THE EFFECT OF ONLINE COLLEGE LECTURES ON STUDENTS STUDYING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Shaden Abdullah
Journalism Department, College of Media, Al-Iraqia University, Baghdad, Iraq.

Aalaa Hassan
English Department, College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq.

ABSTRACT

The study investigates the effect of online college lectures on English language learners, focusing on technical challenges, online platforms, and disadvantages of online lectures compared to face-to-face learning and language proficiency development. The study objectives are to discover how the students view online lectures in terms of learning language skills, the technical obstacles, and how they evaluate the whole process. The study used qualitative and quantitative methods, and 12 participants from different Iraqi universities/English departments were selected. A Microsoft Word has been created to conduct an interview and distributed to the specified participants. The data used inductive thematic analysis to examine students' answers to questions about online learning. This provided a flexible exploration of the diverse perspectives of the participants. The results demonstrated varied responses to the evaluation of online lectures. Though it is effective and flexible with low costs, participants stated that loneliness, limited face-to-face interaction, and technical issues are considered the main obstacles to conducting essential online teaching. The study has contributed to the field of distance education as it is one of the most affordable techniques in English language teaching, considering the outcomes and challenges involved in the process.

Keywords: *Online Teaching, English Language Skills, Technical Obstacles, Online Platforms, Interaction and Feedback.*

1. Introduction

E-learning has attained high benefits as a modern language learning and teaching mode (Alqahtani & Rajkhan, 2020). Wu (2020) mentioned that E-learning is the application of digital technologies in educational settings. Furthermore, online learning has a similar meaning to e-learning and is a commonly known term in academic fields. This expression has turned from an empirical novel aspect into a practically widespread teaching technique (Strielkowski, 2020). Additionally, online learning is suitable to use when learners have restricted movement. Often, certain situations force learners to stay away from their educational establishments. According to these conditions, online learning provides the answer to omit the distance barrier since it presents the flexibility of learning (Ghirardini, 2011).

Educators and instructors perform their best to deliver the language successfully. Despite some strategies used by teachers to help learners acquire the four essential English language skills–reading, writing, listening, and speaking–which are very beneficial, it is necessary to study the effect of online settings that have a good influence on the students learning the English language (Alshammari, 2022). However, to teach a foreign language remotely is to use online learning platforms. Online platforms like Google Classroom use interactive technologies to support different learning activities and develop common language competencies (Juárez-Díaz & Perales, 2021). Online learning platforms provide ready-made lessons and assignments. Teachers can design and create tests and exercises that are compatible with the curriculum requirements. Additionally, for live classes, Google Meet is used as one of the prevalent virtual learning platforms. Google Meet, also known as Google Hangouts Meet, is created to permit dozens of participants to attend the same virtual meeting and chat or share video from any space with a good internet connection (John, 2020).

Despite, the easy-made lessons and being a flexible tool for learning the English language, online learning includes many

technical problems for students and instructors alike. These include limited access to internet networks, the weakness of devices, and unequal mastery of technology among students and instructors (Wulandari & Muslem, 2022). The participants encountered these technical obstacles during the distance learning process.

The low student motivation is one of the EFL teachers' challenges in managing online learning. Research demonstrates that monotonous teaching by instructors leads to a decrease in students' engagement in the learning process. In teaching English through online learning, teachers have to design the online learning appropriately. The method of delivering the course in online learning is based on students' comfort with the technology used, students' technical expertise with this technology, and students' available time (Nugroho, et al., 2021).

On the other hand, the disadvantage of online learning is the lack of interaction with teachers. Students mentioned that not seeing their teacher in online lessons made them less motivated and engaged. Many studies claimed that lack of face-to-face communication may also lead to loneliness and isolation among learners (Elayan, 2021).

The study aims to transfer students' experience with online learning the English language from different Iraqi universities, analyze their responses, and understand their feelings through this process. Furthermore, to uncover how the process had affected them positively and negatively; additionally, the study findings can guide educational institutions in developing online lectures with student's needs.

Teaching English Language Online

"English was the language of the leading colonial nation-Britain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the nineteenth century, it was the language of the ruler of the industrial revolution-Britian. In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth one, it was the major economic power of the USA. For this reason, when novel technologies provided new linguistic opportunities, English emerged as a first-rank language in industries that had affected all aspects of society press

advertising, broadcasting, motion pictures, sound recording, transport, and communications. (Crystal 1997, p 110-111)"

By the twenty-first century, online teaching has become a significant new approach. The earlier methods have been made through online platforms and different institutions have utilized the e-learning procedure in various places (Frydenberg, 2002). In contrast with traditional teaching, online learning modes have used presentations of thoughts through charts and discourse through online conferences; thus, electronic learning makes better use of various classroom training methodologies or home-based approaches (Soper, 2017).

In recent years, teaching and learning have been conducted from a distance; online English language teaching has offered a lot of comfort in scheduling for students and teachers in Iraq. Despite the poor internet connections, software glitches, or hardware failures in the country, many college instructors were able to pursue their higher studies and practice their regular job of presenting lectures and guiding students through electronic platforms, which eliminated the two factors of cost and travel for them. Students, as well, have found this is an effective opportunity to complete their studies in the evening hours and perform their work during the morning hours. Eventually, they do want to lose their jobs that support their lives.

Teaching English through Google Platforms Google Meet

Numerous educational institutions have adopted various learning systems to maintain education and ensure the safety of teachers and students through during online teaching. Consequently, Google meet has become an efficient learning platform throughout the country.

The research by Setyawan, et al. (2020) reveals that incorporating media-assisted lecture strategies through Google Meet creates a distinct learning experience that supports achieving educational objectives like knowledge development and student learning outcomes in a home-based learning environment. Consequently, Google Meet classes enhance interaction, communication, and motivation

between teachers and learners, as well as among learners in virtual courses (Benmansour, 2022).Google Meet is an effective tool for speaking especially in an English setting, and this has improved learners' speaking skills. Learners will enhance their ability to communicate better and explore their speaking abilities through video conferencing and online forums (Fakhruddin, 2018).

Google Classroom

Google Classroom has emerged as one of the most commonly used teaching platforms among professors and students. With over 30 million assignments uploaded by users, it indicates that this program could be an effective tool for teaching and learning in our educational system (Iftakhar, 2016). Online learning has brought main changes in education and learning settings; Google Classroom is one of these transformations, which has provided knowledge for students through conversation and discussion. Teachers have used this platform to register for courses that serve their academic careers and to upload assignments and tasks for students. Educators and students can also actively participate in the application. For each activity assigned by educators, Google Classroom offers features that enable both group and private communication between educators and students (Nursyahrina, et al, 2021).Google Classroom is regarded as an LMS (Learning Management System) application as it is linked to the university and school networks and seems to match students' demands for a simpler interface that permits more engagement (Heggart & Yoo, 2018).

Review of Related Studies

Distance education is a domain of education that focuses its technology to deliver teaching in the best ways. It is a convenient tool for students who are not actually attending the traditional classroom setting. The campus-based university is on the contrary to distance teaching. It replaces gathering students from distributed locations in one place with reaching out to students wherever or whenever they wish to study (Simon, 2012) . In recent years, electronic transformation has become a necessity in higher education, and as a

consequence of this innovation, certain administrative regulations have to adapt to this new era of learning and teaching (Strielkowski, 2020).

Among many languages worldwide, English is the most common language to learn. English platforms play a significant role in all areas of the globalized world (Rao, 2019). English is used, in most countries, as the second language, whereas in other countries, it acts as a foreign language. For this reason, it has continuously played a crucial task for learning and for international communication. (Mckay, 2002).

Significant studies have been conducted on online teaching and how this affects the studying of the English language in universities around the world. A survey was performed to investigate the elements that influence the approval of e-learning, including several English language students. The study has demonstrated the significance that technology has in learning a foreign language such as English and examined how people, organizational, and social aspects contribute to the admission of this technology among English language students (Ramzani, et al. (2013).

Collaborative online learning has been considered for German and Thai students; they were selected due to their cultural differences in values of power distance, collectivism, and femininity. The study explores the effect of community inquiry. The results have showed the differences in realizations of social and teaching presence between the two groups. German students have based their communication mainly on e-mail or messenger applications, and they didn't have the willingness to disrupt their classmate's privacy. Thai students, on the other hand, have the sense of being more connected during self-organized group work stages and support each other frequently (Grothaus, 2022).

A study that investigated the use of e-learning in teaching the English language was conducted in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. It consists of a random sample of 25 students in their final year of college study at the Department of English Language and Literature, where a questionnaire was distributed to them.

The method of data analysis was Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, mostly known as SPSS. The results have shown that learners disapproved about the use of online teaching considered it to have a negative impact on teaching the English language than traditional face-to-face education. (Murad & Kurdi, 2022).

Extensive research about how electronic learning is useful for English language teaching was managed by Al-Maqtri (2014). It explored the implementation of e-learning in the English department in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study has considered three years, academic years 2011-2012 to 2013-2014. It examined a total of forty undergraduate students and sixteen teachers who were the participants of the survey. The results have indicated a divergence in views between teachers and students regarding the effectiveness of e-learning. Teachers displayed a favorable view, considering e-learning as an effective teaching method. Still, students did not perceive e-learning as an efficient mode of learning. The study revealed that students have inadequate motivation to engage with e-learning, and most students face difficulties accessing the internet, thereby hindering their ability to meet online demands. To include teachers in his study, Al-Maqtri aimed to provide insights into their perspectives on e-learning, their eagerness to integrate technology into their teaching practices, and any obstacles they encountered.

To measure students' preference to the distance learning and how this will affect to the achievement obtained from this process, Tuckel&Carabalona (2023) has investigated the viewpoint of student attitude in this regard. The study explored four aspects: the technological and environmental challenges to distance learning, preferences between asynchronous and synchronous courses, (3) preferences between online and in-person courses, and (4) attitudes toward taking online courses in the future. Two unnamed online surveys have been considered in the spring and fall of 2020 among students at a big urban public college positioned in New York City. The findings of the study have demonstrated how students favor an asynchronous aspect over a synchronous one for online learning. Additionally, they prefer in-person courses to online ones across various features of the classroom experience.

To better understand the motivation of teachers and instructors for online learning, a study has been conducted to measure how online learning has created an overwhelming range of responsibilities for teachers. The study explored the school's teachers' motivation to incorporate the best tools into their existing pedagogy. Many possibilities of online tools have made teachers choose to retreat to what is comfortable and known, the traditional face-to-face teaching. Nevertheless, research has indicated that many educational institutions are continuing to use and update online tools as much as possible. On the other hand, teachers need these tools and support to continue to make these online learning experiences as engaging, enriching, and meaningful as their traditional classroom lessons (Wiles, et al., 2023).

The results of the aforementioned studies are varied in viewing online learning as an effective way of learning and teaching the English language. Furthermore, the current study contributes to the existing body of literature as it investigated the use of online lectures effect on students studying the English language and utilized a qualitative and quantitative methodology to provide a clear description of the collected data. The study conducted a comprehensive insight into the student experience of remote learning and tackled their issues of online learning outcomes of the English language. Additionally, the findings have showed that the primary challenges to delivering an effective online lecture are feelings of loneliness, limited face-to-face interaction, and the technical difficulties related to the studying of the English language.

2. Methodology
Research Design

The study utilized qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Qualitative research is concerned with conveying the complexity of participants' experiences and comprehending social realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), and the quantitative methodology was used to give the statistical

analysis of the students' responses. The researchers chose to use this quantitative strategy for a variety of reasons. Understanding the phenomenon is aided by both the researchers and the readers by providing a description and analysis of the data. "One of the greatest strengths of the qualitative approach is the richness and depth of exploration and description" (Myers, 2000). Researchers using a qualitative method examine people's experiences and encourage readers to learn more about online lectures. The questions were adopted from the Wulandari, et al. (2022) research paper, where a semi-structured interview of nine (open-and close-questions) was conducted to cover aspects of online lectures on English language skills, technical challenges, online platforms that have been utilized in the teaching process and the pros and cons of online in comparison

to traditional teaching. Additionally, personal interviews and document analysis were used in this study to collect detailed information and offer a more comprehensive picture of the process of online education (see appendix 1).

Participants

The sample consisted of three groups: four students from each university, the Department of English/College of Education for Women/University of Baghdad, the Department of English/College of Languages/Al-Nisour University, and the Department of English/College of Arts/Imam Ja'afar al-Sadiq University during the academic years for virtual learning 2020-2021, and 2021-2022 and face-toface learning 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. The criteria for choosing have been considered based on the period they have spent in online teaching.

Table 1: Profile of Participants

No.	Gender	Age	Online Period Study	University	Enrollment Status
1.	Female	21	Two-years	University of Baghdad	Graduated
2.	Female	33	Two-years	University of Baghdad	Graduated
3.	Female	22	Two-years	University of Baghdad	Graduated
4.	Female	22	Two-years	University of Baghdad	Graduated
5.	Male	23	Two-years	Al-Nisour University	Graduated
6.	Male	22	Two-years	Al-Nisour University	Graduated
7.	Female	22	Two-years	Al-Nisour University	Graduated
8.	Female	23	Two-years	Al-Nisour University	Graduated
9.	Male	28	Two-years	Imam al-Sadiq University	Graduated
10.	Female	25	Two-years	Imam al-Sadiq University	Graduated
11.	Female	32	Two-years	Imam al-Sadiq University	Graduated
12.	Male	26	Two-years	Imam al-Sadiq University	Graduated

Data Collection Instrument

The study used Google Meet to connect with students and gather information about the time spent in online lectures, the process of online teaching for different skills, the difficulties they faced and how they overcame

them, the platforms they used, the disadvantages of online teaching in comparison to traditional teaching, and an overall evaluation of the whole process. (see appendix 1). The questions used in the interview appear clearly in Table 2.

Table2: Questions adapted from Wulandari et al. (2022)

No.	Questions
1.	What is your gender?
2.	What is your age?
3.	Which university did you attend?
4.	How long did you spend in online lectures?
5.	How was the process of online teaching the English language skills, listening, reading, writing and speaking?

6.	What were the technical challenges you have faced with online college lectures teaching?
7.	How did you overcome these challenges?
8.	What platform was easy to use in online college lectures?
9.	What were the disadvantages of online compare to face-to-face teaching?
10.	How did you evaluate the process of online college lectures?

Data Analysis

Inductive thematic analysis is used to examine the data from students' answers to questions about online learning. This approach allowed themes to emerge directly from the students' responses during the interview, providing a flexible exploration of diverse perspectives and nuanced insights. The study obtained authentic and in-depth reports of the students' experiences by depending solely on their responses. It ensured that the conclusions were based on the participants' perspectives and reflections. This approach also made it easier to comprehend the many benefits and problems of remote learning, as well as the particular techniques students used to overcome the obstacles.

3.   Results

The researchers will show the results in detail and use both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

Language Skills

Most of the topics being taught at Iraqi universities have indirectly included the four language skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. For most of the students, these skills have been affected by online college lectures either positively or negatively. The students' responses to this question revealed diverse results regarding language skills. The first one is listening, which was reported 100%, as shown in Table 3, where all the participants from the three universities stated. With the microphone being muted during online lectures, which provided more space for the teachers to explain the topic, and with less noise from the students, it made them listen clearly to the explanation of the subjects through the online lecture. Additionally, Candidates 6 and 9 expressed that the available audio material that provided interactive exercises through Google Classroom improved

their listening comprehension. The second is a reading that recorded varied results from the three universities. Only 50% of them from Baghdad University showed that reading is practiced only when the teacher asks them to read a certain paragraph. Candidates 1 and 2 expressed 0% experience. With a bad internet connection, it is difficult for teachers to know whether what they have read is right or wrong. As for al-Nisour University, the result was 100%, which proved their experience is somehow better, where Candidates 7 and 8 stated that reading is manageable during online lectures, while Candidates 5 and 6 expressed how reading was honed by e-books and electronic articles.

Candidates 10 and 12 from Al-Sadiq University had a different experience reported 50% where they had practiced reading, especially when teachers asked them to read the assignment or certain paragraph in an essay subject. Candidates 11 and 9 showed 0% as they didn't have the chance to enhance their reading, specifically with technical issues concerning the internet. The third skill is speaking, reported at 50% for two universities, Baghdad and Al-Nisour University, and 75% for Al-Sadiq University. For Baghdad University, 50% of Candidates 1 and 4 expressed that speaking was practiced when replying to questions from teachers, and Google Meet was being used as an online platform, which had eased the process of participation for students to conduct activities that involved speaking. Candidates 2 and 3 showed 0% experience in speaking; they explained that the limited time of a lecture and the fact that many students attended at the same time hindered the chance to speak. As for Al-Nisour University, the result is the same, where 50% of Candidates 6 and 7 showed that speaking was practiced through virtual classrooms and online activities. Candidate 8 expressed that face-to-face is

better when it comes to enhancing speaking skills, and Candidate 5 mentioned how it was a challenging process. Finally, for Al-Sadiq University, the students had a better experience with a 75% result. Candidates 9 and 10 stated that it was interesting and beneficial, especially when using electronic material such as pair-group activities that improved the process of speaking. Candidate 12 mentioned it was manageable to talk in online settings. Candidate 11 expressed their preference for face-to-face interaction with the teacher. The final skill is writing, and the results appeared to be ineffective in learning and enhancing with online teaching. For Baghdad and Al-Sadiq University, the result was 25%. Candidate 3 expressed that writing was somehow practiced through Google Classroom by solving online assignments, and Candidate 11 stated that it was an acceptable experience and manageable when it comes to online writing. Candidates 1,

2, and 4 mentioned how they did not learn anything new or did not practice writing because everything is being done through electronic mediums, which made them lazy writers. Candidates 9, 10, and 12 expressed how writing restrained their ability to learn new vocabulary because of using Grammar Checker and Google Translate, which made them dependent on technology a lot.

As for Al-Nisour University, the result was 50%. Candidates 6 and 7 mentioned how their experience with practicing writing through online teaching and doing online tests has improved their electronic abilities of writing. Candidate 5 mentioned how it was a challenging and discouraging experience; Candidate 8 preferred the face-to-face interaction with the teacher when practicing writing; consequently, they showed 0% experience of online learning.

Table 3: The process of online teaching the English Language Skills

University	Listening		Reading		Speaking		Writing	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
University of Baghdad	4	100%	2	50%	2	50%	1	25%
Al-Nisour University	4	100%	4	100%	2	50%	2	50%
Al-Sadiq University	4	100%	2	50%	3	75%	1	25%
Total	12	100%	9	75%	7	58%	4	33%

Technical Obstacles

Online teaching relies extensively on technology, and technical issues obstruct the learning process. Poor internet connections, software glitches, or hardware failures can result in interruptions and dissatisfaction for teachers and students. As stated by all the Candidates of the study, limited internet access is a common issue in Iraq. All the students from the three universities reported 100% internet access difficulty, as shown in Table 3.

For the University of Baghdad, Candidates 1 and 2 expressed that a poor internet connection resulted in missing the quiz. Not equipped with the basic means of running the necessary software for online quizzes, Candidate 3 showed difficulty conducting an online test. For Candidates 5 and 11, poor internet connection hindered audio quality, resulting in miscommunication with the

teacher. Certain online platforms are not operating well with poor connection to the internet; the FCC platform reported 25% for Candidate 3, who faced a challenging time during the online lecture. Candidates 4 and 7 from both the University of Baghdad and Al-Nisour University reported 25% frustration when many students attended a fixed time of online lecture because of the bad service; this led to a crashed internet connection. The candidates expressed how this affected their learning of language skills, reading, speaking, and writing. The poor connection made text on the screen hard to read, the continuous interruptions made speaking during an assignment difficult, leading to miscommunication with the teachers, and it also obstructed their ability to type on the keyboard effectively.

For Al-Nisour University, the weak service of the internet made Candidate 8 miss a lot of lectures, and for Candidate 7, teachers did not use the recording lecture criteria; certain distractions at home reported 25% for Candidate 6, which affected significantly the learning outcome. Consequently, this impeded the engagement with reading comprehension and the skill of writing effectively. For al-Sadiq University, Candidate 10 mentioned that a bad connection led to difficulty in reading on the screen, Candidate 11 led to misinterpretation of certain topics mentioned by the teachers, and Candidate 12 added that the phone battery charge was off because of the bad electricity. Ironically, during the study interview with Candidate 8, the same problem arose, resulting in stopping and repeating answering the questions of the interview. Candidate 12 stated during the interview that the limited internet access resulted in poor hearing of the questions.

As a result, Al-Sadiq University candidates showed that internet interruption had disrupted their communication with the teacher; the weak connection of the internet caused problems with reading and writing for the students during online lectures, which led to weakness in perception of the subjects and decreased engagement to the learning English through online settings.

Table 4: Technical challenges with online college lectures

University	Internet Weakness		FCC Platform Problem		Lectures Schedule		Surrounding Distractions	
	No	Percent	No	Percent	No	Percent	No	Percent
University of Baghdad	4	100%	1	25%	1	25%	0	0%
Al-Nisour University	4	100%	0	0%	1	25%	1	25%
Al-Sadiq University	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	12	100%	1	8%	2	17%	1	8%

Managing Technical Problems

Since it is a common problem in the country, not all the students managed to provide stable access to internet service; however, they tried to enhance the service through certain strategies. The results varied among the three universities, and Baghdad University reported the lowest result; only 50% addressed the technical issues as shown in Table 5. Candidates 1 and 2 did not solve the problem as they stated it was challenging, and even now, they are still suffering from a bad connection. Candidate 2 asked the teacher to record the lecture for later study offline. Candidate 3 used backup devices, and they switched to using Google, which reported 25% as a better choice and reliable when it comes to low internet service. Candidate 4 mentioned that the teacher scheduled the time of the lecture and distributed the students into groups to attend the lecture properly.

For Al-Nisour University, the experience of internet improvement is better where 75% managed to optimize the service. Candidates 5 communicated with the teacher to offer support and help to access a reliable internet service and used backup devices. Candidate 6 tried to be familiar more with digital systems to use online tools effectively and provided a less distracted environment for better learning outcomes reported 25%. Candidate 8 did not overcome the limited internet access which caused a problem even during the interview process. Candidate 7 maintained regular attendance of the online lectures and used a laptop as it had a better connection. As for fixed-time lectures, Al-Nisour and Baghdad University reported 17% problem solving where Candidates 7 and 4 asked the teacher to schedule multiple times of lectures and with varying commitment to make better online learning results.

For Al-Sadiq University, they reported 100% internet enhancement. Candidate 9 expressed that mobile data service is more reliable and minimizes poor internet

connection; Candidate 10 got support and help from their sibling. Providing alternative ways to understand the topics through YouTube videos when the internet is good is what Candidate 11 had expressed. Candidate 12 stated that searching for online sessions about how to conduct a USB is in some way solving the problem of internet service providers.

Table 5: Address the technical issues

University	Internet Stability		Google-Meet Platform		Fix Schedule		Less Distractions	
	No	Percent	No	Percent	No	Percent	No	Percent
University of Baghdad	2	50%	1	25%	1	25%	0	0%
Al-Nisour University	3	75%	0	0%	1	25%	1	25%
Al-Sadiq University	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	9	75%	1	8%	2	17%	1	8%

Educational Platforms

Several educational platforms have implemented diverse pedagogical approaches to preserve knowledge and guarantee the security of instructors and students during online teaching. For many students, Google Classroom is the best platform because teachers can upload various files or media, such as photos, sound clips, videos, Word documents, or PDF files, which students can access anytime. All candidates from the three universities confirmed that Google Meet is very helpful for meeting professors and peers; as shown in Table 6, candidates chose Google Classroom (100%). The second platform mentioned by students is Telegram. All students from Al-Nisour University used Telegram as a supplementary platform alongside Google Classroom, with a usage rate of 100%, and Candidate 12 from Al-Sadiq University also mentioned it, resulting in a 50% usage rate. The total usage rate for Telegram across the three universities was 42%; the simple usage and the ability to create a group or channel, besides sending messages with all types of files or media, gave this platform the second highest usage.

The third platform for uploading videos to students was YouTube, mentioned by two students from Al-Sadiq University, Candidates 9 and 12 and Candidate 3 from the University of Baghdad. The fourth usage platform was given to Zoom (17%). Finally, the lowest percentage was given to the FCC. Candidate 8 mentioned that Zoom was good for listening to lectures, and Candidate 4 expressed that FCC or Zoom platforms are rather bad as they were often an alternative platform for Google Meet. As a personal use for enhancing the learning of the English language, Candidate 9 mentioned that Instagram reels are good in this regard.

Table 6: The use of online educational platforms by universities

University	Google Classroom		Telegram		YouTube		Zoom		FCC	
	No	Percent	No	Percent	No	Percent	No	Percent	No	Percent
University of Baghdad	4	100%	0	0%	1	25%	1	25%	1	25%
Al-Nisour University	4	100%	4	100%	0	0%	1	25%	0	0%
Al-Sadiq University	4	100%	1	25%	2	50%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	12	100%	5	42%	3	25%	2	17%	1	8%

As shown above, the facilitation of teaching and learning processes made Google Classroom a crucial platform in online education. As for live classes, Google Meet is considered an effective platform mentioned by the participants. Next comes Telegram, as it is a vital communication platform after Google Classroom in Iraq. Another platform chosen was YouTube; this platform supplied students with access to visual materials. The students could watch them any time and repeat them many times. For this feature, it is considered a

valuable tool for teaching students online. The fourth platform chosen was Zoom; it is crucial for visual conferences, but still, it does not have the popularity of other platforms. Finally, the lowest percentage was given to FCC due to being used often as an alternative to Google Meet.

Disadvantages of Online Teaching in Comparison to Traditional Teaching

The physical appearance of the teacher in traditional teaching is really important to make the students fully engaged with the lecture; however, this is not attainable in online lectures, consequently affecting the quality of communication between teacher and student. The results of the study showed considerable disadvantages of online teaching among the three universities. Four aspects have been demonstrated among the participants: lack of communication, concentration, feedback, and interaction.

Lack of interaction, which scored 50% for all universities. Candidate 2 expressed the lack of interaction by not seeing the teacher, adding she did not know the teacher's facial expression about certain points she mentioned, which is why she preferred physical teaching. Besides the lack of concentration and feedback, Candidate 3 also mentioned the disadvantage of the absence of interaction with the teacher which affected the online teaching outcome. Candidate 4 expressed that interaction with the teacher hindered the process of learning, just reading and speaking orders. Sometimes, many students attended the online lecture, so we didn't have the chance to ask anything. Candidate 6 mentioned that lack of interaction caused the feeling of isolation; personal connection is better with face-to-face teaching. Candidate 9 was affected by the lack of interaction, as he stated that it made them feel bored because we were sitting behind the screen not seeing the doctor's reaction when speaking. Face-to-face is better because it's a

good opportunity to ask and see the teacher's reaction in person. For Candidate 12, the process of interaction was for him to share his ideas with friends and communicate in person with them; with online, it was really difficult. He added that teachers with online settings could not see who was focusing and who was not.

For the Lack of feedback reported 33%. Candidate 3 and 5 mentioned without feedback and motivation from the teacher, it hindered the process of learning the English language, Candidate 6 preferred physical classroom rather than the virtual one as in online there is no immediate feedback for the students. Candidate 10 expressed that absence of motivation and feedback made the students less interested in online teaching and this led to laziness in doing homework, she prefers face-to-face in this aspect.

Next, lack of communication which reported 25%. Candidate 1 stated that the most important thing in teaching and learning a second language is communication, and it cannot be good if we do not create our own environment of learning, face-to-face is better in this regard. For Candidate 8 the poor connection of internet and sound interruptions resulted to weak communication with the instructors, Candidate 11 mentioned that face-to-face is better to understand and communicate with the teacher, and if you face any difficulty, you can ask the teachers immediately. With online teaching, it's difficult with the bad internet or student interruptions to grasp the topic from the teacher.

Finally, for the lack of concentration, it scored 17% as candidate 7 said that with no concentration it created little motivation in online teaching, and she added how online settings was like a confined circle. Candidate 3 mentioned that distractions at home caused difficulty to concentrate with the teacher; she added that some group activities were challenging to be done through online settings.

As a result, many candidates stated that the main disadvantage of online teaching is the lack of interaction with their teachers which is very important in developing and improving a second or foreign language. Then comes the lack of feedback as students see it's vital to be motivated in online settings, the limited internet access hindered the good communication between teachers and students consequently led to lack of concentration among students.

Table 7: Disadvantageous of online teaching

University	Lack of Interaction		Lack of Feedback		Lack of Communication		Lack of Concentration	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
University of Baghdad	3	75%	1	25%	1	25%	1	25%
Al-Nisour University	1	25%	2	50%	1	25%	1	25%
Al-Sadiq University	2	50%	1	25%	1	25%	0	0%
Total	6	50%	4	33%	3	25%	2	17%

Evaluation of Online Teaching

Examining the responses provided by the students about their evaluation of the online college lecture process revealed that their experience with online lectures showed the positive and negative outcomes.

Flexibility and Convenience

Candidate 1 gave online lectures a 7 out of 10, recognizing its value in enabling students to finish their education even under difficult circumstances. She did observe that it was not as useful for learning English, though. Candidate 2 didn't state her evaluation, but said that attending lectures online was helpful, particularly for parents who had to stay at home with young children. Candidate 8 expressed excellent satisfaction with online teaching, giving it a high rating of 9 out of 10, according to this, online teaching is considered flexible and convenient. Candidate 12 expressed a quite satisfaction result of learning English skills, listening, reading and speaking with online education, rating it 7 out of 10.

Availability as a Supplemental Tool

Online teaching as a supplemental tool not as a replacement to face-to-face teaching was evaluated by Candidate 3 as 6 out of 10 and confirmed it is a more effective way of teaching.

Ineffective and Less Engaging Mode of Learning

The students also showed the negative side of online teaching in their evaluation for engagement and effectiveness. Candidate 1 stated that the crucial first two years of college were not well-suited for the development of English language skills through online instruction. Candidate 5 gave it a 7 out of 10, saying that while it was less engaging than face-to-face education, it was still reasonably effective. Due to a lack of immediate feedback, Candidate 6 gave it a 7 out of 10. Candidate 7 gave online teaching a 6.5 out of 10 stating it was less engaging and during participation I have to wait for my role to answer unlike the physical teaching where I just raise my hand and the teacher will notice me. Candidate 4 gave online teaching a 4 out of 10 saying that while it was useful for watching videos, she preferred the traditional learning. Candidate 10 rated online education with a score of 6 out of 10showing that it was less motivated mode of learning.

Limitations and Difficulties

Candidate 9 expressed substantial unhappiness with online instruction, giving it a 4 out of 10 rating because of the lack of interaction with the teacher. Though there is difficulty in communication, but it's still a useful experience for Candidate 11 who evaluated it a 7 out of 10.

Table 8: Evaluation of Online Learning

University	4		6		7		9		10	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No	Percent
University of Baghdad	1	25%	1	25%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%
Al-Nisour University	0	0%	1	25%	2	50%	1	25%	0	0%

Al-Sadiq University	1	25%	1	25%	2	50%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	2	17%	3	25%	5	42%	1	8%	0	0%

Most students gave their online instruction a moderate satisfaction rating of between 6 and 7 out of 10 (25%, 42%), this is clearly shown in Table 8. They valued the convenience and flexibility it offered, particularly in difficult circumstances. One candidate 8 gave online teaching a very high rating, 9 out of 10 (8%), indicating that it was quite satisfied experience for her with their online education. Due to ineffectiveness, low engagement, and limited interaction, two students gave online teaching lower ratings of 4 out of 10 (17%).

4. Discussion

Teaching the English language is challenging in online settings, especially with the lack of face-to-face interaction. According to the aforementioned results of the current study, online lectures had several outcomes for studying the English language effectively. The findings proved that learning language skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing are severely affected by the online lecture teaching format. All of the candidates showed satisfactory results when it came to listening skills, reporting 100%. It was audibly easy to listen to the lectures. Furthermore, listening wasn't affected much by the technical issues that faced students through online platforms. Reading and speaking reported different results (75% and 58%) since these were affected by the poor internet connection causing speaking interruptions and delays in loading teaching material on the screen. It's to be noted from the responses analysis of the students that online speaking caused difficulty for students to practice with their colleagues and instructors. Additionally, for reading, prolonged screen time can lead to eye strain and fatigue, resulting in difficulty in concentration for students. The lowest percentage was for writing skills, which reported 33%. Candidates believed that using smart devices to solve assignments or to do tests hindered their process of learning new words, and most importantly, being dependent on technology when it comes to grammar check applications, they preferred handwriting for better grammar self-checking.

The main technical obstacle that faced students and teachers is the weakness of internet service which is a common issue in the country as stated by all the candidates that reported 100%. Fixed lecture schedules reported at 17%, weakness of certain platforms reported at 8% and the lack of concertation with the surrounding distractions reported at 8% were other factors that contributed to miscommunication and motivation to the distance learning of the English language. Most students found ways for internet stability 75% by using backup devices and becoming more familiar with digital literacy. Furthermore, they asked the teachers for a flexible timetable of the lectures or to record the lectures so they could study offline and use a compatible platform with limited access to the internet, such as Google Meet. Fostering digital training and using better online platforms can help address some of the technical issues that students through online learning environments.

The results demonstrated that Google Classroom has proved to be an effective tool in online learning that reported 100%. Teachers can upload various files or different media, such as photos, sound clips, videos, and Word or PDF files, so students can access them anytime. As for conducting live lectures, screen sharing, and how it's easy to use, Google Meet reported 100% that it considered the suitable platform for that. The analysis also showed that Telegram was reported to be 42% easier to use for groups or channels in addition to sending messages or various media (photos or videos), which indicated that it's an effective second communication platform for students. YouTube comes as a third platform 25%, and students mentioned how it was useful for video recording and when teachers shared tutorials for learning the English language.

Students are really accustomed to the idea of face-to-face learning, and the teacher will guide and give instructions to the students; this will result in a greater possibility of live interaction between the teacher and the

learner (Rai, 2021). With online settings, there is not only less but a lack of interaction with the teacher. The findings of the study showed that the main disadvantage for students is the loss or absence of interaction with instructors, reported 50%. Another disadvantage stated by participants is the lack of feedback, reported 33%, resulting in less motivation for online learning. Additionally, some important non-verbal clues, such as eye contact, are not found in online teaching. Furthermore, the students can ask any questions at any time during the physical classes, and this trait does not exist in online learning, which may not create an effective connection with their teachers. On the other hand, candidates also mentioned that the limited internet access prevented good communication between teachers and students, consequently leading to a lack of concentration among them. Without effective communication, it was difficult to do activities and tests, which adversely impacted the learning process.

Exploring the results of the student's evaluation of the whole process of the online lectures demonstrated certain positive and negative attitudes. Most participants' ratings were between 6 and 7 out of 10. Five participants rated 7; despite the disadvantage of miscommunication and the lack of interaction, they consider it effective and convenient during difficult times and a flexible tool with low costs. As for the lowest score, it was rated 4 out of 10 as two candidates mentioned how it's really difficult and challenging when you can't interact in person with teachers; in addition to that, being less engaged and less motivated created difficulty in evolving and advancing the knowledge to the specified areas that aim for their benefit outcome.

For most students, face-to-face interaction in learning the English language is better than online learning because it allows quick feedback and personal interaction. The feeling of loneliness and low motivation caused the absence of social interaction, which is considered ineffective for students' participation and academic performance. Teachers have to come up with more effective methods to consider the time the students need and receive feedback in online teaching. The lack of engagement and motivation appeared clear in most students' responses; therefore, the effectiveness of teaching online has decreased. Also, large class sizes cannot ensure engagement in the class, while smaller classes are more interactive with a limited number of students. Despite the comfortability and flexibility, most students still prefer traditional teaching, and this is due to the interaction, participation, and other facilities that are available in this type of teaching.

5. Conclusions

Based on the results and discussion above, the researchers draw some conclusions about the present study of online college lectures on students studying the English language. According to the candidates' responses, students demonstrated various results when teaching language skills, listening, reading, speaking, and writing through online settings. All participants displayed high satisfaction with their listening skills and found it easy to listen to the lectures. Reading and speaking showed different results as these were affected by the limited access to the internet, which led to interruptions during speaking and difficulty in showing the teaching material on the screen. As for writing skills, it demonstrated the lowest response from the participants as they believed that using smart devices to solve assignments and perform tests hindered their ability to learn new vocabulary and made them overly reliant on technology.

Technical issues were the primary obstacle for the students and teachers alike; it was a widespread matter in the country. Fixed lecture time, weakness of certain online platforms, and surrounding distractions are other obstacles that showed less response. Participants managed to address these issues to a certain degree by using backup devices and enhancing their digital literacy skills; additionally, they requested that teachers afford a flexible lecture schedule and record lectures for watching offline. For being effective and easy to use, Google Classroom showed the highest response as an online educational platform. For live lectures and screen sharing,

Google Meet also received a satisfactory result. Though it is effective, convenient during difficult times, and a flexible tool with low costs, students displayed that the most negative side of online teaching is the interaction with the teacher; they need to see their teacher to be more engaged and motivated for English language learning. For most students, face-to-face interaction in learning the English language is better than online learning because it allows quick feedback and better communication with the teacher. The feeling of loneliness, limited face-to-face interaction, and technical issues are considered the main obstacles to conducting an effective online lecture.

6.   Recommendations

Related to the conclusions above, the researchers would like to make some recommendations. First, the student's experience would be better if they had improved internet stability; thus, educational institutions must address these issues by improving their technology infrastructure. Second, teachers need to consider more live lecture videos with cameras on where they can best interact with their students, and this will mimic the physical classroom environment. Third, allocate some time for the students who need support and feedback, as they are crucial to the production of online teaching of the English language.

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