



The Perceptions of Thai and International Lecturers of English in Using an Online Platform

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Abstract

Even with the resumption of physical classes following the pandemic outbreak, various educational institutions tend to remain using online platforms, although not entirely employed. Considering this matter, it is plausible to scrutinize perceptions of instructors as inevitable users, as well as the effectiveness, advantages, and disadvantages of online instructional platforms. The objective of this study is to investigate the viewpoints of lecturers who remain utilizing virtual platforms. It examines the perceptions of Thai and international university English lecturers regarding the utilization of online platforms and explores any difficulties they might have encountered in their EFL classes. Adopting a qualitative approach, the data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The findings indicate that Thai and international English instructors at a Thai university view online platforms positively due to their user-friendliness and practicality. Key factors influencing these perceptions include perceived usefulness, ease of use, and self-efficacy. The benefits highlighted in the research encompass class accessibility, time and cost savings, and enhanced class organization. However, despite recognizing these advantages, there is a preference for traditional onsite classes over online alternatives. This may result from challenges experienced in online classes, notably related to students, such as Internet connectivity issues, a less motivating atmosphere, concerns over academic integrity, and diminished teacher-student interaction. Consequently, while online platforms can serve as supplementary resources for English classes, they may not fully replace traditional onsite classes but could be utilized as substitutes when required.

Keywords: Online Platform, Online Learning and Teaching, English Teaching, Teachers' Perception, Problems in Online Classes, Tat

Introduction

Online learning has gained widespread interest due to the significant changes in global education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of schools and educational realms turn to the increase of utilizing online platforms, ranging from complete online learning to blended learning. Although resuming to physical classes, online platforms have been continuously used in educational institutes in Thailand. In relation to English language education in which the current study was conducted, online platforms have been adopted as an additional form of language teaching and learning when, for instance, instructors or learners are unavoidably unable to be present in physical classes. Another contribution that the use of online venues remains crucial is the benefits to EFL learners, for example, in case that they need language lesson reviews from recorded lessons through online platforms. Furthermore, online venues can also be applied to improve quality of learning, along with widening the access to education for wider learners with lower educational processes (Panigrahi et al., 2018). Hence, it is advantageous to investigate the effects of using online learning platforms on Thai and international lecturers who have experience using virtual platforms to examine their perceptions and challenges in English online classes. The context involved in this study is a Thai university where the lecturers have experience in providing virtual classes to EFL students. The participants, thus, are Thai and international university lecturers of English. The research was carried out using a semi-structured interview to gain insights into teachers' perceptions in adopting online venues since the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak until the post pandemic era. The results from this study have important implications



for reflecting clearer perceptions and existing challenges of implementing online teaching and learning in English classes from lecturers' perspectives. Understanding such perspectives and challenges could lead to appropriate adjustments to online classes and result in more effective online English instructions.

Research Questions

1. How do Thai and international university lecturers of English perceive the use of an online platform?
2. Do Thai and international university lecturers of English encounter any difficulties in their online classes?

If so, what difficulties are faced by them?

Literature Review

Online learning emerges as a key and valuable concept pertinent to present-day global educational practices. As digital technologies and Internet access have become widely accessible and affordable, they have contributed to the flexibility of the learning procedure and have helped support the physical learning methods (Pal & Vanijja, 2020; Wang et al., 2019). According to Panigrahi et al. (2018), the main objective of online learning is to widen educational access with lower cost of educational processes for wider learners and to facilitate learning quality. Likewise, Nambiar (2020), whose study on teachers' perspectives of the effect of online learning, yielded that an online platform helps facilitate education to be more convenient and accessible. In the past few years, the online platforms have played a crucial role worldwide. The major cause of this is that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed worldwide education to utilize virtual classes for the purpose of teaching and learning as to follow the government regulation of social distancing (Pal & Vanijja, 2020; Nambiar, 2020).

After the Corona situations have improved and seem to end, online platforms in education remains essential. It can be seen that hybrid classes, which combine online platforms and physical classes, have been adopted in educational institutes, partly to ensure teaching and learning continuity. This suggests that there is still room for online classes although the situations have recovered. Hence, the role of online venues tends to continue to exist further. The evidence that online learning platforms remains commonly used as virtual instructional meeting tools together with onsite classes in Thai universities appears in the work of Pusvitasari et al. (2023), researching the students' perceptions of online learning at three Thai universities.

The model that fits this study is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989), of which the extension by Venkatesh (2000) is applied to analyze the data on teachers' perceptions of using online learning platforms. TAM is considered one of the most commonly applied models used by Information Systems (IS) scholars in prognosticating on the potential to utilize technological systems (Pal & Vanijja, 2020). The TAM model suggests three factors that affect technological users' motivation including Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), Perceived Usefulness (PU), and Attitude Toward Using Technology (ATUT). The term 'perceived ease of use' means the extent to which the users believe that employing a particular system would be effort free, and 'perceived usefulness' means the extent to which the users believe that employing a particular system would facilitate the users' job performance. Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) are considered the core components of TAM. For the last construct, the users' attitude towards technological systems, it was hypothesized that ATUT plays a major role in whether the users will accept the system or not. In addition, the users' attitude is also affected by perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Davis, 1989). However,

the extension of TAM by Venkatesh (2000) can explain the data in this study in more several facets. Hence, this study is based on TAM extended by Venkatesh, who proposes additional factors and variables to the previous TAM, whose related-model factors include self-efficacy, additional belief factors such as demonstrability and trialability, and external factors such as external factors affecting perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use such as personality traits and demographic backgrounds.

To effectively adopt online learning in language education, it is a necessity to study the perceptions of instructors who directly implement online mode of teaching in order that educational institutes and policymakers can take such perceptions into consideration in planning to adapt teaching online platforms to be more effective (Nambiar, 2020). To respond to such necessity, the main focus of this study is, therefore, to investigate teachers' perceptions towards using an online platform. The extended version of TAM proposed by Venkatesh (2000) is used as the model in explaining different factors affecting teachers' perceptions and their motivation of using various technological online learning platforms such as MS Teams, Zoom, or Google Meet in their English classes.

There are a number of research studies that were conducted in response to the issues of online classes. For instance, Tappoon (2021) recently carried out a mixed method study to investigate attitudes, opinions and problems of university lecturers in their EFL online teaching in Thailand during the spread of COVID-19. It was found that all lecturers had positive views on virtual platforms despite the fact that they perceived the lack of effective tools to facilitate their online English teaching and insufficient training for online teaching techniques. Outside of Thailand, the study of Alahmadi and Alraddadi (2020) focused on the impact of virtual classes on second language interaction in the Saudi EFL context. It revealed that online classes produced more effective learning outcomes than onsite ones, helped reduce learners' anxiety, and facilitated more participation among learners and teachers. The learners also generated positive perceptions. They agreed that virtual classes provided them with a number of opportunities to learn a language and interact with their teachers and classmates. However, general difficulties in online classes may be encountered by teachers and learners including time lag, difficulty in using a teaching program and technological issues.

To overcome the technological problems in online learning and teaching, the study conducted by Giovannella et al. (2020), which examined Italian teachers' perspectives on the effect of the COVID-19 on online education, and the study of Klapproth et al. (2020), which investigated teachers' experiences of stress, how they cope with their stress and external and internal barriers for remote teaching during pandemic lockdown in Germany, suggested that teachers' digital skills need to be developed to prepare for subsequent pedagogical activities and contribute to their willingness to employ technologies for virtual classes.

In relation to online learning perception research applying the TAM model, the study of Pal and Vanijja (2020) is one of the studies that employed TAM together with System Usability Scale (SUS) as the reference frameworks and focused the perceived usability evaluation of Microsoft Teams as an online learning platform during COVID-19 in India. The results showed that TAM is an effective tool that can be used to measure the perceived usability and as an indicator to predict overall users' experience of using an online learning platform. Additionally, the concept of perceived usability seems to be more influenced by the perceived ease of use component than the perceived usefulness component. In the Thai context, a study related to willingness of using online learning platforms and virtual learning satisfaction applying TAM model is conducted by Pusvitasari et al. (2023), investigating the perceptions of Thai university students in engaging online learning in the post pandemic using survey questionnaires as their research tool. The findings yielded that the main TAM constructs which consist of



perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are directly influenced by computer self-efficacy, service quality, information quality, and system quality. The authors emphasized that system quality is the crucial factor affecting students' satisfaction when using online learning platforms. In addition, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use also affect such satisfaction.

In terms of teacher perceptions' role of online learning, it can be seen that online learning has become an essential requirement since the spread of Corona outbreak. It is crucial to understand such perceptions, particularly, teachers' challenges and needs of using online learning. This is because the information gained can contribute as a guiding principle for instructors, authorities and other stakeholders who are involved, in order to formulate educational policies. For online instructions, it is necessary for teachers to employ different pedagogical abilities that will affect the instructional quality. The insight into the perceptions and needs can also be utilized to improve the process in online classes (Fakhrunisa & Prabawanto, 2020).

To be more specific to the current study, which is related to online English language learning and investigating teachers' perceptions of online platforms, it is also vital to promote an effective online learning environment. The advantages and difficulties that teachers have faced need to be understood (Rahayu & Wirza, 2020). Since the context of the current study includes both Thai and international university instructors, who have been implementing online instruction to teach English, the perceptions of both teacher groups should be examined to capture their perspectives and experiences, and to understand more deeply about Thai and international lecturers' perceptions concerning the benefits and challenges of using online platforms. This will result in more effective online English classes. Therefore, more in-depth research on Thai and non-Thai university lecturers regarding English online classes in the Thai context is worth conducting as the results will be useful for improving online English teaching and learning, particularly in the post pandemic when virtual platforms remain playing a role.

Methods

The ten participants in the study are five Thai and five international instructors in a Thai university, Department of English, Faculty of Humanities. Those instructors have experience implementing online instruction to teach English since the spread of Corona pandemic until the end of pandemic situations. The data were collected qualitatively by using semi-structured in-depth interviews which lasted approximately 30 minutes to an hour. Before the actual data collection, pilot studies were conducted to test the validity of the interview questions, identify potential problems and ensure the feasibility of the research interview process. After the revision of question interviews, the main study was carried out based on the participants' preference either via online or onsite platforms, and the participants were initially asked for their permission to record their interviews. After obtaining interview data, they were transcribed, analysed and interpreted by using qualitative content analysis method to analyze interview data to answer the research questions.

Results

1. Teachers' Perception of Using Online Platforms in English Online Classes

1.1 Overall Perceptions of Virtual Classes

In general, Thai and international university lecturers of English positively perceive the use of an online platform although they encountered certain difficulties when conducting online classes, and they all have



a clear preference for teaching English in traditional classes rather than virtual classes. Online platforms generate a number of benefits. One of the most significant benefits of using online platforms is that it brings great convenience to both teachers and learners in terms of accessing to classes, saving time and expenses, and class management. Apart from that, online platforms provide useful functions that enable effective teaching and learning.

During the interview, the participants were asked how they perceived the use of online platforms in their English online classes. To this, they responded:

Teacher Leo: “Through technology, we were able to supply the needs and demands of our students, and we’re able to access and reach the needs of our students through online teaching. And we were able to have a positive outcome to our students and teacher relationship in teaching” and “It would also give or spread information widely and instantly at a very low cost.”

Teacher Chanon: “Online teaching and learning is most outstanding and can beat onsite classes in the way that it is convenient for teachers and learners. When it comes to online classes, it’s convenient for everyone to attend classes, and online classes can be held anywhere.”

A similar positive view of using online platforms is demonstrated by Teacher Nisa. She remarked:

Teacher Nisa: “There’re useful multi-functions such as video and audio recording, and screen sharing. Learners can see teaching slides on their screens clearly and access class recordings later if they can’t catch up. We’re able to generate online classes wherever we’re, so it’s convenient for both teachers and students. I can share my screen while commenting on their assignments, and they can send their files directly to me.”

1.2 Interaction in Online Classes vs. Onsite Classes

In the matter of interaction, the participants expressed the same opinions that there are more interactions between teachers and students via face-to-face rather than virtual classes. This is exemplified in the following excerpts:

Teacher Yanee: “Physical classes allow more teacher-learner interactions because of real eye contact. I can notice students’ behaviors in class, whether they’re concentrating on my lessons or not. I can’t see what they’re doing in online classes. I can only see their names on the screen. I sometimes call them by names, but no answers, and I have no idea if they are in front of their screens or not. So interactions via onsite reflects more reality, and online classes’re more time consuming than onsite when asking students to respond to my questions.”

Teacher Purit: “The interactions are increasing in physical classes. Online classes are easily distracted and this can be negative because students who don’t listen to their teachers thoroughly might get wrong idea based on a failure to understand the whole lessons.”

Teacher Sophie: “The online class cannot surpass or comparable to how you interact with your students face to face. I am more effective with face-to-face rather than online, because online, you can see your students, but it’s difficult to manage them personally. Classroom management’s not effective in online classes.”

From the excerpts above, students were perceived having more interactions via onsite rather than online English classes. Most participants explained why their students interacted more in the physical classes, and the onsite classes can better reflect students’ real behaviors which teachers can see and closely monitor. Hence, students could hardly escape and fall asleep, so they tended to participate and interact more in traditional classes.

1.3 Preferable Teaching Venues by Teacher Participants

As noted earlier, all participants demonstrated that an English course should be better taught in traditional classes rather than virtual classes. When being asked questions related to their preference, they all agreed



that using onsite classes is a more effective way of teaching English. The following examples are the reasons to explain why they prefer traditional classes.

Teacher Nisa: “I prefer teaching English face to face because in online classes, students requested class recording to record all the things happening in class. For example, in writing class activities, students had to do peer review and feedback. Some students were uncomfortable to give comments while being recorded. It was like they didn’t show their entire ability, and some students were not always in front of the screen.”

Teacher Jacob: “For undergraduate students, onsite is a little bit better. It’s about the nature of students as well. In different disciplines, they’re different. I taught both education majors and humanities English majors. The education majors tended to be more self-directed, but that’s probably because they had a goal to become teachers, whereas the humanities majors’re not really a clear career line.”

Teacher Sarah: “I feel that students would like to see teachers in real so that they can expose to verbal and nonverbal languages as well as eye and hand gestures. I think it helps students to understand Thai and native English lecturers more if they don’t understand anything. But I still think that if I can choose to interact with students, I would prefer to interact with them in real classrooms so that I can see students’ gestures.”

Several participants perceive that onsite classes are the best whereas online platforms can be possibly used as an additional tool or non-teaching activities such as online meetings and conferences. Otherwise, it can be used as a compensation of onsite classes when needed such as the spread of pandemic. The following excerpts can demonstrate such a view.

Teacher Leo: “Traditional way of teaching is still powerful than online class. I think online thing is good only for meetings.” and “If you’re in the traditional way of teaching, teachers’ll always guard you. While online, students can do whatever they want and hide themselves behind it. That’s why I don’t like online teaching.”

Teacher Jacob: “It’s hard for a lot of students to study English online. I feel like that to kind of have direction to begin with. And I think the online format just adds on to that.”

Teacher Chanon: “I prefer teaching onsite, but in case of necessity such as the spread of pandemic, it’s ok to go online. But if I have to choose, I would prefer onsite because teaching effectiveness is better in traditional classes.”

It can be seen that, in the view of teachers, no one rejects online platforms because for them, such platform is functional and advantageous. Nevertheless, they view that it is not the most effective venue for English instruction; it should be merely an additional teaching platform.

1.4 Participants’ Perceptions in Relation to Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

All the participants have used MS Teams as the main platform for teaching English online since this program is provided and trained to all involved in their institute. The majority of the participants have positive attitudes toward using this platform as this was commented that after being trained the platform is easy to use, useful and practical. Additionally, this program helps facilitate interaction between students and teachers and generate the potential of the content of their teaching, so it would also give or spread information widely and instantly at a very low cost. Another positive attitude is suggested by an international male lecturer, who views that MS Teams can supply the demand of students while some other platforms would not assuredly satisfy teachers’ objectives in teaching, and their institution has chosen the right platform as he said, “This is also the best platform so far....I’m so thankful with this MS Teams and I think the University made a perfect choice for this platform.” This is evident that perceived usefulness of the programs has an effect on technology users’ perceptions.

In addition to their perceived usefulness of the programs, the participants' perceived ease of use also potentially leads to their positive perceptions of English online teaching.

Most participants are optimistic about using the online platform and perceived that the platform is easy to use to teach English. In the following excerpts, Thai and international participants consider themselves effective users, although not very professional in using technology, show positive attitudes toward MS Teams. Regarding this, they said:

Teacher Sophie: "MS Teams was very, you know, teacher friendly and at the same time student friendly. And it's easier on the part of the students and at the same time, on the part of the teacher, because if there are media that we would like to upload, it's very easy."

Teacher Sophie also talked about her experience in using different online platforms. She remains positive about MS Teams as in the following excerpt:

Teacher Sophie: "I tried both E-learning and MS Teams, but I found it easier to use MS Teams. Faculty exposed us to MS Teams. MS Teams was easier."

Another international female participant similarly views this provided platform. She informed during the interview that:

Teacher Sarah: "This program helps us a lot. Students can get an access to it easily. So I have very positive attitude towards this platform, and I would also recommend other lecturers to use this program."

The above excerpts could suggest that programs systems and functions affect perceived ease of use and users' perception of online platforms.

However, one international male participant has a neutral perception regarding the choice made by the institution, and prefers using another platform which this participant considers providing more useful functions. For this perception, he mentioned:

Teacher Jacob: "If they were better platforms available or a variety maybe using ... it'd give me more options for the type of student that you're using, but in terms of using MS Teams, I'm really neutral about that."

Because this participant described himself as technologically professional, having artificial intelligence and skills allowed him to exposure to more various kinds of modern technology, and he tends to be more selective about online teaching programs to be used. The participant's view suggests that functions and system characteristics of different instructional online programs influence his perception of using a particular platform. This is in line with Pusvitasari et al. (2023), that highlighted system quality as the crucial factor affecting users' satisfaction when using online platforms. As can be seen that this participant perceived the functions and system characteristics of MS Teams are moderately usable, but there are better alternative choices to choose from. Hence, he expressed moderate satisfaction with using such an online platform. This supports the TAM concept in explaining users' behavior toward technology that system characteristics and potential system usage are closely related (Davis, 1989).

An additional factor in TAM, self-efficacy, to some extent affects perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. The Thai male participant pointed out that his self-efficacy affected the two core components of TAM. This is evident in the following excerpt.

Teacher Chanon: "I perceived myself technologically proficient although not very expert. I have no difficulty in implementing technology in my online English classes, so I'm comfortable to use online platform because it's easy to use, useful, and fully functioned."



However, from the interview data, it can be interpreted that experience in using technology and exposure to technology seem to be a more significant component which affects perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Even one participant with a low level of self-efficacy perceived that the online platform she was using was difficult at the beginning but somehow useful. Nevertheless, the more she experienced, and was exposed to the platform, the more her perception of technology usefulness and ease of use increased as she said:

Teacher Yanee: “I perceived myself not a very technological person. I wasn’t skillful in using technology, so MS Teams was difficult to use at the beginning. But when I got trained, I tried to use the platform and got used to it, it seemed easy, and I was aware that the program was useful. My attitude towards using the technology is changing according to my experience and time for technology exposures that make me more fluent.”

As can be seen, self-efficacy and trialability of an online platform play a crucial role in affecting perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. This finding ties with the extension of TAM proposed by Venkatesh (2000) who suggests additional factors such as self-efficacy and trialability that influence perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Apart from that, this finding yielded that user experience and exposure to technology also have an effect on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use.

Teacher Leo: “My current skills of using online platform make me creative and innovative. Though I prefer to the traditional way of teaching, I’m open for online platform. Teacher should be flexible and innovative in creating different styles and strategies to reach students’ needs. I can teach traditional teaching and also teach online. But in terms of choice, I’d really go to the traditional teaching.”

2. Difficulties Faced by Thai and International University Lecturers of English in Their Online Classes

2.1 Teacher Problems

In terms of teachers who conduct online classes, teachers’ internal factors do not seem to be problematic. Most participants do not find themselves having issues related to their internal parts; however, a number of problems of online classes occur because of students’ parts and other external factors. Only one participant mentioned her health issue as her internal problem when teaching online. She was anxious that her health problem would become worse because she had to give feedback on students’ several writing drafts and mark them in front of her screen. This caused her painful and deteriorated her eyesight. Moreover, she was less motivated to teach via an online platform as she further expressed her concern as follows:

Teacher Nisa: “When teaching online, I felt like I was talking with a computer screen, and I wasn’t energetic because I would never know if students understood what I was teaching or not.”

2.2 Learner Problems

As mentioned in the previous section that teachers perceived that the major issues in online classes were partly related to students’ parts rather than their own parts. Most participants raised students’ inactiveness and uncooperativeness in online learning as in the following excerpts:

Teacher Nisa: “In online teaching, students were quiet and sometimes unwilling to turn their cameras on. No answer when I was calling them to respond. After a long while, they turned on their mics saying they were a way for toilet.”

Teacher Yanee: “Online learning isn’t suitable for Thai students because they’re generally used to being receptive and having teachers as a feeder. Students who’re passive learners in online classes will have more trouble than self-directed students.”



Teacher Sophie: “On the part of the students, they’re not that serious. When it comes to the online thing, compared to the traditional one and most of the problems that I encountered were mostly on the part of the students, so because most of the students were not ready yet, especially during the 8:00 o’clock.”

Teacher Pimdao: “For some modules with no class attendance mark, students didn’t want to participate or attended online class late. This’s because they can go back to online class recording. In online class, students usually had no questions or no comments although I tried to motivate them to ask questions.”

Unlike physical classes, according to the above excerpts, it seems that students have less participation in English online learning mainly because students are able to revisit recorded online lectures later anytime and teachers are not always able to monitor if they are really in front of their screens or not.

2.3 Technological and Technical Problems

Hardware and software do not tend to be a major problem faced by the participants although two of them pose a problem related to digital devices and applications for online teaching and learning. One international teacher, Teacher Lucy, sometimes encountered a problem with the online platform, MS Teams, that she could not access to the program and her camera did not occasionally work properly. The other participant, Teacher Nisa, who is a Thai female, confronted another issue related to her teaching applications for quizzes and games that were not compatible with some of her students’ learning devices. Additionally, she mentioned this was because students could study anywhere, so it could generate internet connection problems, particularly for those who were studying while travelling. In addition to the internet connection problem mentioned by Teacher Nisa, two other teachers, Teacher Leo and Teacher Jacob, also indicated students’ internet connection problems as their difficulty when teaching online. About this, they said:

Teacher Leo: “Poor Internet connection and that students like staying at home would really contribute them to laziness. And we have also different difficulties in online teaching.”

Teacher Jacob: “They said the only difficulty is kind of the technology, the Internet aspect with the students, like some of their Internet would go out. Some of them, they’re the phones or tablets, whatever they’re using. Their devices are little old. So that can make communication a little spotty at times.”

2.4 Problems Related to Class Management

The individual participants have encountered different difficulties in online class management. Their challenges that were addressed mostly include difficulty in engaging students to learn, difficulty in delivering specific lessons that are not suitable for online teaching and learning, and the increase in cheating and plagiarism on exams and class assignments. The voice from the following Thai male teacher reflects how difficult he faced in managing his online class compared with a traditional class.

Teacher Chanon: “In online teaching, we can’t see what students were doing behind the camera. Onsite classes’d be less problematic. I could see them, and they had to be present for in the entire class. Physical class suits my teaching style better. When I saw them falling asleep, I’d adjust my teaching to make them awake.”

Checking attendance and having students turn their cameras on seems to be a key solution to ensure that students are present and listening to teachers in online classes. However, on student side, such solution does not seem to satisfy every student. The international male lecturer expressed his negative experience in a disappointed manner that:

Teacher Leo: “I was so strict in terms of checking attendance and forcing them to open the camera and check the microphone. I want them to be part of my teaching. They have to be present and listen.”



Online class management is problematic, also in accordance with students' integrity. The international female lecturer, Teacher Sarah, and the Thai male lecturer, Teacher Purit, provided negative comments on their difficulties in online classes and their students' unpleasant behaviors.

Teacher Sarah: "It was very difficult to manage my online exam. I couldn't monitor my students thoroughly. Though I asked them to turn their cameras on while taking the exam, some students didn't do and had excuse that their internet signal was lost. Some students asked to be away for toilet, and I had no clue if they were really going to toilet or doing something else that might be cheating, or if they were texting anyone to help them."

Teacher Purit: "It's harder to prevent cheating on the online exams. Teachers can't see the screen of the students who're taking an exam. So they might try to consult outside sources though they're not allowed."

Additionally, nature of different disciplines has a substantial effect on class management. The following excerpt displays an obstacle faced by a Thai female participant when teaching Phonetics module via an online platform.

Teacher Pimdao: "At the beginning of my class when teaching online, it's hard to use the online platform, like it's difficult to write on monitor screen. Writing phonetic alphabets is even hard on the screen, so I tried not to write as much as I should have done. It would be much easier to do this on an actual whiteboard in onsite classes. But for less demanding subjects, it seemed that students prefer me to teach via an online platform."

For the above participant, a more advanced module tends to be more problematic with online class management which is agreed by another Thai female participant as she commented that;

Teacher Yanee: "There are various skills for learning English. In case of modules that do not require speaking and listening skills nor practicing skills, it's fine to teach online, but this is not the best way for other modules in which skills, practice, in-person instruction, and interaction between teachers and learners are needed."

Another participant also reflected his thoughts about class management affecting quality of education which is hindered, partly due to age groups and nature of the modules he taught.

Teacher Jacob: "Depending on the group, I think many students, aged 18 to 22, don't have the maturity level to be self-directed learners. So it's hard to do an online format because they're not really used to that.", and "It is also about the nature of students as well. In different disciplines, they're different."

In short, the effectiveness of teaching English online seems to be based on the nature of disciplines. Virtual classes tend to be suitable for modules that are not very advanced or do not require a great degree of specific skills, practice and interaction. Also, student age, student level of study and nature of students in different disciplines appear to impact the effectiveness of online classes. Students with a higher degree of education and more senior ones seem to be readier for online learning. Apart from that, online classes tend to successfully function with more students in particular subject areas tend to learn more effectively than others in different subject areas.

Discussion

This study aims to investigate how Thai and international university lecturers of English perceive the use of an online platform and examines whether they encounter any difficulties in their online classes. The study reveals notable points discussed below.

The primary benefit of using online platforms according to the participants in this study is the significant convenience the platforms offer to teachers and students in terms of class accessibility, time and cost savings, and class organization. Additionally, online platforms come with valuable features that enhance the effectiveness of



teaching and learning methods. Overall, Thai and international English instructors in the study generally view the utilization of an online platform in a favorable light, despite facing challenges during online instruction. These findings evidently correspond with previous studies on teachers' perceptions of online teaching. For instance, Shatri et al. (2021) found that although technical issues persist, often impeding the effective use of online resources, teachers exhibit positive attitudes towards the use of online platforms and positively impact the comprehensiveness and ease of their lessons. In a congruent vein, in Tappoon's (2021) investigation, situated within a comparable academic setting to the present study as they investigated the perspectives of Thai and international lecturers within a Thai university environment, Tappoon's study found the similar result as in this study that all lecturers had positive attitudes towards virtual platforms. Therefore, based on the outcomes of the current study and Tappoon's findings, it could be suggested that EFL lecturers in Thailand are likely to demonstrate an increasing openness towards integrating online platforms into their teaching practices. However, in this current study, although positive perceptions of using virtual platforms are highly demonstrated, all participants expressed a distinct preference for English courses to be conducted in conventional classroom environments rather than virtually. When questioned about their preference, they unanimously agreed that onsite classes are more effective than virtual ones for teaching English. This indicates that online platforms cannot surpass onsite venues. However, it can be potentially a supplementary tool for teaching and learning or be blended with physical classes. Additionally, utilizing online platforms might be employed as a substitute for onsite classes when necessary, such as the spread of pandemic.

As mentioned earlier, this research and previously stated studies (e.g. Shatri et al., 2021; Tappoon, 2021) show positive perceptions of teachers on the use of online resources. These results do not correspond with the research outcomes found in the study of Turkish researchers, Civelek et al. (2021) who present that the attitude of the majority of EFL instructors in Türkiye towards online classes tended to be negative due to the lack of sufficient expertise and essential skills required for delivering effective online classes. Their negative attitudes also include the absence of student motivation to engage in online sessions, deficiencies in virtual meeting applications, limited interaction during online sessions, and insufficient access to equipment for effective online learning. This evidence shows that supporting from institutions, providing sufficient online educational technologies, and offering trainings related to online teaching are crucial to enhance the online class effectiveness and influence users' perception of online platforms. Research demonstrating positive perceptions of teachers in online teaching, including the current study, may be attributed to adequate institutional funding, sufficient availability of online teaching tools and software, and comprehensive training in using online platforms. As Giovannella et al. (2020) and Klapproth et al. (2020) point out, improving teachers' digital skills is necessary to equip them for subsequent pedagogical activities and contribute to their willingness to employ technologies for virtual instruction.

Based on the TAM literature (e.g., Davis, 1989; Venkatesh, 2000), this study yielded that the participants' perceived usefulness and ease of use of the programs influence how technology users perceive them, which can potentially result in their positive perceptions of online English teaching. In this regard, the majority of participants found platforms to be user-friendly for teaching English. Both Thai and international participants view themselves as proficient users, despite not being highly skilled in technology, and they hold favorable views toward online platforms. In other words, most participants had positive perspectives on the utilization of an online platform, as this was commented that after they were properly and sufficiently trained in the use of online platforms, the platforms are easy to use, useful and practical. The findings indicate that perceived usefulness and ease of use of the programs have an effect on technology users' perception. The results corroborate Davis's framework (1989)



which proposes that the users' perception of a technological system greatly influences their decision to accept or reject it. Additionally, their attitude is also influenced by how easy they perceive it to be used and how useful they believe it to be. The findings in this study are consistent with the work of Songkram and Osuwan (2022), conducted in Thailand. The two Thai scholars investigated the acceptance of technology and behavioral intentions to use digital learning platforms of Thai teachers and found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use emerged as predictors of attitude towards the use of virtual learning platforms. That is to say, when teachers believe that an online learning platform is beneficial and user-friendly for teaching purposes, they tend to have favorable attitudes towards digital learning platforms. Furthermore, this study also aligns with Khlaisang et al. (2023); Pal and Vanijja (2020) and Teo and Huang (2019) that suggest that TAM is an indicator to predict overall users' experience of using an online learning platform, and TAM can also be used to explain teachers' behavioral intentions to use technologies and served as a reliable framework for understanding teachers' acceptance of technology. Most participants hold favorable views regarding the utilization of an online platform, as this was commented that after being properly trained in the use of online platforms, the platforms are easy to use, useful and practical. The findings indicate that perceived usefulness and ease of use of the programs have an effect on technology users' perception.

Experience in using technology and exposure to technology appear to be another substantial factor influencing perceived usefulness and ease of use. Self-efficacy and trialability of an online platform are essential factors that significantly impact how users perceive its usefulness and ease of use. This finding corresponds with Venkatesh's (2000) expanded TAM model, which introduces supplementary factors encompassing trialability and self-efficacy, impacting perceived ease of use and usefulness. The finding in this study found that users' trialability and exposure to technology also contribute to how users perceive ease of use and usefulness.

In the context of English online teaching, the instructor participants experience several barriers in their online classes. The primary challenges do not primarily rest with themselves, but rather with students, who at times demonstrate a lack of cooperation. A significant concern arises from the uncontrollability of teachers to monitor student engagement when cameras remain inactive. This scenario may cause various issues, including instances of students falling asleep, resorting to cheating during assessments with the aid of external programs, compromising plagiarism, collusion, or secretly sharing information. Such behaviors are beyond the direct control of teachers. This might lead the lecturer participants to favour face-to-face classes to foster their classroom management, engagement between teachers and students, and prevent academic integrity compared to virtual settings. The lack of engagement between teachers and students is a problem perceived by the participants in this study. It was found that teacher-student interaction was diminished in their online instructional sessions. This issue was similarly observed in the research conducted by Al-Sharah et al. (2021), which found that their EFL instructor participants encountered numerous challenges as a result of low student engagement during their online lectures. Further challenges were also identified in the current study. In terms of technology, many teachers did not appear to encounter significant challenges on their side, although some difficulties occur occasionally, such as cameras not working or difficulty accessing programs, but the majority of issues related to technology, such as poor internet signals, usually temporarily occur and are mainly attributable to students.

From the interview data in this study, major issues that seem to play a role in determining the effectiveness of online instruction voiced by the teacher participants pertain to student-related matters; namely, student age, academic level, students' modules, and particularly individual characteristics. For such individual characteristics,



this could be explained by ugli Juraboyev (2021) and Kizlik (2007) that students encounter no challenges in online learning due to their autonomy and self-direction; that is, individuals need a combination of self-assurance and the capability to independently search, assess, and integrate relevant information without constant face-to-face feedback. In this study, it is possible that the challenges regarding students reported by teacher participants may arise from the students' deficiency in these fundamental attributes. Hence, it might be said that English virtual classes are well-suited for certain kinds of students such as autonomous students (Huy, 2021) and mature students. English online classrooms might also be suitable for learners studying in less advanced modules or those that do not necessitate highly specific skills, extensive practice, or frequent interaction.

Conclusion, Limitations and Suggestions

Thai and international lecturers of English in a Thai University positively perceive the use of online platforms because the online platforms are easy to use and useful. Perceived usefulness, perceive ease of use of the online platforms and their self-efficacy have a substantial positive influence on their perceptions of using online platforms. The benefits of online platforms mentioned in the study include class accessibility, time and cost savings, and class organization. However, despite acknowledging these advantages, a preference for traditional onsite classes over online venues is expressed. This preference arises from difficulties in online classes, primarily related to their students, such as poor internet connectivity, student inactiveness, cheating, plagiarism, reduced interaction, and lack of certain student characteristics conducive to online learning. Hence, online platforms can be used as potentially supplementary tools for teaching and learning and might be employed as a substitute for onsite classes when necessary. They cannot replace onsite ones.

While existing research has mostly examined students' perceptions of English online teaching, there is a room for studying teachers' perceptions about this issue. This study investigated only in one institution in a Thai university, so participants from different institutions should be further studied. Also, future studies could be investigated by using mixed-method research to triangulate the data and gain more insight into perceptions of lecturers of English towards utilizing online classes. Researchers may also explore lecturers across various disciplines, as disciplinary variances may yield unique and compelling findings. Such investigations could enrich more comprehension of lecturers' broader perspectives on online teaching within higher education. Rather than solely returning to conventional teaching methods after the pandemic, the ongoing of online classes should be examined to evaluate the benefits and challenges over time and sustainability of the educational online platforms.

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