EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING: EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF ESL STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought sudden changes in the academic world. On-campus teaching and learning have become online, onscreen, and at-home, thus, the term emergency remote teaching (ERT) has emerged. While many people label this unprecedented shift in the teaching-learning situation as online learning and distance education, ERT scholars describe it as a distinct pedagogy that is far different from face-to-face delivery and not comparable to well-prepared, fully-structured online education offered in schools and universities. Since ERT is a new pedagogical shift, the researchers aimed to understand its nature by collating feedback from English as Second Language (ESL) students and teachers in Vietnam who have been adapting ERT for two academic years. A survey among 32 ESL teachers was conducted via Google form. Meanwhile, 71 students' feedback was gathered through Padlet, a collaborative web platform. Both teachers' and students' responses were coded and arranged according to themes through thematic content analysis. The themes were used in the identification and discussion of good practices and problems encountered during the recent ERT delivery. Results showed that most teachers considered students' behavior, learning distractions, and class interaction as the top most challenges in an online class while technical problems are considered as the most challenging factors for online learning among students. It is recommended that teachers use various interactive platforms in delivering a lesson, in doing formative assessments, and in motivating students. Furthermore, teachers can make learning fun by providing more language games and by improving online class interaction.

Keywords: emergency remote teaching; ERT; online teaching; virtual class

1. INTRODUCTION

Online education has received both praise and criticism, as well as benefits and drawbacks. The only viable solution to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic in the educational system is to teach and learn via the internet from home.

There are several success stories circulating online after most schools around the world have adopted the blended and mixed learning. For instance, in Australia, Yarra Primary School has successfully delivered online Physical Education lessons by taping senior student leadership roles in delivering lessons and creating of various virtual clubs. The school has also created a virtual art gallery and an online parents'

forum which helped make parents more informed and engaged (*Teaching from Home Success Stories*, 2020). Another success story is shared by State University New York in their Carnegie Math Pathways Program. Math instructors at SUNY worked with an adaptive learning platform which allowed them to adjust learning content to each of the student's needs and progress (*3 Success Stories of Distance Learning in the Era of COVID-19*, 2020)

Unlike teaching math, art, and other subject areas, teaching and learning English is different. According to Krashen (1977 in McCaul, 2012), trying to teach languages in the same way that we teach science, history, and mathematics is a mistake. Second languages are learned in the same way that children learn their first language.

Teaching English is a complex process. An ESL teacher does not only focus on one aspect of a language like the overrated grammatical items. He also needs to focus on workplans to facilitate language learning. This is what is called *task* by Ellis (2003 in Kumaravadivelu, 2006). According to Kumaravadivelu, "Ellis made a composite definition among all other definitions of task that includes other major points of contention in language pedagogy including attention to meaning, engagement with grammar, inclusion of pragmatic properties, use of authentic communication, importance of social interaction, integration of language skills, and the connection to psycholinguistic processes" (p. 65). Indeed, the task of a language teacher is so perplexing that Brown (2000) calls it a "profession that will guarantee a fair share of challenges, growth, joy, and fulfillment" (p. 2).

Learning the English language entails a vast area of knowledge and long expectations. In an ESL class, learners are expected to attain a certain level of proficiency in all four macro-skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Specifically, they are expected to learn to communicate effectively in a specific context. They have to achieve mastery on lexical, phonological, morphological, and syntactic criteria stipulated in the curriculum design. But more than these structural units of the language system, learners are expected to extend their learnings from the four walls of the classroom into the community as a global citizen.

The complexity of teaching and learning the English language is undebatable. If students are expected to carry out tasks that allow them to show mastery and control of language in a communication and social interaction, how would this be possible in an online learning? The COVID-19 pandemic has brought sudden changes to the education system around the world. In Vietnam, it was March 2020 when students' Tet holiday was extended for a month and schools started to switch to online teaching (Nguyễn, 2020). The pandemic was unprecedented that almost all schools around the world were not prepared for it. The World Bank (2021) highlighted that "the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the learning crisis, and the impact on the human capital of this generation of learners is likely to be long-lasting." (par. 7). According to UNICEFs data as of April 2020, "with the closure of schools across 188 countries, many of them are exploring alternative ways to provide continuous education using technologies such as Internet, TV, and radio." (par. 2). Because of this, the term Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT)

has emerged. Commonly, students, parents, teachers call it online learning, work from home, and offline learning. However, unlike the well-structured and organized distant education, ERT in this context is a result of a health crisis. Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust & Bond (2020, par. 13) defined *emergency remote teaching* (ERT) as a "temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances." This results in many challenges in the teaching-learning process. Nearly half of the world's students are still affected by partial or full school closures one year after the COVID-19 pandemic began, and over 100 million more children will fall below the minimum reading proficiency level as a result of the health crisis, according to a report published on the UNESCO website. To date, the havoc of Covid-19 is still continuously posing threats around the globe. Thus, if schools should continue to embrace online learning, it is important to reflect and evaluate what has been done for the last couple of years to improve the quality of education delivered to the homes of every student.

Objectives of the Study

The aims of this study are twofold: on the part of the teacher, and on the part of the learners. One of its objectives is to investigate the challenges that ESL teachers confront when providing classes through online platforms. It explores at the difficulties that students face when learning online. It also intends to investigate effective approaches, strategies, activities, and platforms that meet the goals and demands of the teaching and learning process in order to promote good teaching practices. This research intends to answer the following questions:

1. What are the general impressions of online teaching and learning among teachers and students?

2. What are the successful features of the online teaching and learning process?

3. What challenges or difficulties do teachers and students face during ERT?

4. What strategies and platforms do teachers and students consider as effective during ERT?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Background

This paper is based on the assumption that ESL learners tend to engage in an online lesson if tasks and activities are interesting and fun. It is anchored on two theories from different fields; one from Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and the other one is from distance education (DE). The pedagogical framework that helped the researchers in the conceptualization of this research are also discussed below.

2.1.1 The Affective Filter Hypothesis

This hypothesis one of the five hypotheses of Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis in SLA. In his discussion in his 1985 article, Krashen explained that:

Comprehensible input is necessary for acquisition, but is it not sufficient. The acquirer needs to be 'open' to the input. The 'affective filter' is a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition. When it is 'up,' the acquirer may understand what he hears and reads,

but the input will not reach the language acquisition device (LAD.) This occurs when the acquirer is unmotivated, lacking in self-confidence, or anxious, when he is 'on the defensive,' when he considers the language class to be a place where his weakness will be revealed. (p.81)

Krashen's hypothesis focuses more on the affective factor of learning. Schütz (1998) analyzed these affective variables which he considered as facilitative in second language acquisition. These variables include motivation, self-confidence, anxiety and personality traits. Schütz (1998, "Affective Filter", para. 1) further explained that "Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, a low level of anxiety and extroversion are better equipped for success in second language acquisition." McCaul (2016) associated Krashen's affective filter with stress. He explained that if teachers can create a classroom environment in which students feel comfortable and relaxed, then, the environment could provide the learner plenty of comprehensible input. In an online learning environment, students complain about boredom and eyestrain. They are unmotivated and exhausted as a result of spending hours in front of the computer with little human interaction.

2.1.2 Transactional Distance Theory

This theory was postulated by Moore in 1972 which was derived from Dewey's concept of transaction. Transaction is described as the "interplay among the environment, the individuals and the pattern of behaviors in a situation (Boyd and Apps, 1980 in Moore 1991, p. 3). Moore explained that transactional distance is a continuous and a relative rather than an absolute term. He further explained that in any educational system, there is some transactional distance even in a classroom where teachers and students meet face to face.

In distance education where there is physical separation between the teacher and the students, it is important to understand the special teaching adjustment and the learning behavior of students. Moore (1991, p. 3) emphasized that "it is the physical separation that leads to a psychological and a communication gap, a space of potential misunderstanding between the inputs of the instructor and those of the learner and this is transactional distance." He further explained that the separation of the teacher and the learner creates a significant impact to the change of behavior to both teachers and learners. Thus, distance education requires the use of special techniques and special conceptualization.

In this study, emergency remote teaching (ERT), also known as online learning among teachers and students, is a measure to meet the challenges of Covid-19 pandemic where students and teachers meet online so as not to disrupt the flow of the academic year. Since ERT is an offshoot of a drastic measure to contain a human crisis which started in March 2019, the major domains of teaching and learning underwent a sudden shift. Thus, on campus classes have become online. Along with this, all other aspects such as teaching materials, learning tasks, and assessments have been adjusted to meet the demands of time. As a result of these shifts, teachers and students have different viewpoints and patterns of behavior when it comes to online learning.

2.2 Pedagogical Framework

2.2.1 Teacher's self-evaluation

Britten and O'Dwyer (1995 in Richards 2001) identified five domains which serve as the criteria in doing a self-appraisal. The criteria include *language content, skills practice, correction and feedback, lesson structure, and class management*. Richards (2001) described self-appraisal as part of the appraisal system of an institution carried out with different purposes such as rewarding good performance, identifying needs for further training, reinforcing self-development, improving teaching, among others. According to Richards (2001), teachers are in a good position to assess their own teaching.

Brown (2000) explained that in the era of *action research*, classroom observation, either in the form of peer observation or self-observation is indispensable tool for classroom research and is enlightening endeavor for the observer and the teacher himself. Meek (1991 in Brown, 2000) discussed that in the world of education, researchers who are not teaching are telling teachers about teaching which is an upside-down policy. Meek (in Brown, 2000) emphasized:

Teachers are ones who do it and therefore, are the ones who know about it. It's worth getting teachers to build on what they know, to build on what questions they have, because that's what matters – what teachers know and what questions they have. And so anybody who wants to be a helpful researcher should value what the teachers know and help them develop that. (p. 431)

In this research, the teachers were provided with open-ended questions in a survey to allow them to reflect and evaluate their emergency remote teaching (ERT) experience. These experiences were coded and categorized according to the domains of self-appraisal developed by Britten and O'Dwyer (1995 in Richards, 2000).

2.2.2 The Learning Process

Richards (2001) emphasized that "learning is not the mirror image of teaching" (p. 223). He enumerated several factors that may affect how successfully a course is received by the learners. These factors include *understanding the course, views of learning, learning styles, motivation and support.*

The teachers and students have different expectations when they meet in the classroom. Because of this, misunderstandings might arise. Brindley (1984 in Richards, 2001) explained that it is important that both teachers and students are aware of each other's expectations at the beginning of the course. Students must be actively involved in the decision of their own learning. Both teachers and students must be able to freely express their positions and beliefs in the learning process. Teachers must be able to survey and interpret the needs of the students.

According to Richards (2001, p. 223), "the views of the students towards teaching and learning may not be identical to those of their teachers." The students have different perceptions towards the roles of the teacher and their roles in the learning process. It is important that students understand their roles through orientation and training. Students' roles may range from being the manager of their own learning, an independent learner,

needs analyst, collaborator and team member, and peer tutor. Meanwhile, it also necessary that teachers will inquire whether students are happy with the roles expected of them.

The learning styles and motivation of the students may also vary. Likewise, the support mechanisms provided for learners can also impact the students' perception towards teaching and learning. Some examples of the support system include feedback, self-access materials for specific learning needs, and the instructional materials and resources that teachers use in the classroom.

Both ESL teachers and students in this research have varied perspectives and experiences with ERT. Richards' learning process model guided the researcher in comprehending replies as well as generating and organizing themes.

3. METHODOLOGY

This paper employed a thematic content analysis (TCA) which is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data. By using content analysis, it is possible to analyze data qualitatively and at the same time quantify the data (Gbrich, 2007 in Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Since the researchers aimed to explore the challenges and the new learning opportunities experienced by teachers and students, a qualitative approach in studying, collecting and analyzing data deem appropriate since "qualitative approaches share a similar goal in that they seek to arrive at an understanding of a particular phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it" (Vaismoradi et al., 2013, p. 398). According to Anderson (2007), "qualitative data may take the form of interview transcripts collected from research participants or other identified texts that reflect experientially on the topic of study" (p. 1). In this study, the primary data were taken from open-ended survey designed to gather reflection and recollection of teachers and students after they completed two academic years with emergency remote teaching in between. The researchers used Padlet, a real-time collaborative web platform, to design an open-ended survey to collect the students' responses. The survey was given out in four ESL classes, and 71 students responded. On the teachers' side, 32 Vietnamese secondary ESL teachers were chosen based on their own experience with ERT since the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. Google Form was used to collect responses from English teachers in Vietnam for the school years 2019-2020 and 2021-2022.

Furthermore, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school's management for ethical consideration. Each participant is given a pseudonym to protect their identity.

In analyzing the data, the researchers adapted Elo and Kyngäs's (2008) model of content analysis. The data were coded using NVivo 10 and the themes were generated deductively by referring to Britten and O'Dwyer (1995 in Richards 2000) five domains of teacher's self-appraisal and Richards' (2001) factors that affect students' reception of learning. Other themes were generated inductively as they emerged from the data.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

ESL Teachers

The participants in this study were 32 Vietnamese secondary ESL teachers who have been teaching since the school year 2019-2020. It also is important to note that

when the pandemic struck in March 2020, these teachers had firsthand experience with emergency remote teaching (ERT).

Students

There were 71 students who participated in the end-of-year reflection activity which was used as the source of data in this study. The following are the demographic characteristics of the respondents:

- 7 students were Grade 6; 3 boys, 4 girls
- 42 students were Grade 7; 20 boys, 22 girls
- 11 students were Grade 8; 3 boys, 8 girls
- 11 students were Grade 9; 4 boys; 7 girls

Survey Results

This section contains data that were coded and analyzed from the responses of the participants. The data are presented according to two main categories - the students' responses and the teachers' responses. Meanwhile, the research questions will be addressed by comparing the responses of the two groups.

General impressions towards online learning

The generated themes from the coded responses of the teachers and students reveal that ERT, also known as *online learning* among the respondents of this study, has its advantages and disadvantages. The sub-themes generated from each group are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Teachers' Responses

Advantages	Number of Occurrences	Disadvantages	Number of Occurrences
Online teaching fosters positive feelings among teachers and students	7	In online teaching, students do not focus or pay attention to the lesson	15
Online teaching is convenient	6	Online teaching fosters negative feelings among teachers	11
Online teaching allows teachers to meet the learning objectives	6	Online teaching is inconvenient	7
Online teaching allows teachers to learn new skills	5	Online teaching is ineffective	5
Total	**24**	**Total**	**38**

According to the teachers, online teaching offers both benefits and drawbacks; however, the disadvantages, outweigh the advantages. To be more specific, online teaching causes teachers to have more negative feelings than pleasant feelings. Teachers feel tired and bored. Worse yet, most of them find this experience challenging, inconvenient, and ineffective compared to offline class teaching. Because students are not under the teacher's control and there are many distractions, the most challenging aspect of online teaching is to rivet their attention to the lesson. According to Peth (2008), keeping learners motivated and focused on completing their task on time is a common difficulty in virtual learning.

There are 15 occurrences from the teachers' responses which express that students' misbehavior is the downright struggling aspect for them. All of the issues are implicitly reflected in the following sample responses:

Teacher A: I have some difficulties in controlling students' behavior.

Teacher B: Students are distracted by other activities like playing games online and chatting.

Teacher C:The teacher needs to prepare more materials and educational tools to attract students' attention.

On the other hand, although there are disadvantages listed above, some teachers find online teaching beneficial. Teachers acquire new skills through the online teaching time, particularly those related to technology, such as using videos, editing videos, and using interactive platforms. Here is a comment from Teacher A, "It is like an opportunity for the teachers to learn more about the application of technology."

Table 2

Students' Responses

Advantages	Number of Occurrences	Disadvantages	Number of Occurrences
Online learning is good and interesting	30	Online learning does not allow sharing and interaction	16
Online learning is convenient and safe	11	Online learning is not the learning preference of some students	12
Online learning develops study skills	7	Online learning has many distractions	11
Online learning improves academic performance	7	Online learning influences negative behavior among students	7
Online learning offers confidence	4	Online learning is affected by different technical problems	5
Online learning allows learning while having fun	2	Online learning affects comprehension	4
Total	**61**	**Total**	**55**

Despite the infancy of emergency remote teaching (ERT) in the academe, most students find it good and interesting. Students express various reasons for their perceptions. Common answers include *I think studying online is good, I like it, I think online learning is better*. On the other hand, ten students mentioned safety and convenience as one of the positive aspects of online learning. With the current health risk brought about by Covid-19 pandemic, ERT is the only viable solution to provide continuous education to all students around the world. Although students are aware that ERT is done to protect them from health hazards, some of them express opinion that online learning is convenient because they can manage their time without too much pressure as expressed implicitly in the following responses:

Minh: I don't need to wake up early so online study is great.

Bac: I feel happy because everything is more convenient and faster.

Likewise, students also find online learning beneficial in developing their study skills because they can easily find the needed information even during discussion and they can do screen grabbing as alternative to note-taking to save all information during lecture. They also find online learning helpful in improving their academic performance as evidenced in their examination scores.

On the other hand, the emergency remote teaching (ERT) has also its downside. In fact, 16 occurrences from the students' responses underscored that online learning does not allow sharing and interaction, may it be student-student or teacher-student. This is evident in students' responses such as:

Chi: It is difficult to learn online because I can't ask my teacher normally.

Tue: Online learning was quite difficult to communicate. (During online learning, it was quite difficult to communicate).

Nga: I can't see my friends and my teachers, it's was sad.

Other disadvantages of ERT include learning distractions and negative behavior. Thirteen students (18 occurrences) narrated that since teachers cannot monitor their behavior, some of them are doing other things during online live sessions such watching a movie, playing video games, and listening to music. Aside from this, some of them also shared their misdemeanor during online classes. Here are some of the students' narrative:

Ha: My teachers would not know whether I was concentrating on studying or watch YouTube instead." (My teachers would not know whether I was concentrating on studying or I was just watching YouTube instead).

Tung: Even some students in the class can just turn off the camera and play games in the new tab or with other devices."

Duc: Also, even if my teacher called me I could just press the 'leave meeting' button and say 'Teacher, my wifi was lagging.

Finally, few students associate comprehension problems to opportunity interact with their teachers to be able to ask questions.

From the data presented in Table 1 and Table 2, it can be deduced that teachers and students have opposing views regarding ERT. While most students find it good, interesting, and convenient, the teachers find it challenging especially in fostering students' engagement during live online sessions.

Assessment of teaching and learning

Both teachers and students were asked to reflect on the outcomes of the teaching and learning process. The generated themes showed that teachers were more concern on classroom management and students' engagement. Meanwhile, students' responses were coded and generated into seven themes which are presented in Table 4.

Table 3

Teachers' assessment of their teaching

Teaching Aspects Considered Successful	Number of Occurrences
Smooth lesson structure in variety of activities through clear staging and instructions	16
Easier to enforce the class rules	8
Higher achievement of main lesson objectives	5
Easier assessment through apps which get immediate scores and feedback for students' work	5
Improvement in reading, pronunciation, speaking and scaffolding	5
Total	**39**

When it comes to the advantages of online teaching, 13 teachers indicated that the class flow was excellent because of clear staging and instruction from the teachers, as well as a large range of activities in virtual online learning. Furthermore, online learning offered teachers with a comprehensive online platform resource that enabled them to diversify their learning activities in order to improve student participation. Here are two examples of remarks from teachers:

Teacher D: Students also seemed to have high opinion of the interactive activities that were offered more games.

Teacher A: There are lots of apps and websites to assist me with online teaching.

Furthermore, teachers benefit from remote instruction in terms of enforcing rules. In a virtual classroom, students have familiarized themselves with the routines, comprehended the rules, and followed the instructions, according to eight teachers. Teachers also employed a range of instructional strategies to keep their students on track, including reiterating regulations and remaining silent when their students misbehaved in class.

Table 4

Students' assessment of their own learning

Learning Aspects Considered Successful	Number of Occurrences
Lesson concentration	30
Study skill improvement	19
Task completion rate	16
Class participation	16
Academic performance	7
Attendance	5
Behavior in class	5
Total	**39**

There are 30 occurrences on lesson concentration and focus like *During class, I also listened attentively to the lectures; I can concentrate for more hours; I studied very attentively.* On the other hand, students' responses also reveal a significant improvement of the students' study skills especially on note taking and researching. Students can easily take a screen shot of the lesson as discussed in Table 1 and they can find the

relevant information to understand the lesson during live sessions. Students' responses include *I listen to the teacher carefully and take the picture of everything important; I can search more information about the lesson in internet; During (the) online class, I know more information about somethings new.*

Challenges encountered

Both teachers and students shared the problems and challenges they encountered while teaching and learning online. Aside from this, they also provided possible solutions. The themes of the teachers' and students' responses are summarized in Table 5 and Figure 1 below.

Table 5

Challenges encountered by teachers during online classes

Challenges	Number of Occurrences
Students' behavior	22
Learning distractions	15
Interaction between teachers and students	11
Technical issues	5
Negative feedback	4
Teacher's talking time	3
Teacher's work load	2
Skill practice	2
Total	**64**

In general, classroom management and students' engagement are two main concerns when teaching online. Regarding classroom management, while some teachers express that students are more well-behaved and rule-obedient in their online class, the others hold the opposite viewpoints. There are more than 16 replies that state classroom management as an issue in online classroom. Because the teacher has less control when teaching online, students appear to disobey. They constantly turned off the camera without the teacher's attention; some tried to skip the class or miss the engagement. Here are some teachers' responses:

Teacher I: Passive students always tried to skip the lessons or missed the assignments.

Teacher E: Students refuse to turn on the camera.

Teacher F: Managing the class is challenging.

The teacher's second issue while teaching online appears to be a lack of engagement. Majority of the respondents observe that the students rarely give comments in class, leading to significantly worse interaction between teachers and students. These are implied in the responses of the teachers:

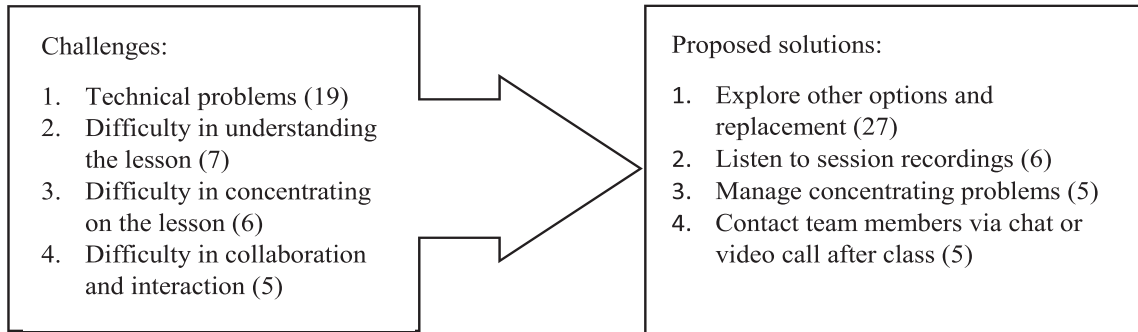Teacher G: The interaction between me and students is not effective.

My students often keep silent and do not join class activities.

Teacher J: Some of them played computer games or did their personal works while learning online.

When students are distracted, the teacher spends more time talking than usual since the teacher needs to call out each student to participate and engage in the lesson.

Figure 1

Challenges encountered and proposed solutions by the students

Challenges:

1. Technical problems (19)
2. Difficulty in understanding the lesson (7)
3. Difficulty in concentrating on the lesson (6)
4. Difficulty in collaboration and interaction (5)

Proposed solutions:

1. Explore other options and replacement (27)
2. Listen to session recordings (6)
3. Manage concentrating problems (5)
4. Contact team members via chat or video call after class (5)

The students' responses were coded and four themes were generated. Students find technical problems as the greatest challenge in online learning. These technical problems, which are mentioned 19 times by 14 students are caused by poor internet connection, dysfunctional camera and microphone. A student narrated her online learning experience, "But sometime is really lag (the connection is lagging) so I can't hear the teacher really clear (clearly). I just listen until the class ended and then I came to Google drive to listen to what I didn't hear while I'm studying."

While this study found that technology use is the most prevalent obstacle students experience during online classes, the situation in developing nations during pandemics is a little different. Rasheed et al., (2020) found that the learning environment is the most difficult obstacle for students to overcome, especially distractions at home (e.g., noise) and limits in learning space and facilities.

Another problem pointed out by students was their ability to concentrate during the lesson. They pointed out that there were times they could not understand the lesson due to teacher's speed of speech. One of students said, "Sometimes my teacher teaches too fast and I can't understand the lesson." As a solution, three students shared their strategy which could be summarized as "I watched the recording so I understood better." Teachers who participated in this study were required to record their live sessions and upload them to a Learning Management System (LMS) so that students could view them. Some students find that listening to the recordings helps them review subjects and discussions that they may have missed. Although concentration problem is listed here, it must be noted that it only represents a lower number if compared to the number of students who answered that they did well in concentrating during lesson time in Table 4.

Strategies and platforms that are effective in online teaching and learning

Both teachers and students named some strategies and platforms which helped them achieved the expected learning outcomes. Many teachers believe that using interactive platforms to generate positive moments in class is effective. These are summarized in Figure 3 below. Meanwhile, the platforms and applications which student believed to have provided them a fun yet productive learning experience are also presented.

Table 6

Strategies employed by teachers towards a successful online teaching

Recommended Strategies	Number of Occurrences	Examples
Using interactive platforms	25	Zoom, Google Meet, Quizziz, Kahoot, etc
Establishing rapport between teacher and students	5	Relaxing moments in class, discussion between students and the teacher, pastoral care
Motivating the students	4	Rewards and encouragement to share ideas in class
Preparing before the class	2	Clear instructions, back-up plans and alternative means
Assigning them to work in groups	2	
		Group work, think-pair-share activities
Total	**64**	

Many teachers agree that employing interactive platforms to create positive moments in class is effective, according to the data. Many apps have been listed in the responses. In an online class, Kahoot and Quizizz are two popular apps. Various meeting platforms, such as Google Meet, Nearpod, and Padlet, are also mentioned frequently in the teachers' narratives. The result conforms with the findings of the study conducted by Ferri, Grifoni & Guzzo (2020) which emphasized that the teachers should use interactive platforms to encourage students' engagement.

Furthermore, the teachers stated that building a harmonious relationship between teachers and students improves the classroom environment. Teachers and students can enjoy some relaxed moments together in which *teacher and students sing together,* participate in *interesting activities like think-pair-share,* or have an *informal conversation.* These activities would strengthen the bond among every member in the class and reduce the tension of the lesson.

Figure 2

Interactive Platforms employed by the teachers

Platforms for delivering content lesson	Platforms used for formative assessment	Platforms used for motivation
Nearpod (7)	Quizziz (14)	Kahoot (6)
Canva - LMS (4)	Padlet (12)	Wordwall, Quizlet and Bamboozle (3)
Google classroom (3)	Google forms and Slido (5)	Gimkit, Classkick And Blooket (2)
Seesaw, Zoom, Peardeck and Miro (1)	Whiteboard, Flipgrid and Mentimeter (2)	Educancy (1)
	Wizer.me, Liveworksheet, Class dojo (1)	

With so many platforms available on the Internet, ERT appears to provide opportunity for teachers to explore and use them in their lessons. Teachers have successfully employed a range of apps in their classrooms to monitor the lesson. These applications (apps) can be classified into three categories: content delivery, formative evaluation, and motivation. Teachers used apps like Nearpod, Canva LMS, and Google Classroom to present content in the classroom. Quizziz and Padlet, which were used to assess students' understanding of the lesson, were mentioned 14 and 12 times, respectively. Some teachers even emphasized that employing Quizziz for testing makes students interested. Finally, to motivate students, the teacher used interactive tools such as Kahoot, Worldwall, Quizlet, Bamboozle, and others.

Figure 3

Online apps listed by students as fun and beneficial
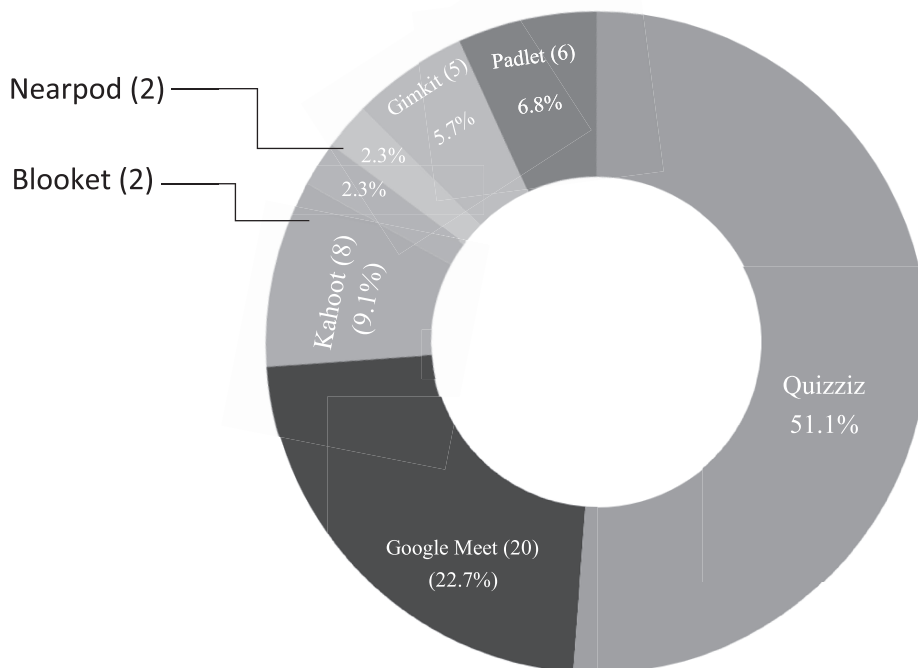
Despite the fact that ERT is at its early stage, teachers adapted to the new teaching situation and explored tools and online apps to provide activities that would motivate students and would encourage them to participate and take responsibility of their own learning. Among the seven apps listed by students, six of these are platforms that allow teacher to provide students content lessons in the form of formative assessment such that in Quizziz, Kahoot, Blooket, and Gimkit. These four apps allow students to play content-relevant interactive games and track their progress. Meanwhile, Nearpod is a flexible platform which allows teachers to present information in the form of slide, videos, images, and even in a 3D virtual tour. It also allows students to interact with the lesson in various ways such as participating in a poll, writing their ideas in collaborate boards for shorter answers and open-ended question board for longer paragraphs. Nearpod also provides other functionalities which are favorable for vocabulary development and

grammar revisions. Meanwhile, Padlet was used by many teachers to elicit responses for open-ended questions which open for class discussion. On the other hand, Google Meet is a video conferencing app which was mainly used by teachers in this research context to conduct online classes.

In the responses coded, 55 students (in 86 occurrences) listed the apps that helped them learn while having fun. Some of the responses were:

Van: My favorite is Quizziz because it helps teachers test students' knowledge, this game also tells us how much knowledge we have. It also helps me absorb new knowledge.

Giang: Those are the websites that help me play games while learning.

Thuy: I like playing games because when I play games, I find it easier to understand and absorb.

5. CONCLUSION

This study explored the feedback of teachers and students on ERT. It employed a thematic analysis of the data gathered through an open-ended survey.

Results showed that teachers and students have opposing views towards online learning. While teachers believed that online learning disadvantages outweighs the advantages, the students felt the opposite. Most students described online learning as good and interesting while teachers expressed various challenges in managing students' behavior and participation.

In terms of ERT outcomes, teachers find the lesson structure in an online class as successful due to variety of activities, clear instructions and organized staging. Meanwhile, students find lesson concentration and improvement of study skills as the top two most successful aspect in their online learning.

Teachers considered students' behavior, learning distractions, and class interaction as the top most challenges in an online class while technical problems are considered as the most challenging factors for online learning among students.

Teachers recommended the use of various interactive platforms in delivering a lesson, in doing formative assessments, and in motivating students. Likewise, students also recommended that teachers can make learning more fun by providing more games and by improving online class interaction. Aside from this, they also provided recommendations for their fellow students such as suppressing boredom and enduring learning, trying harder to improve weak skills, performing better in the end-of-term-examinations, and fixing technical problems. The students also expressed some recommendation specifically addressed for the school's board of directors such are revisiting the examination procedure to prevent cheating incidents and reducing class sessions per day to minimize screen-time.

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