a huge difference about economic status, "If their learning achievement got affected by the sudden change when they could not afford tools their classmates had, what can we do to narrow the gap?" asked the Japanese instructor. The last concern involves how students, parents, and instructors viewed online teaching. Based on a few instructors' new experience teaching online, part of students preferred online platforms while the others complained about the limitations. Another participant's response was "we cannot force them, both parents and students, to accept the quality of online teaching when they believe that learning must take place in a classroom."

3.2 Students' Reflections

3.2.1 The Practicality of Online Language Teaching and Learning

All 16 students' responses to the interview questions and open-ended reflections indicated varied opinions about the practicality of learning foreign language via online platforms. First, those who advocated online learning confirmed the practicality of the 'new' way of learning. A student majoring in Japanese said, "It is okay to learn online, nothing to worry about." Similarly, a Chinese-major student expressed her opinion about the indifferences between face-to-face and online learning. She learned the same content, practice Chinese skills, and did assignments as she regularly did in any onsite classrooms. Other students who supported online learning also described similar reasons concerning its practicality. Key components integrated to refer to the practicality of online learning included the convenience, the quality of each lesson, and each instructor's ability to teach online. It can be concluded from a few students' responses to the interviews and reflections that learning languages online shared the characteristics of interacting with friends through social media platforms when they participated in seeing, hearing, and sharing. Just the content was different. Instead of talking about music and other casual topics, the content of each lesson and assignments that came afterwards.

The practicality of online foreign language learning, for some instances, was mediocre. A Chinese major student shared her view that, "It's not too bad. I can still learn although learning from the screen can't be compared to in the real classroom." Voices from a few more students carried similar opinions. Another student taking Chinese as her minor accepted the practicality of online learning when the focus was the course content but not supplementary activities. She wrote that "Learning online is practical if we focus on the course content, but not class activities. I think I lost my opportunities to do supplementary activities that can fulfil my understanding and essential experience I was supposed to do face-to-face."

The rest of the participants did not seem to approve the practicality of learning foreign language through online platforms. The following excerpts represent their opinions:

"I think learning language should take place in a classroom with classmates, doing activities and sharing ideas immediately in person... Learning like this is not practical, I think and I guess my classmates had a similar idea."

"It would be a lot better when seeing the instructor and learning simultaneously, without any unexpectedly problems about Internet that we had. With frequent technical problems, how can it be practical?"

"No, no, no. I did not understand the lesson. I lost my attention easily and online learning is not fun at all."

3.2.2 The Possibility of Online Teaching and Learning

All students' responses with respect to the possibility of learning languages via online platforms presented varied opinions. They said that the possibility depended on a number of related factors. The university policy was the most influential factor. Some examples of the responses include:

"If the university wants to change teaching and learning modes, online learning will be possible."

"I don't know. It depends on what the university wants."

The second factor involved instructors' preferred teaching styles. The following are some examples of the students' opinions:

"Is it possible? I think it depends on the professors. Some might choose to teach online if they like it. When they requires us to learn online, we have got to."

"My professor told the whole class that he preferred to teach online and he also convinced the students to support teaching and learning via online platforms. If he really chooses the mode, It will be possible. However, I am not sure if other students have similar ideas."

The last influential factor related to the possibility of learning foreign languages online was students. All students in this study mentioned that students were supposed to be the target of teaching and learning processes. Hence, the possibility of selected approaches to language instruction should be based on, at a certain degree, students' attitude, agreement, and preparedness, as presented in the following excerpts:

"I think if students have good attitudes toward online learning, why isn't it possible to switch to online modes?"

"My friends and I understand that during that emergent situations, the professors had no other choices. Both agreed to turn to teach and learn via Zoom and some other platforms. But I started to hear some disagreements."

"It is definitely possible to learn language online, but it does not apply to all students. When the majority can adjust themselves to learn as we had been doing now, it is possible. But I am afraid that some were not prepared to learn from the screen and they seem to object to this learning mode. For them, if they are against, it won't be possible."

3.2.3 Concerns About the Implementation of Online Instruction in Foreign Language Education

Sixteen participants shared their concerns, both directly and indirectly, about teaching and learning foreign languages online. The first theme of the concerns shared by 12 students involves the learning unproductivity. One student described her perception of online learning as 'somewhat ineffective' due to her feeling of uneasiness and loneliness. Five students compared and contrasted online to onsite learning and concluded that the online learning environment for language skills practice failed to support lively participation. With less chance to do activities such as role-plays, the learning outcomes might not be as productive as it could be in classroom settings. A student learning French online added in her verbal comments, "I think my learning is not effective. Nothing about the way the professors taught, but it could be caused by how I learned via online platforms and I cannot think of any word but ineffective."

Also, some students had concerns about the content. A few students were concerned about the way some instructors manipulated the content of each lesson. One student said, "I guess my professor adjusted the depth and breadth of some topics. Some should be supplemented by group activities but were removed. I am not sure if there are differences about the amount of learning content taught through differing modes."

The last concern directly related to students included their financial statuses, learning styles, and attitudes toward online learning. These can be viewed as personal limitations. Many students' responses to the interview questions and written reflections indicated their concerns about students' insufficient financial availability that, in the meantime, minimized their chances to learn online. Economically disadvantaged students could not afford the Internet fee and this situation worsened their learning. As a student wrote in his reflection,

"My friends have difficulties coping with the unexpected expenses caused by online teaching and learning. It is sad that their limited budget affected their learning. Why didn't the university provide assistance through facility loan or free Internet accounts?"

Other concerns include students' familiarity with in-person interactions in classroom settings and uncertainties about the effectiveness of online learning. One student said that she frequently lost attention when learning from the screen. Others also said that learning took place when they were surrounded by lively environments in concrete situation, through hearing and seeing 'real' teachers. Some students' reflections indicate that narrowing the landscape to "just the size of the screen of the cellphone, ipad, or a desktop computer in a disengagement pattern reduced both the quality and quantity of language learning". Additionally, learning by oneself was discouraging, and stressful, as shown in the following example.

"I don't like learning any course, especially language via online communication. I could sense my own tense, and I think some professors expressed similar ideas. At times, the professor talked alone without any verbal reactions from my classmates and me. The learning environment became more stressful"

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study provides insight into foreign language instructors' and students reflections on the feasibility of online teaching and learning during the alertness of Covid-19 pandemic. The findings indicate that both groups of the participants perceived the practicality, possibility, and concerns regarding online language teaching and learning similarly. In terms of the practicality, the instructors and the students' direct experience with online teaching and learning pointed out 3 different levels divided into high, medium, and low. The easiness and smoothness of tool management and utilization seemed to be a foreground of criteria. Not surprisingly, when both the instructors and

students were free from the obstacles, they perceived the high practicality while those who were interrupted by any type of inconvenience and trouble handling technological skills rated the practicality as low. According to Huss and Eastep (2013), students rated their satisfaction with online courses from their critical judgments about clear instructions, instructors' availability, and appropriate use of technology. The results in this study indicated similar issues. It can be implied that convenient connections, supportive patterns of teaching and learning, and technological skills that can reduce communication gaps can affect the opinions about the practicality of online teaching and learning.

Other results concerning the possibility of online teaching and learning showed indifferent opinions of both groups of the participants. The most evident similarity was about their reluctance to identify the possibility. Instead of voicing their opinions directly, the instructors considered the necessity of digital pedagogy first and other related factors later. In the same vein, the students claimed that a number of factors ranging from the university's policy, students' willingness, and uncontrollable circumstances. Neither groups used any supports from their reflections on the factors regarding language learning, digital-based social change in education, and alternatives to pedagogical practices. It is likely that the participants realized that online teaching and learning was just temporarily required during the pandemic. More importantly, the findings did not show any definite objections to online teaching and learning. Yet, without any emergent threats, traditional, face-to-face tended to be their preferred mainstream of language teaching and learning. More importantly, the findings did not show any definite objections to online teaching and learning. This could be concluded that the participants in this study regarded the possibility of language teaching and learning as mediocre, depending on 'outside' influences in the near future.

The other results uncovered concerns about the implementation of online teaching. The instructors' first synthesized concern was about students' learning discipline and behavior that could fail to facilitate effective language learning. This study confirmed Bali and Liu's remark (2018) that learning foreign languages via online platforms requires self-discipline in learning including independent learning styles. Students' insufficient resources for online learning were the second theme of their concerns. This critical concern should be studied in detail. Interestingly, none of the instructors in this study discussed their technological skills needed for online teaching delivery. Once they were able to carry on their teaching through the utilization of any available communication tools, they focused on the course content rather than other issues. Clearly indicated in the findings, the very first concern was about students' learning that can be extended in detail into learning behavior. Another intriguing concern shared by both groups of the participants involved a critical issue regarding equity. This seemed to be a challenging reminder urging for consideration for policy and practice in language education. It was likely that they did not initiate the changing mode of delivery. Instead it was abruptly required without any official preparedness due to emergent circumstances. It can be concluded that the instructors and the students accepted the feasibility of foreign language online instruction at a certain level. Within the concept of feasibility lay detailed aspects. The findings uncovered in this study can serve as both the voices from the stakeholders and the displayed information to be used in instructional design and policy about the language educational movement toward online education. In addition, further research is needed for a more complete understanding of the effects of online foreign language instruction in different social contexts.

5. Limitations

This study was intentionally conducted to indicate the instructors' and students' opinions about the feasibility of teaching and learning foreign languages via online platforms during the beginning of Covid-19 pandemic abruptly spread throughout all global regions. The findings were limitedly contextualized within the boundary of a case at an autonomous university in Bangkok, Thailand. Hence, the limitations of this study include the number of the participants, the timeframe and duration, the context of data collection and analysis, and the aim to present the findings without any generalization.

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