Lebanese University Non-English Speaking Students Experience with E-Technology-Driven Lectures Delivered in the English Medium of Instruction: Students' Perspectives

Beth Bassima Bakkar

Lebanese University of Beirut, Lebanon

E-mail: bethbakkar@gmail.com

Abstract

The study's objective was to investigate the challenges virtual online learning has on the English Foreign Language (EFL) students studying their primary course majors in the English Medium of Instruction (EMI) at the Lebanese University. The study aimed to explore the unprecedented implication brought on by COVID-19 on the immediate substitution of face-to-face in-class instruction to the synchronous virtual classroom. The study was concerned with students' overall attitude towards distance learning, the implications they may have faced that would have contributed to their lack of online attendance, challenges, and how confident they acquired the course content in its entirety. Lebanese university students from various faculty majors participated in the study. One hundred thirty-three students took part in the quantitative questionnaire with 22 question item statements to determine the hypotheses of this study. The data presented were analyzed regarding the profile of the Lebanese university student. The findings indicate that students favor face-to-face in-class learning over online learning. The results further highlight that the instructors dominate the lectures, students are either disqualified or are not initiating discussion or eliciting course-related questions, and their learning experience is interrupted by their lack of computer proficiency, motivation, or economic marginalization. In conclusion, the findings stipulate that in E-learning, students lacked learning autonomy, motivation, and commitment towards the course major of study delivered through a virtual classroom. In parallel to the findings, the study provided implications, limitations, and future directions.

Keywords: English foreign language, English as a medium of instruction, synchronous, technology-driven lectures, virtual classroom

1. Introduction

In this research, a study of the Lebanese University non-English speaking students' online learning experience with technology-driven lectures delivered in the English medium of instruction (EMI) was investigated. The investigation's essence was brought on by the unexpected, immediate lockdown of the universities and the enforced learning and teaching of all subjects online without prior preparation from students or instructors. Students' and instructors' experience with online distance learning was imposed on them due to the immediate global need to control the widespread of COVID-19 and maintain education normalcy.

The unprecedented radical changes made to the traditional face-to-face pedagogical in-class learning may have been unpredictable, and the implementation process was accelerated. In the process, schools and universities in Lebanon may have compromised the teaching and learning process. Many EFL students and university educators promptly committed themselves to e-technology distance learning with limited or no awareness of how a virtual classroom operates or to engage in. Hence, with this immediate need for online learning, minimum preparations, and teaching came many discrepancies. Educational organizations, such as the Lebanese Universities and policymakers, and students, faced accountable challenges.

Before the COVID-19 predicament, online learning has been an integral part of education globally. Therefore, when the Lebanese University students were asked to continue with the academic year in a synchronous manner, where real-time online face-to-face with their lecturer was set into their weekly academic calendar, university stakeholders assumed that since students are socially digitally active, they would make a smooth transition into learning online.

The Lebanese University allocated an online platform and learning tools to ensure as much as possible a favorable, positive learning environment. Online e-technology learning tools and platforms were approached to introduce blended learning, virtual classrooms, and video conferencing. Furthermore, instructors could upload e-books and taught unit content literature for students to access synchronously and asynchronously.

The development of online learning meant that students could be members of a virtual classroom to interact with their instructors and peers and reinforce learning through the developed courses unit's content. The objective is for instructors to ensure that the delivered course content and learning through the selected E-technology resources may resemble in-class face-to-face uniformity.

Despite the current urgency for online learning and the distinct number of years online learning has been successfully applied and received, according to Tsia (2009), students can encounter difficulties they may not have experienced in a face-to-face instructional and learning setting. Consequently, the challenges experienced by the students could have a negative outcome on students learning and teaching (Davis & Graffs, 2005). Online learning and teaching contribute positively towards students learning and instructors' course delivery, but they may also experience predicaments in the process. Tsai (2009) ascertained that online teaching and learning do not only benefit both instructors and students, but they could also confront difficulties they may not have experienced in the traditional classroom, consequently contributing towards a negative learning and instructional outcome. The challenges students face may contribute towards lack of skill comprehension, difficulties in analytical thinking, technical anxiety, failing to access online resources, and learning style preferences. When students have limited knowledge of interacting with a computer and accessing online resources, platforms, and Tools, they may experience internet anxiety (Aydin, 2011), contributing to technical operative and language frustration. In a study conducted by Aydin (2011) on internet anxiety among foreign language learners, he highlighted that learner achievement is extensively affected by challenges students face during the operational computer processes and when the network system is down. According to Aydin (b), this anxiety is conjured by students' inability to follow the lessons during the delivery of the virtual lessons, feeling the need to seek alternative learning styles that will overcome the challenges they face. Furthermore, online learning forces students to work independently, and this may be problematic to students who are inclined to work in groups (Crim & Reio, 2011) to overcome a lack of knowledge in a

specific skill set. Moreover, group work supports students who may feel lost, frustrated, and detached from not being productive members of the virtual classroom.

Extensive studies have acknowledged that successful learning is achieved through effective online learning strategies (Solak & Cakir, 2015; Artino & Jones, 2012). They argue that when students employ online learning procedures that support their learning preference and assist them in navigating the online Tools and platforms, they are content to acquire new knowledge effectively and efficiently. However, not enough studies have been carried out on the EFL learner studying their core major in the EM of instruction online and the difficulties they may be encountering during active online learning. Studies have yet to highlight the technical, cognitive, and emotional challenges EFL students face while interacting with online learning applications and instruction in a non-English foreign language setting.

Understandably, Lebanon, as is the rest of the world, had to implement immediate online learning to ensure its welfare. However, universities and schools transitioned from the traditional classroom to virtual distance learning overlooking their students' English language profile, learning needs, and socio-economical background. Even though various studies have been researched on the effect and value of online learning, limited papers have been presented on the underlying value and discrepancies on the learning of EFL Arabic speaking students' experiences in studying their core majors in the English medium via E-technology distance learning and how synchronous learning may be affecting their metacognition, cognition and contributing to technical anxiety. From this perspective, the study aims to answer the following question but not limited to:

The Lebanese University non-English speaking students experience with technology-driven lectures delivered in the English medium of instruction: Students' perspective

2. Literature

Synchronous distance education is the distant transactional engagement taking place between students and teachers. Transactional distance is a pedagogical experience between the learner and the teacher; consequently, an engaging learning experience pertains. According to Moore (1993), students' experience with distance learning transcends geography and is focused on the teacher and learner engagement in dialogue and interaction with the delivered task. Therefore, this particular experience is dominantly realized and analyzed through the perspectives of the student's engagement in learning.

Numerous comparative research was conducted on the significance of e-technology, distance-driven learning dating back to the 1990s. Studies have consistently provided pragmatic knowledge of students engaging in face-to-face in-class instruction compared to online synchronous and asynchronous instruction. According to Allen and Seaman (2010), over 6.1 million students in 2010 were enrolled in an online course for one reason or another. Students took online learning to manage their study time and space availability and acquire new technology skills. Asynchronous online courses offered students an alternative to physical in-class learning, and they had the opportunity to select when and where and at what time they wanted to view the teacher-recorded instructional session.

Empirical studies from the US Department of Education (2010) examining the potential value and effectiveness of online learning, such as in the case of evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices; and Neuhauser (2002); Learning styles and effectiveness of online face to face

instruction all concluded that there are minor differences in students learning online outcome and through traditional face to face instruction. A further exploration conducted by Hariri and Bahanshal (2005) noted a positive parallel between students' English proficiency and the application of e-learning equal to face-to-face instructional classes. Bates (2011) and Shachar (2010) highlighted that e-technology learning accommodated students' mobility and provided them with greater educational offerings and material. Shachar's (b) study demonstrated that 70 percent of the 20,000 participating students taking courses by distance education predominately outperformed their peers in the traditionally instructed courses.

An additional study conducted by Huba and Freed (2000) and Meltzer and Manivannan (2002) investigated the effect of online distance learning compared to in-class lectures based on face-to-face learning Effectiveness of the lecture teaching method to e-technology instruction delivery. The study's results singled out in-class lectures as they remain a favored student learning component because they provide the student with the opportunities to interact with the teacher and each other (West & Jones, 2007).

As the studies indicate, many practitioners are optimistic about the academic future of online learning. Synchronous online teaching and conferencing enable social interactions in a virtual environment (West & Jones, 2007). Since the 1990s, computer-based learning has received extensive attention and has progressively become a vital aspect of education. Brown and Johnson (2000), Cerny and Heines (2001) stipulated that the internet and computer technology development are an integral part of academia. Computer-based online learning aims to improve learning for students (Jones, 2003) where they have access to supported ICT, file attachments, tools- learning resources, and recorded viewing of the lectures at their convince. Furthermore, e-technology learning provides stakeholders with optimal financial advantages, an invitation to international students, or unlimited access to educational literature and professional opportunities. In addition, according to West and Jones, synchronous conferencing between instructor and students enables oral communication, transaction of literary discourse, uploading of power points, video, and shared prerecorded lectures.

Hence, for distance learning and interaction to be successful, one needs to question the gained experience from the instructors and students. Attention needs to be made towards students' perspectives and the delivered dialogue, content, structure, and learner autonomy (Moore, 1993). Online learning requires the students to independently employ strategies that will enable them to manage instructor uploaded resources and computer technical skills and learning strategies to ensure a thriving and anxiety-free learning environment. The study understands online learning strategies as one's cognitive competence to plan, discipline, and comprehend the instruction and learning employed by the instructor and received by the student. Tsai (2009) and Hu and Grambling (2009) exemplified online learning strategies as students' ability to manage their learning by utilizing an amplitude of metacognitive, cognitive, resources management strategies to acquire online learning goals free from anxiety successfully.

The learner experiences online cognitive challenges because the metaphysical process requires a higher cognitive ability to interact and access the instructors' shared literary content and resources. Online content requires learners to access complex academic literary resources that challenge them to apply numerous technical application processes. Tsai's (b) study on the effect of online learning on students demonstrates that students' to achieve a positive learning outcome need to know how to access a computer technically, download resources, save and share files. He further notes that with online learning- metacognition challenges, the learner

can freely select class schedules, and attendance is not required, but he is responsible to self-regulate their learning and completing all the lessons. If learners face personal and technical challenges accessing online resources and virtual online classes, they may experience computer and internet anxiety. This negative experience, according to Aydin (b), results in the learners' long-term academic achievement being impacted negatively by computer technical breakdown and challenges with adapting to new learning preferences. Students transitioning from face-to-face learning to online synchronous classrooms need time to settle into their new learning setting and navigate new learning styles that will enable them to experience a positive learning outcome (Tsai, (c); Kearns, 2012; & Lee, 2001). To achieve a positive learning outcome, students need to have a positive perception of online E-technology learning. According to Tsai (c), a student who adopts a positive perspective of online learning and is motivated and willing to learn will experience minimal technical anxiety. A positive perspective will enable students to adopt and adapt online technical learning strategies that contribute to their long-term learning achievements.

The study acknowledges that the growing online learning phenomenon comes with many unanswered questions, especially now that students have no choice but to acquire their academic knowledge online. The discrepancies are how students receive the information; if they are building on to their education knowledge; they face any educational, cognitive, technical anxiety, and emotional issues; and if any underlying predicaments contribute to students' lack of learning progress. From this perspective, the study found minimal studies on EFL students' learning prospects studying higher education in the EM of instruction. EFL students acquiring their education certificate in the English medium of instruction do not sit on the EFL learners' paradigm, nor are their pedagogical learning needs considered by lecturers employed to instruct the courses in an English native context (Beth, 2020). The EFL higher education student profile is defined as a learner whose native language is not English, and they reside in a country where English is not the primary spoken language of communication. Cambridge dictionary defines English as a foreign language to teach English to students whose first language is not English, and Murica (2001) highlights that EFL is taught as a foreign language in countries where English is not the official language. Hence, Lebanon is a country whose native spoken language is Arabic, but English is taught at most schools and higher education universities, where the core academic courses are delivered in the English medium of instruction (EMI).

For the purpose of this study, it is vital to highlight the variant between the first language application where all core courses are taught in the English medium (L1) in a foreign language (FL) classroom and English delivered for communication purposes that focus on language communication, tourism, business, medicine, etc. The pedagogical objective of delivering core modules in EMI is for the students to learn the thematic content units of instruction in the academic English language. Students, according to Beth (2020), who conducted a study on the Lebanese EFL university students who are studying their core subjects in the EMI; instructors' perspective concluded that they are a member of a large number of students in the classroom where they are exposed to academic core content literature that demands they rely on themselves for research, to expose themselves to a large quantity of targeted literature, and to produce essays of academic standard. Students are expected to have developed their English language to an academic higher education level and display a native or second language speaker's language characteristics. Whereas, in an EF language learning environment, teachers instruct a language syllabus that centers on the students' language profile and needs. Students

and teacher language exchange occur in various contexts, content reinforcement and learner feedback are encouraged, and constructive teacher feedback is delivered. Furthermore, in an EF language classroom, the number of students is kept to a minimum to ensure language input and face-to-face interaction between students and teacher and their peers.

Teacher-student interaction online or in-class is vital for transferring knowledge and ensuring learning occurs in an EFL, ESL, and English native medium classroom. According to Sari (2018), to achieve a successful learning output, there needs to be a balance between teacher and student exchanging thoughts and ideas. Additionally, the online learning environment needs to encourage an effective communication process and adopt a technology-driven classroom where instructors display subject proficiency, content-centered instructional skills, and the ability to involve and motivate students to achieve the intended learning objectives and outcome. This conception is further heightened by Copeland, Longworth, Hewson & Stiller (2000) where they stipulate that the success of a lecture depends on the individual lecture's competence, delivery, and pedagogical skill, and personal capacity to engage and inspire students. Verneil and Berge (2000) and Mandernach (2005) provided further support to this understanding of who contributed online course success to students' engagement and actively participated in the session's delivery.

While research has proven that a lecture's success is achieved through instructors' content skill competency, pedagogical delivery, and an innate skill to encourage student engagement, technology-driven lectures also play a vital role in the effectiveness of a lecture. Technology is presently being utilized to create virtual online classrooms offering a quick solution to schools and universities' lockdown. Students and teachers can be part of an electronic classroom that can be "expandable in time, space, and content" (Beatty, 2013. P. 156). Providing an unlimited virtual learning interactional space that is confined to the individual participant's walls and at their time-convenience. Opportunities for learning and interaction are provided through access to various tools, mediums, and platforms. These platforms can vary from TEAMS, Google Space, Mural, Zoom, Slido, Yammer, and Microsoft Teams, to name a few. Teachers and students communicate verbally and through text, sharing PowerPoints, text content, and video.

Moreover, according to Hamouda (2020), since students are becoming digital natives and prefer to socialize and interact online, virtual classrooms have become an effective way to engage them in education. From the perspective of this study, being able to utilize a digital platform for social purposes and to enhance a particular language in communication may be a powerful tool when generating interaction and acquiring a language for specific purposes; but when a major-core subject is being instructed in the EM and students are expected to deliver a literary discourse, content knowledge, and evaluation, research papers, and presentations at a high academic standard then the purpose of utilizing a digital platform becomes more sophisticated and technical. Students and instructors are currently encouraged to collaborate in a virtual space, sharing applications and web browsers, utilizing whiteboards and audiovisuals to ensure effective learning is achieved. However, in a third-world country, such as Lebanon, where net service is poor and unreliable, electricity shortage is ongoing, and students' socio-economic and English language profile is overlooked, these collaborated virtual classrooms may become challenging for both instructors and students. Consequently, contrary to an effective, shared virtual teaching and learning experience, online learning becomes less appealing and challenging to university students.

The study acknowledges the value of online virtual classrooms as being practical, especially in these unprecedented times. However, in an EFL Lebanese Arabic-speaking student studying their core subjects in the EM of instruction, distance e-technology learning may not facilitate the same outcome for an English native language student or a student in another country in the MENA region or Europe. Current studies have indicated a positive relationship between online EFL language learning and students' strategies to achieve a positive language and academic outcome. The study aims to fill a gap in the literature by focusing on EFL university students and their experience with online learning. The study examines whether synchronous learning environments facilitate a positive or negative education and psychological outcome on the learner. To achieve this, the study adopts Moore's synchronous learning to be the process of online engagement and interaction between learner and learner and instructor and learner and learner and content; and Tsai, understanding students, adopted learning strategies to achieve their specific online learning goals. The study intends to learn how students are cognitive and metacognitively impacted by synchronous online learning and if they can successfully become motivated, independent, self-directed learners through the framework of the questionnaire.

3. Virtual Classes and the EFL Student Learning in the EMI

For any form of constructive learning to occur between instructor and students, a reciprocal exchange needs to be achieved. This exchange is accommodated through face-to-face interaction-in-class learning or online interactivity-virtual classroom. The acumen between interactivity and interaction is illustrated by Wagner (1994). Wagner exemplifies interaction as a function attributed to effective instruction and interactivity through interactional activity, where the instructor provides a learning purpose, responds, and provides the learner with educational goals.

Hence, for a virtual online class to be effective, it needs to provide a wealth of knowledge and student-instructor engagement and feedback (Bowles, Adams, & Toth, 2014; Tsai, 2010; Kearsley, 1995) in course content. Instructors need to accommodate to students learning profiles and provide a safe space for learning and engagement. The study understands that for effective learning and teaching to occur, there needs to be constant interaction between student and student, instructor and student, learner content interaction, and interaction with technologies. In the mechanism of the learner interacting with the given content, they are expected to process the information intellectually and interact with the content through verbal exchange with their peers and instructor and build knowledge and informative understanding. With regards to learner and technology interaction, Hillman, Willis, and Gunawardena (1994) highlighted that interaction with technologies enables "a process of manipulating tools to accomplish a task" (p. 34), whereby the learner applies the sensory tools to process and manipulate the technology in order to obtain compelling processing viewing and interaction. The learner navigates through the documents, and the teacher verbally delivered the content and accessed the information for their personal academic needs. The virtual classroom enables students and instructors to interact in the content-context units of discussion synchronously, encouraging an effective learning environment to circulate. Consequently, enabling learning, collaborative space between instructor and students where knowledge and meaning are negotiated and acquired. Instructors are in constant motion of discussion, polling students, encouraging exchange and opinions in the given subject, and fostering verbal lead and emotional support. Toth (2008) supported effective learning to be achieved when students'

ongoing interaction provides a positive input, and they can work together to negotiate meaning and modify the output. Therefore by employing effective online instructional and learning strategies, students will most likely achieve a positive learning outcome. However, failure to achieve this will result in students losing learning motivation, experiencing technical anxiety, and refraining from becoming influential online virtual class community members.

4. Methodology

The study surveyed higher education students at the Lebanese University from various faculties receiving their instructional courses in the EMI. The study author invited higher education EFL students whose face-to-face in-class studies were impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown and had to transfer their learning to virtual online distance learning. The study applied the quantitative research method because it is an approach, according to Creswell (2009 & 2014), for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. The students were invited to participate in an online closed-ended questionnaire administered using Google Drive. An e-mail with a hyperlink to the survey was included, along with an introductory message about the survey's intent.

The study aimed to deliver a user-friendly, quick, and easy-to-fill-out survey by applying a closed-ended item questionnaire. The question items were derived from the students' complaints to instructors about their lack of motivation, technical problems experienced while accessing the online tools, and lack of involvement and long-term learning productivity in the adopted synchronous virtual classrooms. The study employed students' perception questionnaires to receive first-hand information about their experience delivering and acquiring courses delivered in the EM of instruction via online learning.

Furthermore, the study aimed to understand further what obstacles students were facing that may contribute to their negative experience during the delivery of their course work and their perception of the virtual classrooms. The study hopes to receive a comprehensive insight into EFL students' interaction with the online EM interactive delivered courses by inviting students to share their opinions, judgments, and experiences. The study supports Anderson's (1992) perspective on inviting teachers and students to provide their insight into perspective studies and their personal experience in the interaction with an academic program. The questionnaire items employed the Likert Scale (1932) technique for several reasons; one being that the techniques measured people's attitude towards a particular experience, and two, the author was not depending on receiving a high number of respondents and the Likert Scale measurable technique is not affected by the number of participants. Furthermore, the questionnaire is administered through the internet, and the Likert Scale is an uncomplicated process in achieving a transcribed statistical analysis percentage. Hence, the responses are easily converted to numbers and entered into a spreadsheet. The author was aware that the wordings of the question items might influence respondents' answers; hence the response options were narrowed down to choosing one answer that best describes their experience with online learning and interaction.

The respondents were requested to choose one option from the closed-ended item questions. Respondent answers represented a degree of agreement that was translated into a measurable number. The closed-ended question was followed by a quantitative variable-a rating scale that ranged from 1-point8 rating being the least to 5-point rating to most effective, or 1-point rating to never to 5-point rating to always.

From the students' complaints, the author identified various significant themes. Hence these themes were transcribed into thematic question items. The questionnaire included 22 question items that consisted of the respondents' profile and the second section of 17 open-ended survey items. The study invited respondents to provide a profile of their gender, age, the number of years they have studied in the EMI, how proficient they perceived themselves to be in the academic English language, and which academic faculty they belonged to. The aim was to gather better insight into the students' English language academic background. The study's initial intent was to acknowledge instructors' experience with online teaching, but it directed the study towards students' perceptions, experiences, and challenges with online learning due to time constraints.

5. Findings

The instructional delivery of courses at the Lebanese University may have taken an emergency alteration from in-class face-to-face to the virtual online classroom. Students are currently moving into the second term of their academic year of synchronous e-technology learning. This preliminary stretch is proving to be challenging for students. Students have to accept distance learning as a new form of the educational system and are exposed to unfamiliar tools and platforms at an unprecedented rate. The study to investigate the effect online synchronous learning has on students invited them to participate in a quantitative open-ended questionnaire. The quantitative analysis was based on thematic item questions that reflect on Tsai's study model of student adopted learning strategies. The 22 questions items provide students perspectives of their experiences with the EM instructed courses.

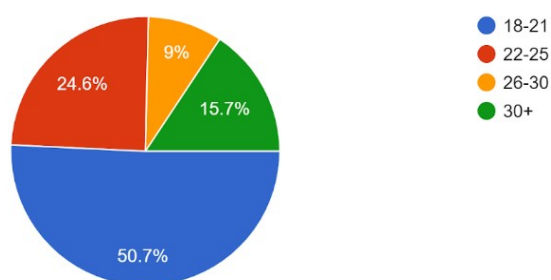The following data addresses an analysis of the 22 question items.

Fig. A.1
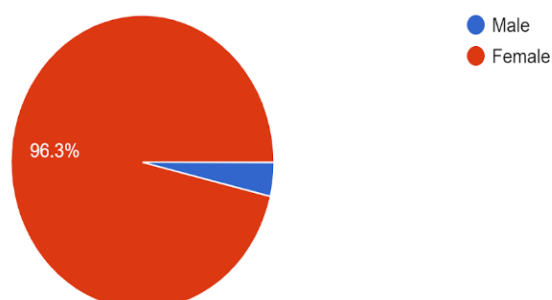
Fig. A.2

4. In which Department are you studying now?
134 responses

- ● Human and Social Science
- ● Faculty of Letters and Human sciences
- ● Institute of Social Sciences
- ● Faculty of Economics and Business Administration
- ● Faculty of Science
- ● Center for Languages and Translation
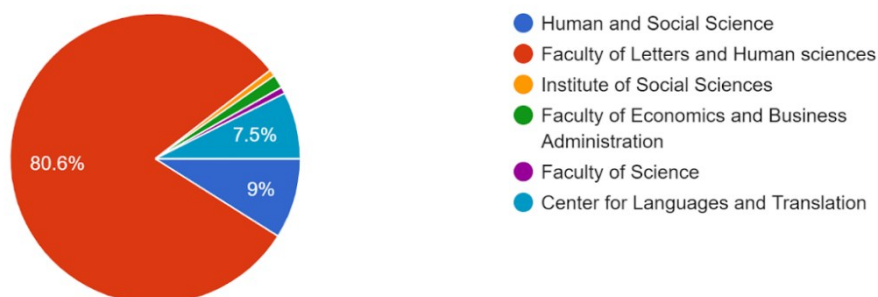
Fig. A.4

5. How would you rate your English academic language proficiency?
134 responses

- ● Very proficient
- ● Proficient
- ● Somewhat proficient
- ● Not proficient
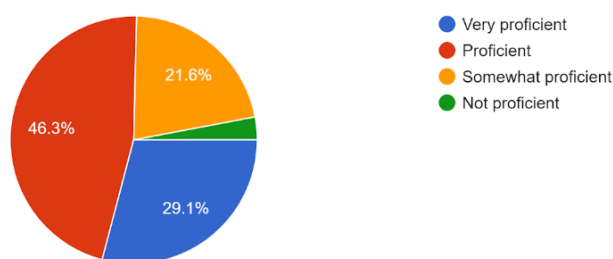
Fig. A.5

The above figures highlight the profile of the 134 EFL Lebanese university students studying their core courses in the EM of instruction (96.3% females to 3.7% males). The respondent age group ranged from 18 to 21 (51%), 22-25 (24%), 26-30 (9%) and 30+ (16%). A large number (81%) of respondents are studying in the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, a small percentage (9%) are members of the Department of Human and Social Science, and a minimal number (7.5) in the Center for Languages and Translation. The majority of respondents (56%) noted that particular subjects were delivered in the English medium in their primary and secondary schooling and an average number (35.1%) highlighted that they received all their instructional subjects in the English medium of instruction. Respondents (46.3%) believe that their English academic language is at a proficient level and others (29%) accept their academic English language to be very proficient and a low number (21.6%) see themselves as being somewhat proficient in the English academic language.

The following descriptive interpretation emerged from the study's data analysis of the EFL Lebanese university students receiving core subjects in the EM instruction and their experience and perception of online E-technology learning.

6. Do you prefer in-class lectures or on-line E-technology learning?
134 responses

- I prefer in-class lectures
- I prefer on-line E-technology learning
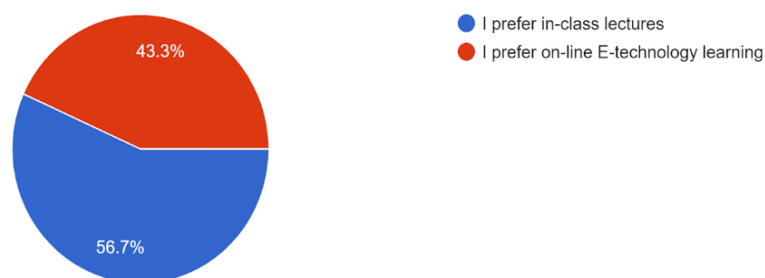
43.3%

56.7%

Fig. B

As shown in Figure (B), an estimated 56.7% of respondents prefer in-class lectures to online e-technology learning to 43.3% stated that they prefer online E-technology learning.

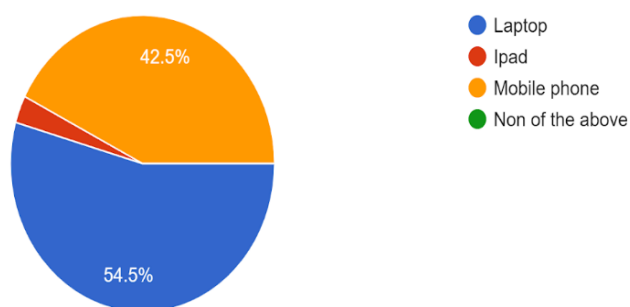7. Which technology device do you use for your on-line E-Technology driven learning?
134 responses

- Laptop
- Ipad
- Mobile phone
- Non of the above

42.5%

54.5%

Fig. C

As shown in Figure (C), 54.5% of respondents use laptops, to 42.5% access a mobile phone when learning online through E-technology driven lectures.

8. How enthusiastic are you in learning your core subjects in EMI through E-technology driven lectures?
134 responses

- Very enthusiatic
- Enthusiastic
- Somewhat enthusiatic
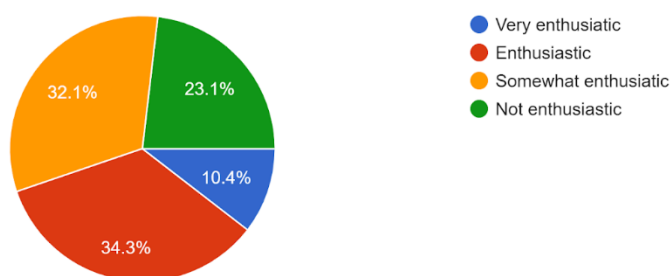- Not enthusiastic

32.1%   23.1%

10.4%

34.3%

Fig. (D)

Figure (D) highlighted that when respondents were asked how enthusiastic they were in learning their core subjects in EMI through E-technology driven lectures, 34.3% highlighted that they are enthusiastic to 32.1% somewhat enthusiastic, and a mere 23.1% noted that they are not enthusiastic.

9. How comfortable are you with E-technology-driven lectures delivered in EMI?
134 responses

- Very comfortable
- Comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
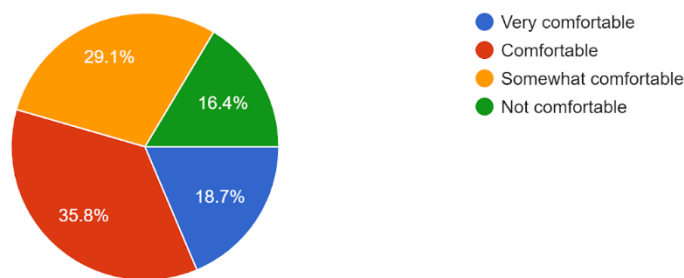- Not comfortable

29.1%
16.4%
18.7%
35.8%

Fig. (E)

Figure (E) findings indicate that 35.8% of respondents are comfortable with E-technology driven lectures in EMI, and 29.1% are somewhat comfortable. Only 18.7% of respondents are very comfortable, to 16.4% are not comfortable with E-technology online learning.

10. To what extent has instructional E-Technology contributed positively towards the learning of your core subjects in EMI?
134 responses

- Very much
- Somewhat
- Acceptable
- Not enough

41.8%
13.4%
21.6%
23.1%
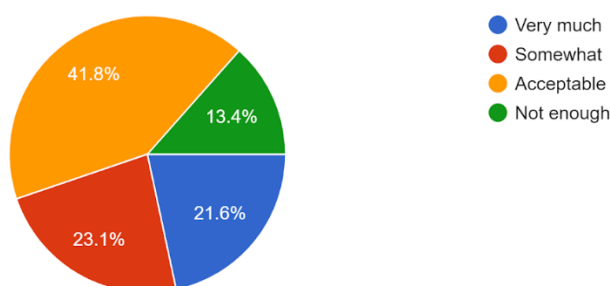
Fig. (F)

As is evident in Figure (F), 41.8% of respondents strongly believe that instructional E-technology has acceptably contributed positively towards their learning of the core subjects in the EMI to 23.1% it has somewhat contributed to their learning. A noted 21.6% stated that instructional e-technology has very much contributed towards their online learning to a mere 13.4% of respondents who believe E-technology learning has not contributed enough to their learning positively.

11. How do you perceive your level of comprehension during online E-Technology driven EMI lectures?
134 responses

- Proficient
- Average
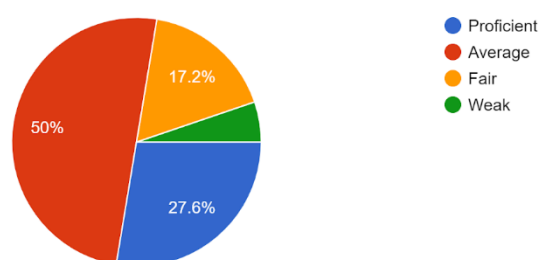- Fair
- Weak

17.2%
50%
27.6%

Fig. (G)

Figure (G) demonstrates that a steady 50% of respondents perceive their level of comprehension during online E-technology learning to be of average level compared to

acceptable to 27.6% as their comprehension to being proficient. An estimated 17.2% of respondents accept their comprehension to be of an adequate level.

12. How confident are you in acquiring core knowledge delivered in EMI through E-technology-driven lectures?
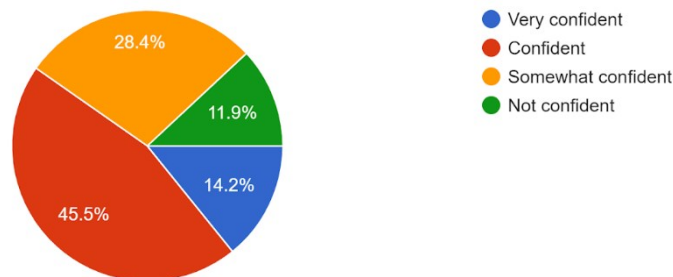134 responses

Fig. (H)

Figure (H), illustrates 14.2% of respondents are very confident in acquiring core knowledge delivered in EMI through E-technology, compared to a robust 45.5% of respondents who claimed that they are confident in acquiring core knowledge delivered in EMI through E-technology. A 28.4% are somewhat confident to 11.9% are not confident in acquiring core knowledge delivered in the EMI through E-technology driven lectures.

13. What do you believe are the main causes of your lack of comprehension of online technology-driven E-lectures delivered in EMI? (choose the reason or reasons which relate to you).
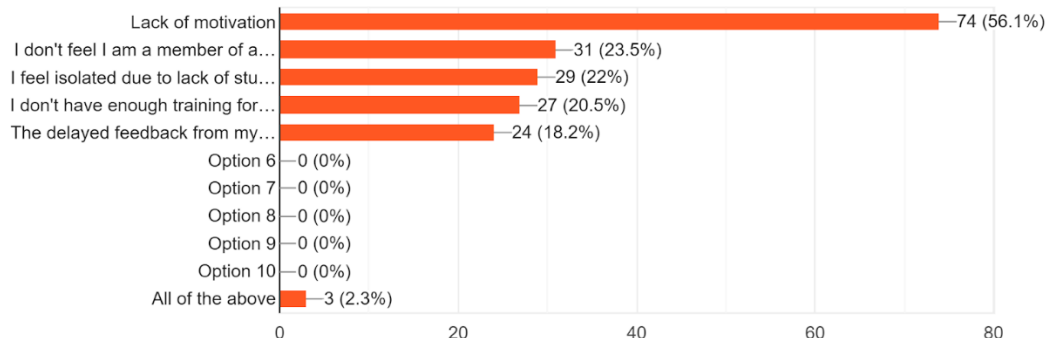132 responses

Fig. (I)

Figure (I) estimates that 56.1% of respondents contribute their lack of motivation to the absence of comprehension of online-driven lectures. 23.5% of respondents stated that they do not feel that they are a member of the class, and 22% see themselves isolated due to lack of student-teacher presence; a mere 18.2% contribute their lack of motivation to online learning is due to the delayed feedback from their instructors.

14. Is your online learning experience affected by any of the following.(Tick the responses that apply)
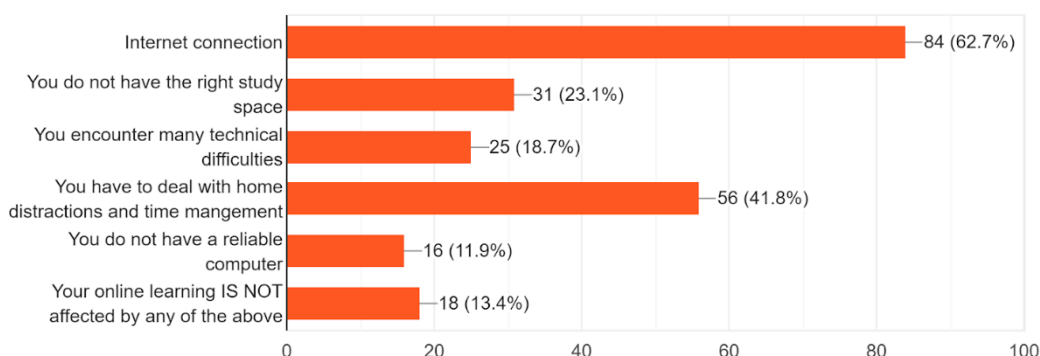
134 responses

Fig. (J)

Figure (J) pinpoints that 62.7% of respondents stated that their online experience is affected by poor internet connection, and 41.8% noted that their online experience is affected by home distraction and management. A further 23.1% of respondents do not have the suitable study space; consequently, their online learning experience is affected.

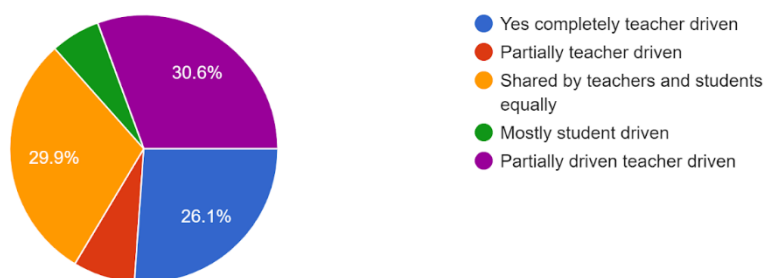15. In your opinion were the lectures teacher-driven?

134 responses

Fig. (K)

Figure (K) demonstrates that 30.6% of students believe that the lectures are partially teacher-driven to 29.9% of students highlighted that their online lectures are shared by the teacher and students equally. A very close 26.1% of respondents believe that the online lectures are completely teacher-driven.

16. Did the teacher often fall back on the Lebanese Arabic language in the educational context?
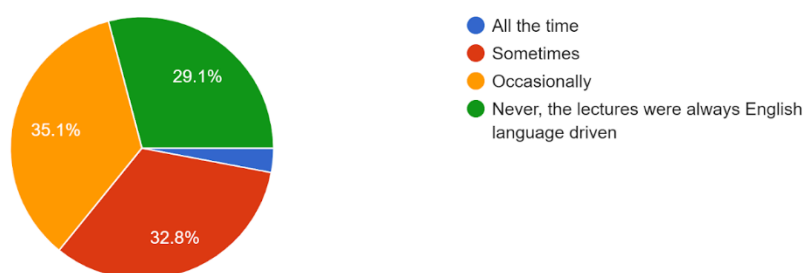
134 responses

Fig. (L)

Figure (K) estimates that 35.1% of respondents observe that instructors often fell back on the Lebanese Arabic language in the educational context, to 32.8% who stated that their instructors occasionally reverted to the Lebanese Arabic language while teaching. A close 29.1% of respondents stated that their lectures were always English language-driven.

17. How many times did you watch the recorded lectures at your own pace?
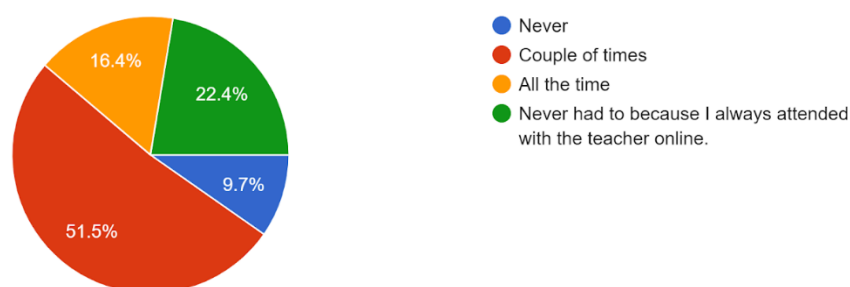134 responses

Fig. (L)

Figure (L) illustrates a distinct 51.5% of respondents that watched the recorded lectures several times, to 22.4% of respondents who never had to re-watch the recorded lectures because they permanently joined the online lectures during their designated times. Figure (L) further demonstrates that 16.4% of respondents watched the recorded lecture sessions all the time, to 9.7 % of respondents never watched the recorded lectures.

18. What is in your opinion the main causes behind the lack of E-technology-online learning lecture efficacy-effectiveness? (Tick the responses that apply)
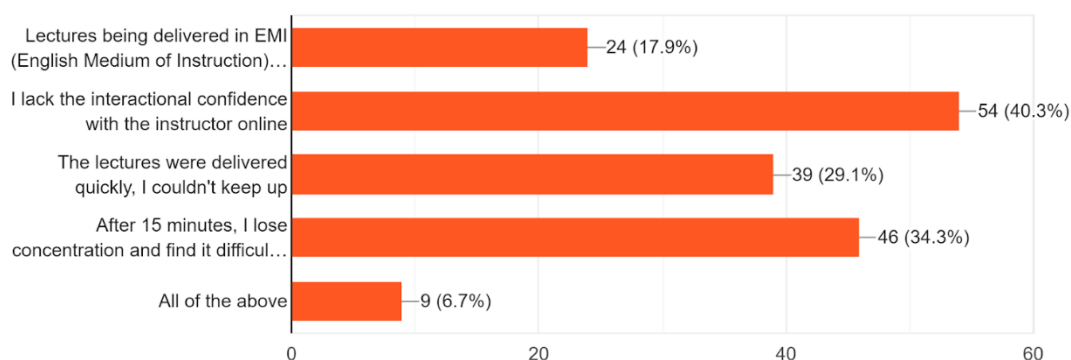134 responses

Fig. (M)

Figure (M) requested respondents to choose the responses that apply to what, in their opinion, is the leading cause behind the lack of E-technology online lecture efficacy-effectiveness. A notable 40.4% of respondents contributed their lack of online lecture efficacy to lack of interactional confidence with the instructor online, and 34.3% that after 15 minutes, they lose concentration and thus find it difficult to join the lecture again. 29.1% of respondents believe that the lectures were delivered quickly and they could not keep up to 17.9% contributed the lack of lecture effectiveness to the lectures being delivered in EMI; consequently, they lacked content understanding.

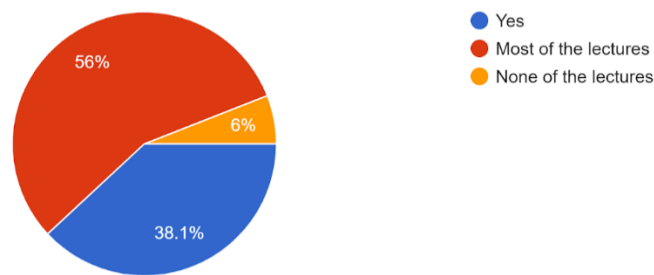19. Did you attend all the online technology-driven lectures?
134 responses

Fig. (N)

Figure (N) implies that 56% of respondents attended most online lectures, to 38.1% of respondents attended all the online lectures.

20. When learning online, did you face any obstacles?
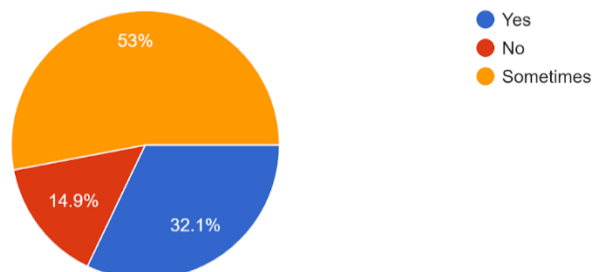134 responses

Fig. (O)

Figure (O) expresses that a distinct 53% of respondents sometimes faced online learning obstacles, to 32.1% who noted that they constantly faced online learning issues. A strong 56% of respondents contributed their online issues to lack of motivation, and 27.6% of respondents felt isolated due to lack of student-teacher in-class presence. 21.6% of respondents felt that they were not ready nor trained for online learning, and 20.9% contributed that the obstacles faced were related to not being equipped with the right technology equipment needed to experience positive online synchronous lectures.

20. When learning online, did you face any obstacles?
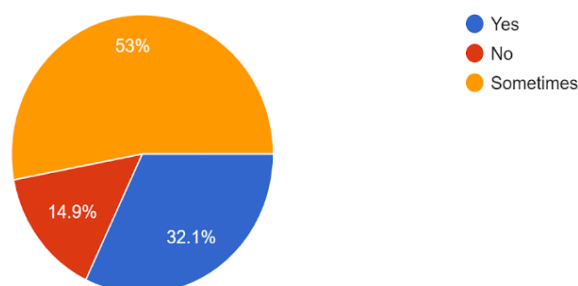134 responses

Fig. (P)

Figure (P) specifies that 53% of respondents sometimes experienced obstacles while learning online, to 32.1% of respondents who always faced obstacles while learning online.

21. If yes, how many of the following obstacles did you face? (choose the responses that apply)
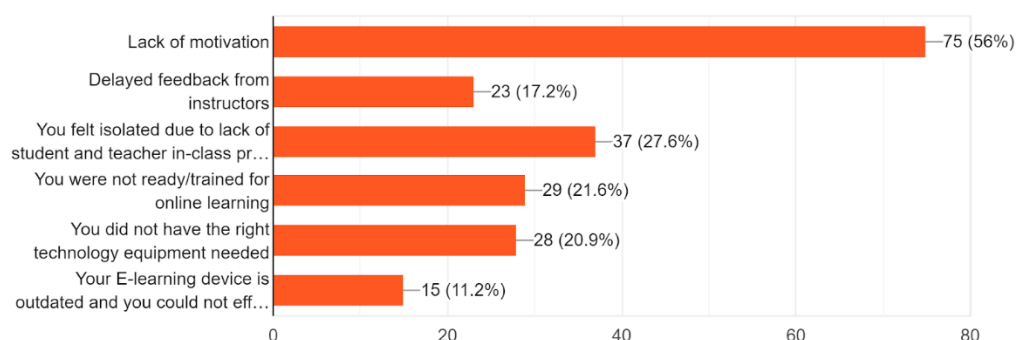134 responses

Fig. Q

Figure (Q) pinpoints the obstacles students faced while learning online. As the figure indicates, 56% of respondents lacked motivation to 17.2% experienced obstacles due to delayed feedback from instructors, and 27.6% felt isolated due to lack of students and teacher in-class presence. Figure (Q) further demonstrates that 21.6% of respondents were not ready or trained for online learning, and 20.9% did not have the right technical equipment to access online learning successfully. A further 11.2% of respondents' E-learning device is either outdated or could not afford to purchase one.

22. How would you compare in-class teacher instructional learning to online E-technology teacher instructional learning,
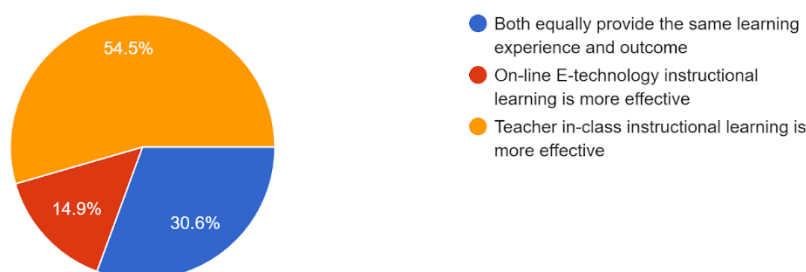134 responses

Fig. (R)

Figure (R) demonstrates the comparison between in-class teacher instructional learning to online E-technology teacher instructional learning from the students' experience. The figure demonstrates that 54.5% of respondents believe that teacher in-class instructional learning is more effective than 30.6% of respondents believe that both online and in-class learning equally provide the same learning experience and outcome.

6. Discussion, Recommendations and Limitations

The study aimed to determine the consequential effects of EFL Lebanese University students having to study online in the EMI due to the Covid-19 pandemic, even though E-technology synchronous instruction and learning are not new in academic education. The findings of this study focused on students' perception and experience with synchronous learning and the unprecedented challenges they faced. The study's outcome strongly confirms that the students are not ready to study online the EMI courses for many reasons.

The findings are summarized and discussed as follows:

It was evident from the received responses that a vast number of students do not have a strong command in utilizing the designated E-technology or Platforms-Tools assigned by their University. What stood out in the study is that students are not, as Hammoudi (2005) noted, "digital natives." From the results received, the study interprets students' interaction with their technology for the purpose of social interaction, or personal language learning does not constitute them, digital natives, for academic study purposes. Students' learning efficacy is impacted by their absence of utilizing the appropriate technologies needed to access the online E-learning systems, such as instructors' shared electronic resources and course literature handouts, e-books, cloud-based platform, whiteboard, microphone, and screen time. In the case of the Lebanese University students' interaction with online language learning, the study's data outcome shows that students are proficiently able to operate the technology in "their hand," such as mobile phones or tablets for personal applications and communication. Due to this, students lacked online readiness. They are not digitally ready for academic learning purposes because their interaction with technology is mainly limited to their mobile phones. The study understands this to be the result of students' minimal engagement and a lack of productive learning experience in the online virtual classroom setting.

The study data outcome notes that a productive outcome to online learning can mainly be achieved by employing effective online technical and language learning strategies. The study outcome noted that students struggle with online synchronous learning engagement because they preferred an in-class learning environment to a virtual teaching classroom. Students' preference may be related to the fact that they are EFL students and should not be treated by instructors as native English speakers and assume that they can follow the spoken discourse as a native speaker of the English language. As emphasized by the data outcome, the delivery of knowledge and discourse is lost in "wired translation." Students omit to seek further explanation from their instructor and opt to stay silent and disengaged. Students do not have a sense of belonging to the virtual class and have failed to make meaningful connections to their instructors and peers. First-year and newly enrolled students may have never met their instructors or peers in a physical classroom setting, and the instructors do not know the academic profile of their students to provide personalized learning. Hence, teachers' instructional approaches are not optimized for the benefit of the students. The study reasons the absence of learner technical needs influences students' motivation and commitment to online virtual classrooms and instruction to manipulate the academic needs and meaningful and relevant activities that interest and encourage online attendance and commitment. Consequently, students lacked motivation which may have led to their experiencing learning anxiety.

Furthermore, students felt isolated due to a lack of teacher-student involvement and delayed feedback from their instructors. Students could not keep up with the instructors' discourse, consequently failing to comprehend the delivered literature, thus procrastinating during the virtual class time. Students favored an in-class lecture environment to virtual online lectures. This response further supports Huba and Freed's (2000) study, which favored face-to-face lecture teaching methods to online learning. Students preferred traditional teaching methods to contribute to their EFL efficacy and their ability to communicate with the instructor on the delivered literary discourse. In support of this, respondents noted that their content comprehension and learning are relatively low because they are not discussing the difficulties

and struggles they are experiencing with the comprehension of the content, academic language, and inability to keep up with the delivered content due to online time mismanagement. Data further indicated that the online lectures were mainly teacher-driven, and teachers either fell back on the Lebanese-Arabic language or hybrid of the English and Arabic language to transmit academic information in the educational context.

The students' questionnaire study outcome further highlights that students were not prepared or familiar with the University's adopted E-technology learning platforms or Tools. Students note that there is a lack of technology learning readiness and a digital divide between them. The study strongly highlights that a large group of students is financially marginalized, and this factor cannot be overlooked. Some students were registered at the University, but they are "ghost students" who were entirely or partially absent from attending the virtual synchronous online courses due to either financial or lack of electricity and net access. These students take part in the end-of-year course assessments because they are delivered on the university campus. The university stakeholders are unaware of students' virtual class absence; consequently, their technology and financial needs are not addressed, and the problems are carried through to the following academic year.

The Lebanese University stakeholders' overlooked the students' socio-economic profile in the process, marginalizing them. Students noted that they either use their mobile phones or an outdated computer shared by several family members. The mobile phone, unlike the computer, hindered students' access to the virtual classroom. The software may not be compatible, interrupting access to shared documents and learning experience. Furthermore, students were distracted by social media websites, lack of internet connection, electricity, and a dying battery. The study further highlighted that students' negative experience was contributed by home distraction, lack of study space, and being unable to access digital course materials

The study gathers from the students' responses that the Lebanese University failed to inform them of their adopted technology programs to support their formal studies. As a result, students were left to navigate the technology Tools and platforms through trial and error. The study supports instructors and students to be provided with guidelines for designing effective content-context interaction conferencing that introduces students to the cloud-based platform, E-technology terms, and how to navigate the selected Google or TEAMS virtual classroom online textbooks whiteboard, digitally shared documents, submit essays, and online tests. Students lacked online readiness, which may have contributed to their lack of motivation. Students were not given appropriate time to adapt to the new enforced learning process. The transition from face-to-face in-class learning to online instruction and learning could have contributed to adverse cognitive and metacognitive experiences. According to Kuama and Intharaksa (2016), students that needed time to adapt to a new learning platform faced many online learning challenges. As stated by Kuama and Intharaksa (b), students' proficiency, maturity, and experience with online learning predicted students' E-technology long-term success. It is only through providing equal opportunity for students to access virtual E-technology classrooms, practical online courses, and training on navigating the online platforms before introducing the studied courses. Students' online learning readiness can motivate them and reduce any technical anxiety they may be experiencing. Furthermore, students' readiness for online learning will ensure that the accredited delivered courses are not being challenged.

The received students' responses in online virtual classrooms dictate how pedagogy and learning are being shaped and acquired. From the author's understanding, the Lebanese

university stakeholders aim to maintain course accreditation and global academic standards, but in the process, they are compromising students' academic short and long-term learning goals. Students' online e-technology educational opportunities have been limited due to minimal access to online resources, low-speed internet access, and a one teaching pathway that fits all learners. Hence, the recommendations for this study focus on how university stakeholders can personalize and deliver the course work in multiple procedures, consider the learner's profile, and ensure learners are not marginalized, hence closing the digital divide amongst students by ensuring equitable access to technology.

The study encourages education institutions in Lebanon to become aware of their student-learner geographical and socio-economic profile to create an equitable learning e-technology environment that does not marginalize students. The universities' responsibility is to ensure that resources are equally and effectively dispatched, permitting easy and unified access to all students' online resources. The Lebanese University can effectively use the available resources and Tools to ensure instructor and online student collaboration and agreed upon pedagogical practices for accessing uploaded resources and online asynchronous and synchronous lectures. University stakeholders need to address e-Technology strategies and technology programs that align with educational apps that will support students and are resourcefully meaningful, user-friendly and encourage students to engage in learning.

The study highlights that due to time constraints was unable to involve instructors in the study to gain their perspective of students' involvement in online learning and their experience with the course delivery through the online virtual classroom. Hence, in light of the current study data outcome with the students' experience with synchronous learning, the study encourages instructors to contribute by taking part in professional e-Technology development (PD) and discuss their requisites and expectations from the adopted e-Technology resources and Tools. Instructors should be provided with E-Technology support, gain access to global research-supported practices that may contribute towards their online virtual teaching instruction, and provide immediate answers to their technical questions. Currently, instructors are expected to have knowledge of not only their course work but also how to transfer learning through technology and create a positive virtual classroom as they would in a face-to-face learning setting.

The study understands that the measures with which practitioners viewed and experienced the traditional classroom in the past are vastly losing their presence due to the global pandemic and the transition to online E- technology learning. Technology fundamentally can accelerate and impact learning positively or negatively if not delivered, received, or experienced productively, such as in the case of an EFL learner acquiring their core significant courses in the EM of instruction. Acquiring knowledge in a synchronous learning mode is not a process that can be easily observed, and feedback of its impact on the learner can only be reached through learner discussion and observation across time. Therefore, this study is recommended to be handled cautiously and interpret the findings in light of the Lebanese university EFL students' experience and not reflect other university students globally.

Furthermore, university instructors need to manage and accommodate their digital coursework delivery to the EFL students' learner profile acquiring knowledge in the EM of instruction. The study understands that the university core academic programs delivered in the English language will lose their global academic standards if instructors modify the content and simplify the language to meet students' EFL level. Hence, the study encourages further research to include

how technology-driven lectures can provide language support to students without compromising the course core content, English language, research methods, and evaluation validity and reliability. Research study on the university instructors' reasoning behind the lack of timely student feedback and how this may affect their short and long-term learning and their readiness in interacting with the adopted online platforms such as "Google Teams" in the case of the Lebanese University.

7. Conclusion

Online synchronous and asynchronous learning are now an integral aspect of all EFL Lebanese university students receiving their main courses of study in the English medium of instruction. What has become apparent from the study's questionnaire outcome is that the Lebanese university stakeholders to ensure that academic courses' global standards are maintained and not compromised deliver courses online without profiling the EFL learner or modifying the course content or instructors' pedagogical delivery. The study assumes that stakeholders were quick to maintain health safety and education normalcy and consistency that they did not have the means to adapt the adopted academic courses to the education profile of their students.

In the process, the EFL-Arabic Lebanese speaking students are experiencing academic, technical, and cognitive-metacognitive challenges while accessing the online classroom lectures, consequently questioning the validity and reliability of the delivered content courses outcome and whether they are achieving their global accredited skill objective goals.

What has emerged from this study is that there is a need for university stakeholders to re-examine the role of e- technology in education. When students' profile and learning needs are overlooked, quality education will be compromised, and accredited programs of study will be questioned. As indicated in this study, practitioners and stakeholders need to acknowledge and have a robust discussion that online learning is not totally cognitive, meta-cognitive, or socially suitable nor experienced and received equally by all online EFL learners.

To achieve a positive active learning experience from an online e-Technology virtual classroom, it is up to the university stakeholders to establish a teacher-learner supported E-Technology plan. Stakeholders need to become aware of their students' English language academic proficiency, financial capabilities, and instructors' technology competency knowledge. The systemic technology issues experienced by EFL Lebanese university students when accessing online E-technology learning are conclusively associated with minimal instructor-student interaction and the absence of students' skills in utilizing the appropriate technology portal-Tools. These experienced discrepancies promote students feeling isolated from their peers, lacking motivation and teachers' feedback and support, experiencing technical detachment and anxiety. Employing effective online language learning strategies appears to be a vital factor in achieving a successful online learning outcome.

The findings of this study are not consistent with many studies conducted on the effectiveness and significance of distance-driven learning from an EFL students' perspective acquiring the English language for communication purposes. This study reasons that the EFL students are not acquiring the English language only for communication purposes; they aim to earn a university-accredited degree that enables them to seek higher studies and a global profession. What differentiates this study is that the virtual synchronous classroom does not differentiate between the profile of an English native student or an EFL student. Hence, the study

recommends that further research on the EFL university students acquiring course content knowledge through virtual classrooms be conducted to identify supportive, transformative actions backed by dogmatic evidence that recommend how E-technology synchronous-driven learning enables a positive learning outcome.

There needs to be an extensive examination on the role virtual classrooms play in the academic environment of an EFL student and confer how stakeholders, instructors, and students can work together to find solutions to the negative systemic issues that are negatively impacting students cognitive and meta-cognitive interaction, delivery, and absence from learning online in the EM of instruction. The research may provide insights to instructors and students on overcoming digital anxiety, reducing digital interruptions, and becoming technology savvy for academic purposes. The EFL students' virtual classroom can be supported by text-to-speech, audio, and digital test formats of instructors' lectures and course content material to enable the EFL student to follow the lecture and not feel absent from the material discussions. This study aims to ensure the EFL students are experiencing a positive educational outcome that bridges the divide between students who have access to updated technology devices, online materials-resources, uninterrupted internet, and native English speakers studying the same core subjects online.

The initial objective of enforcing online learning at the Lebanese University is to assure all stakeholders, including students, are safe from Covid19 and provide students with educational opportunities to further their academic studies. To satisfy such an outcome, online e-technology virtual classroom learning must enable a learning environment that supports and expands learning opportunities and students' academic growth; otherwise, they will not only be disadvantaged to the rest of the world but will disengage permanently from learning and lose interest in furthering their studies.

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