

# THE CHALLENGES FACED BY ONLINE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS FROM SEMESTER TWO POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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## Abstract

Covid 19 pandemic has not only affected global economy but also the educational systems simultaneously. The pandemic situation has posed unprecedented challenges requiring educators to adapt teaching online. Switching from face-to-face classroom to a virtual classroom makes the learning experience entirely different and brings new challenges for students. This study aimed to spot the challenges faced by semester 2 Politeknik Kota Bharu students towards online English language learning (OELL). This study involves semester 2 Diploma in Accounting students enrolled in the DUE30022: Communicative English 2 course for December 2020 intake. To achieve the objective, an online survey was carried out in 4 different classes consist of 88 students from Commerce Department to gather the data. The goal of this study is to seek out the possible challenges that can influence students' acceptance towards online English language learning (OELL). According to the findings, the main factors making it challenging for distance learners to learn English are limited proper device used, insufficient hours of lectures, limited face-to-face interactions between the lecturers and students, issues with insufficient learning materials for language learning and limited access of the internet. Motivated and interested students are more likely to be actively engaged in online English language learning. They can determine what the students learn, how they learn and when they choose to learn during online language classes.

**Keywords:** Online English language learning, challenges, recommendations

## INTRODUCTION

Online learning has become a normal phenomenon nowadays in Malaysian higher education system due to today's pandemic issue of COVID 19. As a result, there has been a significant surge in the usage of various online teaching and learning platforms (Li, C. & Lalani, F, 2020). Schools and universities are now conducting online teaching using all possible educational technology resources. This has made it technically challenging for teachers and students to accept this "new normal" academic environment (Memon et.al, 2020). The present study was carried out to explore the challenges of teaching English online from semester two Polytechnic students' perspective during COVID-19 and to provide some possible paths towards effective online English language teaching and learning. Students taking online courses may face challenges that they have never encountered in a traditional teaching and learning atmosphere (Tsai, 2009), and these challenges may impact their learning performance (Davies & Graffs, 2005). However, online learning has become a significant part of education, and it is thought to provide distinct benefits in the learning process (Appana, 2008; Dolence & Norris, 1995; Katz, 1999; Shopova, 2014).

The questionnaire was designed to collect the data and were tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha equals to 0.813. As a result, it is possible to infer that the questionnaire with the 12 items supplied is trustworthy and may be deployed as instruments for the constructs developed. The findings indicated that there are certain challenges that students must face in online English language learning and there are those with a “traditional” mindset who found it difficult to adapt with the new learning circumstances.

The lecturers should consider the needs of the students and should accommodate their teaching techniques based on the issues faced so that students achieve the intended learning objectives. Adequate courses and trainings on online learning for the lecturers should also be considered to meet the students' 21st-century learning demands. Rapid advancements in educational technology have also given educators and students new options in an ever-changing, competitive teaching and learning environment. Teaching English online can be effective if the lecturers and students have sufficient training and orientation. The course should use comprehensible materials by choosing appropriate levels of difficulty and adequate methods, interactions and assessments suitable with different level of language acquisition among the students. This would allow the students to find the course engaging, relevant and meaningful in a manner appropriate and conducive to the situational context of distance learners.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Clark and Mayer help define e-learning as instruction delivered by any technological mode intended to promote learning (2011). Teaching and learning in an e-learning environment differs from traditional classroom settings, posing new challenges for instructors and students participating in this online learning environment. The amount of experience and comfort level each learner has with these specific resource technologies determines the quality of learning outcomes and, more importantly, the successful use of the expected technology resources (Warschauer, 2003).

This study demonstrates that students' consciousness or enthusiasm for the course will affect their performance despite the challenges that they face. According to Smart and Cappel (2006), students' technical background is also a factor in their preference for online courses. They say that students with more technical experience are more likely to have a positive attitude towards online classes than those who do not. Students' attitudes and opinions may be influenced by their computer anxiety (Sun, Tsai, Finger, Chen, & Yeh, 2008) and personality. Personality variations such as extroversion may influence students' views on distance language learning, according to Smidt, Bunk, McGrory, Li, and Gatenby (2014). Extroverted students may desire face-to-face interaction because they enjoy direct interaction with the instructor and their peers. Online learning, according to Clarke and Hermens (2001), is student-centered so students can set their tempo and activities can be tailored to a student's desired learning style. Productive learning is also possible through online learning (Dolence & Norris, 1995).

Online learning does not have to be limited to just email and web-based classroom interactions. Learners frequently experience anxiety when learning online and require the feeling of being connected, reassured, and safe in order to contribute to their new learning

environments (Terry & Leppa, 2009; Hastie, Hung, Chen, & Kinshuk, 2010). E-learning environments often lack a variety of communication options creating an unwelcoming online learning atmosphere (Terry & Leppa, 2009; Martin, 2009; Hastie et al., 2010), which only the instructor can control. Utama et al. (2020) in their study on “Medical Students’ Perspectives about Distance Learning during Covid-19 Pandemic,” discovered several challenges, although the participants were excited about the online classes at the beginning, it was difficult for teachers to identify the students’ engagements.

Schmidt and Topaz (2018) investigated students’ attitudes toward massive open online courses (MOOCs). They selected 84 students who were already enrolled in a MOOC. The responses revealed students’ positive attitudes toward the course and acquired tremendous technological and pedagogical knowledge in online courses. Besides, the study also suggested that MOOC can be a great source of help for teachers’ professional development. However, many studies also discovered that several learners fail to participate successfully in online classes due to lack of online learning skills (Kebritchi, M., Lipschuetz, A. & Santiago 2017). Furthermore, poor internet connectivity and technological knowledge among the students and teachers were other challenging issues frequently mentioned by previous researchers in online learning.

However, another research on the “method used in teaching English during the COVID-19 pandemic” by Fansury et al. (2020) found digital content is very helpful in teaching English during the pandemic. Different applications and online teaching tools like zoom, Google Meet, and others can be integrated with it, and teaching and learning become much more comfortable. Nonetheless, many students failed to attend online classes for poor internet connectivity or limited data during this pandemic. Dudeney and Hockly (2007) emphasized that technology and language teaching should go hand in hand. However, they also pointed out anxiety among many teachers in dealing with technology in language teaching, despite academic institutions’ advanced educational equipment in language teaching. To help alleviate students’ anxiety, instructors should provide a variety of alternative ways for them to interact and communicate, such as Skype, chat forums, or discussion boards.

Previous studies have revealed that learners’ use of effective and appropriate online learning strategies will lead to successful academic achievement (Artino, & Jones, 2012). Additionally, Solak and Cakir (2015) argued that employing effective online learning strategies is essential because, in doing so, students can learn faster, have more pleasure, and learn more efficiently and effectively. Increased interaction between instructors and students is needed to encourage students to take responsibility for and control their own online language learning.

Students need to monitor and self-regulate their online language learning by setting up a learning schedule to ensure they can complete all the lessons on time. According to Chang’s (2013) study, students who adopted the self-monitoring preformed academically better than those who did not on the test of general English proficiency. George Teoh et.al (2013) asserted that course designers and instructors must be familiar with distance learning and second language acquisition theories. They should also be sensitive to the students’ individual differences and needs. This would allow students to find the course engaging, relevant, and meaningful in a way that is appropriate for the situational context of distance

learners. Related literatures indicated that despite the challenges faced by the students, the instructor's primary roles within the learning environment will help to overcome challenges, support, and sustain students' success. Nevertheless, there are still many areas that could be covered when studying the issues and challenges faced by online English language learners.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research objectives**

The objectives of the study are as follow:

1. To identify the challenges faced by students in online English language learning.
2. To investigate ways and means how to overcome the challenges.

### **Research questions**

This study will be conducted based on the research questions:

1. What are the challenges faced by students in online English language learning?
2. What are the ways to overcome the challenges?

### **Respondents**

This study involves 88 semester 2 students from Politeknik Kota Bharu who enrolled in DUE 30022: Communicative English 2 course. The Communicative English 2 course has two major components. The 1-hour lecture which is carried out via Google Meet or Microsoft Teams, while the 2-hour tutorial class is conducted via a Learning Management System (LMS) known as Curriculum Information Document Online System (CIDOS 3.5). The LMS CIDOS 3.5 is a web-based learning platform designed to provide educators, administrators and learners with a single robust, secure and integrated system to create personalized learning environments. It is a tool that facilitates teaching and learning (T&L) between lecturers and students through the Internet. The CIDOS 3.5 was established by the Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education, Ministry of Higher Education. This feature provides a channel of communication among students and lecturers that is not bounded by class time and physical presence.

An online survey provided through the Google form link was carried out in 4 different classes participated voluntarily by 88 respondents from Commerce Department in order to gather the data. Further, a self-administered questionnaire has been prepared based on the already published literature and circulated among the students in their classes WhatsApp groups. It is formulated on the consideration of a total of 12 items, which has been ranked using a five-point Likert scaling system ranging from 1-strongly agree (SA), 2- agree (A), 3-neutral (N), to 5-strongly disagree (SD). Further, the items in the questionnaire have been divided into two parts. The first part consists of 2 items that aim to determine gender, departments, respondents' access to internet and types of gadgets used in online English classes. The second part includes 12 items that aim to investigate the challenges of teaching English online. The descriptive analysis of the data has been done using SPSS 26 software.

The questionnaire was adapted from (Razlina:2016) and (Settha Kuama & Usa Intharaksa:2016). It was also checked and validated by a senior lecturer with PhD qualification from the English Unit of Politeknik Kota Bharu who also teach English subject. There are 6 instruments with negative statements that need to be recoded since the findings show the mean value is quite low. Therefore, recoding is necessary to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings without any alteration of the original data.

### Materials

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences known as SPSS version 26 data analysis was used to analyse the data in this study. Based on the research by (Khairul Zahreen & Syuhaida & Abd Latih: 2018) by using Cronbach Alpha, the value of instruments can be identified based on the range from less than 0.59 to more than 0.90. The instruments with a range of 0.5 to 0.59 are deemed as poor and unacceptable while 0.6 to 0.69 is deemed questionable of acceptability. While the instruments with the range of 0.80 to 0.89 are considered as good instruments. The reliability of the instruments was conducted and examined to ensure the internal validity and consistency of the items used for each construct. The instruments used in this study were discovered to have a very good level of reliability (Low-Stakes testing), with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient  $\alpha = 0.813$ . There were no instruments discovered to have a poor and unacceptable reliability level. The reliability level of 12 instruments from 1 construct used in this study can be seen in the display table (refer to table 1). Overall, the Cronbach Alpha value for all instruments is  $\alpha > 0.8$ , this can be evaluated as very good (Nunnally, 1978). Hence, it can be concluded that the questionnaire with the 12 items which has been distributed is reliable and can be used as the instruments for every construct made.

**Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Level for Each Construct**

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha Value ( $\alpha$ )	Number of Items (n)
Challenges faced by the students	.813	12

### Data collection procedure

The data was analyzed based on the online questionnaire distributed through Google Form link. The link for the questionnaire was given to the respondents after they have completed their English language lessons in week 14. They have participated in 42 hours of online English language learning through CIDOS 3.5 version. The respondents were among the Diploma in Accounting from Commerce Department, Politeknik Kota Bharu. All of the students were asked to fill out the questionnaire indicating their agreement or disagreement with each of the statements on a 4-point Likert-type scale with the ending point being "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree".

The students were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they would not receive any extra credit or reward for participating. The students were asked to complete the survey and submit their questionnaire via Google Form. A total of 88 students had completed and returned the questionnaire. The responses of the questionnaire

were received by 100% (n=88), this indicated that the entire questionnaire has been fully answered by all respondents and none is missing. The descriptive analysis was carried out to see the finding of the study. The analysis was done using SPSS 21.0. Descriptive Statistics were calculated and then, the Pearson Correlation Analysis was used to describe the data. The data was then interpreted by the frequency, percentage, and mean score of all instruments guided with the mean score interpretation as presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Interpretation of Mean Score**

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.0 to 2.33	Low / Negative
2.34 to 3.66	Average / Neutral
3.67 to 5.00	High / Positive

*Source:(Hadiyanto&Amirul&Makmur,2013)*

## FINDINGS

This study was conducted to spot the challenges faced by students in online English language learning and the problems that arise in their online learning experiences. It was based on the following research questions: What are the challenges faced by the students in online English language learning? And what are the ways to overcome the challenges?

### Characteristics of the respondents

There is n=46 (52.3%) of the respondents are females while another n=42 (47.7%) are males (refer Table 3). The respondent's age is between 19-22 years old.

**Table 3: Gender of the Respondents**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	FEMALE	46	52.3	52.3	52.3
	MALE	42	47.7	47.7	100.0
	Total	88	100.0	100.0	

The descriptive analysis is carried out to see the internet access at their home. N=48 (54.5%) respondents responded that they have stable internet access at home whereas n=36 (40.9%) responded they use limited access and have to use their mobile phone or handheld devices to stay connected to internet. (Refer Table 4 below).

**Table 4: Respondents' Access to Internet**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	48	54.5	54.5	54.5
	Limited	36	40.9	40.9	95.5
	No	4	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the respondents use smartphones for their online learning classes with n=50 (56.8%), followed by laptops n=35 (40.9%), whereas both desktop and tablet scored only n=1 (1.1%) each. (Refer Table 5 below).

**Table 5: Types of Gadgets Used**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Smartphone	50	56.8	56.8	56.8
	Laptop	36	40.9	40.9	97.7
	Desktop	1	1.1	1.1	98.9
	Tablet	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	88	100.0	100.0	

### Challenges faced in online English language learning

Further analysis was done through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), 26 version to identify the major challenges that hinder online English language learners. The major challenges are identified and could be the leading factors that discouraged the online English language learning process. The finding is shown in the table below (Refer to Table 6).

**Table 6: The mean values for challenges faced by distance learners.**

Item Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
I frequently use a handphone during my online English language learning class because I don't have a proper gadget/device (e.g.: laptop, personal computer, tablet, etc).	2.7614	.85761
I encounter a lot of problems and challenges in my online English language learning.	2.5682	.82762
I feel that there is limited interaction between the lecturers and students as well as among students in online English learning.	2.3523	.84472
I feel that it is difficult to practice my speaking skills through online English language learning.	2.5455	.82920
I feel it is difficult to consult the lecturers to ask for personal guidance.	2.4659	.75732
The internet connection is poor most of the times.	2.8295	.87391
There are always technical problems when I download or access the materials online.	2.5682	.82762
The learning materials provided via CIDOS are not sufficient for my online English language learning	2.5341	.78510
The enhancement activities and quizzes provided via CIDOS are difficult.	2.7500	.80587
My family members always give their support for my online learning.	3.1705	.83352
My online English language learning environment is conducive and effective all the time.	2.8636	.73001

My daily schedule and daily commitment make it difficult to join online English language classes.	2.7500	.78252
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Based on Table 6 above, the students deemed to face a lot of problems and challenges during their distance learning process with  $M= 2.56$ . The finding shows the students encountered the following six major challenges:

- i. I don't have a proper gadget (e.g.: laptop, personal computer, tablet, etc.) besides I frequently use a hand phone during my online English language learning class. ( $M=2.76, SD=.857$ )
- ii. I feel that there is limited interaction between the lecturers and students as well as among students in online English language learning. ( $M=2.35, SD=.844$ )
- iii. I feel that it is difficult to practice my speaking skills through online English language learning. ( $M=2.54, SD=.829$ )
- iv. The internet connection is poor most of the times. ( $M=2.82, SD=.873$ )
- v. I feel it is difficult to consult the lecturers to ask for personal guidance. ( $M=2.46, SD=.757$ )
- vi. The learning materials are not sufficient for my learning of the online English language learning. ( $M=2.53, SD=.785$ )

The first challenge found in online learning is there are students who do not possess a proper gadget or devices (e.g.: laptop, personal computer, tablet, etc.) and frequently use hand phones during for online classes with  $m=2.7$ . The English online learning course requires the students to be independent in their learning starting from reading the materials, downloading, printing, reacting, and responding by drafting long texts, essays, not limited to search for the online materials through a lengthy period. With the small display and limitations of viewing size, the use of hand phones will give a different learning experience compared to those who possess laptops or personal computers. The students come from various social status and family background. Considering these, not all students afford to have laptops and personal computers. Due to no proper device for their education, it has led to the hindrance in the online learning process.

Next challenge found is related to limited interaction between the lecturers and students as well as among students in online learning with  $m=2.35$ . The course structure of the DUE: 30022 Communicative English 2 syllabus is provided by the Curriculum Division from the Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education. A similar syllabus consists of the same Recommended Time Allocation (RTA) is being used for both face to face and also online learning. According to the syllabus, the students will be having a 1-hour lecture and 2-hours tutorial weekly for 14 weeks' duration. The students indicated this level of interaction is insufficient for their online English language learning. The normal contact hours which is 1- hour lecture and 2-hours tutorial per week as face to face classroom were applied during the distance learning. It is not sufficient and needs to be extended as distance learning need to consider the preparation time, background setting, encouragement, and motivation of the learners. The class size, the technical glitches, and many other factors will also be the possible challenges in the learning process.

One solution to this challenge is for the instructor to implement a learning environment that encourages collaboration. Allowing learners to collaborate, share, and

create will increase their use of various technologies, improve their e-learning experience, and support self-directed

and ongoing learning (Clark & Mayer, 2011; Li & Irby, 2008) with less supervision from the lecturers. The learners should ask questions, seek additional information from credible sources, reflect frequently, and engage in academic discourse related to the online learning objectives with other learners. Having an online community where learners can collaborate in a safe and respected learning environment will help to bridge the new digital divide and create a culture of digital natives conducive to effective e-learning (Warschauer, 2003; Li & Irby, 2008; Clark & Mayer, 2011).

The students also highlighted that it was difficult to meet the lecturers to ask for personal guidance and help with  $m=2.35$ . They have limited lecturer-student's interaction as well as among their friends. Even so, although students were encouraged to engage in the e-learning portal's forums, only a limited percentage of students did so. It is possible that some students were too preoccupied with their other obligations or declined to participate. The course lecturers, on the other hand, have to boost contact because, according to Moore and Kearsley (1996), distance educators should provide three forms of contact: learner-content, learner-teacher, and learner-learner. However, the lecturers' perceived availability and connection are significant in motivating online learners (Belaja, Teoh, and Liau, 2012); online course lecturers should make every effort to respond to students' WhatsApp, emails and feedback as soon as possible. Some students believed that online education made it harder to strengthen their command of the English language. They are unable to adjust to online English language learning due to the unexpected transition from face-to-face learning. Students who have always studied in a traditional classroom setting struggle to focus on online platforms. The presence of a lecturer was always desired. They must adopt the new learning environment with a positive attitude.

Besides, the learning materials provided for them are not sufficient for their online English class with  $m=2.53$ . During the online learning, the students are supplied with PowerPoint slides, e-notes, videos, online exercises, online chat, forum, discussion and many supplementary tasks mainly via LMS CIDOS 3.5 and several applications such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Google Drive, MS teams, etc. Distance learners are encouraged to obtain additional learning materials, which can be obtained for free on the internet in order to improve their language proficiency. The students can watch the videos and access the learning content as many times as they want to understand the lesson. It is reassuring that the online English language learners are flexible in coping with their problems and the students should be responsible for their own learning and cannot totally be dependable on their lecturers and the materials provided via LMS CIDOS 3.5. According to Martin, in today's online environments there is a lack of teacher presence, face-to-face (f2f) interaction, and tech support (2009). The most well planned and explicitly laid out online instructional environment is not enough to sustain learner interest or support intrinsic motivation. As suggested by George Teoh et.al (2013), to ensure effective output and learning, the students should spend an appropriate amount of time studying to digest the content provided and take the initiative to improve their English language proficiency, such as by forming study groups, interacting with the instructor and peers, and preparing for oral presentations, writing assignments, and assessments.

Numerous students also complained they do not have access to a high-speed internet connection, which is necessary for online learning with  $m=2.82$ . As a result, they are having difficulty joining their online English language classes and other platforms that require an internet connection. They have technical problems since some of them are unfamiliar with technology and computer applications. A fast or poor internet connection might affect how soon you can join the class and avoid missing any live sessions. The students might face issues downloading information or seeing lagging videos, due to experiencing bad internet connections. Many students might not have strong internet connection that online courses require, and thus fail to catch up with their virtual classmates. Moreover, most of them live off campus and find it difficult to keep in tune with the technical requirements of the chosen course.

As ruled out by Chantel (2002), internet accessibility is the backbone of online learning. Without stable and efficient connection, students will only face a lot of frustrations instead of developing and enhancing literacy based on the new technology. The glitches issues will sometimes make their learning experience becomes problematic. The only solution to this problem is knowing exactly what kind of technological support that the students need for a certain course before enrolling in it, as well as properly equipping themselves for the course's successful completion. Not only that, a consistent and fast connection is very much needed to support the system used at many language learning websites.

The finding from the previous study conducted by (Prebianca, Vieira, & Finardi, 2014) stated that there may be some problems in distance learning settings. These problems are lack of continuous internet access, lack of technical equipment such as computers, mobile tools, camera, etc., technical problems, students' or teachers' lack of technological skills, computer anxiety, students' or teachers' negative beliefs about distance education particularly for distance language learning and teaching, transferring some habits from traditional setting to online setting, lack of orientation sessions or training, lack of continuous technical or administrative support for the teachers or students, students' reliance on the teacher rather than being autonomous learners. In addition, problems regarding pedagogical support and human-computer interaction features of the software hinder learning in a distance education setting. It has been observed that although students are generally tech savvy and thus capable of managing computers well, a major issue among students today is lack of computer literacy. Some of them are unable to use basic programmes such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint and thus are unable to manage their files. Furthermore, many students find it difficult to solve basic computer problems because they have lack knowledge in this area.

Furthermore, the students found some challenges in completing the enhancement activities and quizzes provided virtually for them with  $m=2.75$ . The challenge in distance English language learning is related to the engagement between the lecturers and students. The one-way communication that seldom happens due to the poor commitment and lack of attention from students will leave the learning session to differ from the understanding level of the students. The learner-centered approach views students as the primary agents in the learning process and it is a distinguishing feature of online learning (Ignasia, 2013). Students who are passive and did not participate well during the online English language learning will sure limit themselves to interact and complete all activities as required during the learning

session. When it comes to online self-assessments and activities, the students will be helpless and found to feel the activities provided as difficult and unresolved. From the instructor's perspective, learners are no longer passive consumers of previously formed language knowledge (Ignasia, 2013). They need to be proactive and always seek for guidance from their lecturers as well as their peers if they encounter any difficulties or hardships with their online English language learning.

The students also agreed that their daily schedule and daily commitment has made it difficult to join online classes  $m=2.75$ . Time management is another challenge and a difficult task for online learners, as online learning requires a lot of time and intensive work. A regular and proper schedule would be a significant help to these learners, as they could even set reminders for their courses and assignments. According to (Sun,2014), following the schedule and studying regularly; getting hold of classmates and finding a suitable time for working together; pairing/teaming up and working collaboratively; ensuring constant engagement with the class; keeping self-motivated and being a self-directed learner and socializing are common challenges faced by online language learners. However, flexibility is another interesting aspect of online English language learning because a learner can plan their time for completion of courses available online.

Moreover, the study revealed the complexity in the aspect of practicing speaking skills with  $m=2.54$  due to time-constraint during the lecture hour. In terms of strengthening speaking skills, the utilization of computer-mediated activities is certainly beneficial in making the learning process more effective and relevant for learners (Mahfouz & Ihmeideh, 2009). Hence, the students need to take the benefits and focus on other online activities provided as a part of their speaking skills improvement. However, for DUE 30022 course, there are 2 assessments namely oral presentation and role play whereby the students need to self-record their presentation and send the recorded videos via Google Drive account of their respective classes. By this way, the students will feel less anxious, more relaxed and well prepared because they can plan beforehand. This can also improve their interpersonal and communications skills.

It has been observed that most of the students can communicate effectively throughout the presentation compared to face-to-face presentation. They can organize their ideas very well and their confidence level is way better than doing oral presentation and role play in front of the audience. When they are motivated to learn, the language acquisition can take place effectively. Creating a low-stress learning environment is essential in online English language learning acquisition. As cited in Burhanudin (2018), the use of technology is believed to be one of the strategies that can be applied in language learning especially in teaching speaking. Once they are motivated, the process of learning will be fun as the students are enthusiastic in learning the language.

Next, this study discovered that the students might have technical problems whenever they are download or access the materials provided for them via CIDOS with  $m=2.94$  each. This is also interrelated with the poor internet connection. According to Yi Yang et.al (2004), taking on the new challenge of being an online student means you'll have less time to do the things you were used to. Politeknik Kota Bharu has started implementing the use of CIDOS since 2011. The emergence of open-source Learning Management System (LMS) platforms, such as Moodle, has drastically expanded the scope of e-learning, thus leading to a diversity

of situations, adjusted to specific educational demands. CIDOS 3.5 platforms is equipped with several online activities and resources such as google slides, e-note, chat, forum, external tools etc. that provides multipurpose support for online teaching and learning. The respondents who enrolled in LMS CIDOS 3.5 can view the notes and attempt the exercises, assignments and quizzes provided in their respective platforms. The notes and supplementary materials related with English subject can be easily accessed via LMS CIDOS 3.5. Lecturers also provide students with many videos relating to English subject as well as self-study resources such as worksheets, notes, a blog, quizzes, and a variety of other self-assessment exercises for each topic.

Many studies reported positive feedback from the language learners, mainly because online language learning materials motivate them to learn the language since they can attempt the activities at their own pace and reduce anxiety or fear in making mistakes in front of the teacher or classmates. Most of the students agreed that they get positive support from the family with  $m=3.17$  and experience conducive and effective online English language learning environment at home all the time with  $m=2.86$ . Getting support from family members, partners, or roommates in getting help with certain tasks and errands around a home is really significant as they embark on this distance learning journey. Understanding the benefits of online learning and even discussing them with their family and peers may better prepare students for online English language classes. In 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, students are using educational technologies to apply knowledge to new situations, analyse information, collaborate, solve problems, and make decisions. They can plan and manage their own learning, thereby developing new skills in the process leading to their lifelong learning.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is worth noting that this was a small study, with only 80 individuals. As a result, it is suggested that a larger sample size should be used to both validate the existing findings and provide further insights. Additional research could lead to a greater understanding of the challenges faced by distance learners

## CONCLUSION

Online English language learning can be considered as an innovative approach to learning and during a pandemic like Covid-19, it crucial to conduct online classes for the safety and continuation of education. It is a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning that meets the needs of today's digital natives. It is an environment that fosters collaboration, choice, and a plethora of technological resources to enable a successful online learning experience. The present research supports earlier studies about the challenges in online language learning. However, there are still many unanswered questions, so further studies emphasizing students' achievements in online English language learning through online teaching are suggested.

To ensure learner success, instructors and learners must consider the potential challenges they may face in an online learning environment. However, in order for learners to be successful in this learning environment the challenges to online learning must be

overcome with support and best practice solutions. Instructors and students alike must embrace the transition from traditional classroom practices to an online learning approach to education. Challenges however, with the proper supports from all parties, learners can be successful within these online learning environments. Students must find motivation to pursue with the new educational trends while also adequately preparing themselves for future educational and career challenges. Only a positive attitude will help them overcome the challenges of online English language learning while this is difficult to practice, students must understand that it is required in order to reap the benefits in the future.

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