Effectiveness of Digital Education in English Language Learning from Undergraduate Students' Perspective

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The teaching-learning process is quickly changing worldwide, moving away from traditional classroom settings and toward a hybrid of traditional and on-line learning. Digital tools have admittedly become crucial to language education both within and outside the classroom context. Technological tools are becoming increasingly important to assist teachers in facilitating language acquisition. In response to the digitization of the academic settings and the recent global coronavirus pandemic, online platforms Zoom such as Microsoft Teams, Blackboard, Skype, Webinar, and Discord have become highly prevalent in L2 teaching. Specifically, Microsoft Teams has been the most frequently utilized digital platform for learning and teaching during the pandemic outbreak in Saudi Arabia. With the purpose of identifying the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in online education of universities, this study investigated 60 (20 female and 40 male) Saudi Arabian university students' perceptions regarding the efficacy of the platform for (1) teacher-student interactions and (2) learning, and (3) assessment. The findings will be discussed in light of the effectiveness of digital education in L2 learning from the university students' perspective.

Keywords: Digital education, microsoft teams, digital tools, university students

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Lisans Öğrencilerinin Perspektifinden İngilizce Öğreniminde Dijital Eğitimin Etkililiği

Öğretme-öğrenme süreci dünya çapında hızla değişmekte, geleneksel sınıf ortamlarından uzaklaşarak geleneksel ve çevrimiçi öğrenmenin bir karışımına doğru ilerlemektedir. Dijital araçlar, hem sınıf bağlamı içinde hem de dışında dil eğitimi için kuşkusuz çok önemli hale gelmiştir. Teknolojik araçlar, dil edinimini kolaylaştırmada öğretmenlere yardımcı olmak için giderek daha önemli hale gelmektedir. Akademik ortamların dijitalleşmesine ve son küresel koronavirüs pandemisine karşılık olarak, Microsoft Teams, Blackboard, Skype, Webinar ve Discord gibi çevrimiçi platformlar L2 öğretiminde oldukça yaygın hale geldi. Özellikle Microsoft Teams, Suudi Arabistan'daki pandemi salgını sırasında öğrenme ve öğretme için en sık kullanılan dijital platform olmuştur. Microsoft Teams'in üniversitelerin çevrimiçi eğitimindeki etkinliğini belirlemek amacıyla, bu çalışmada 60 (20 kadın ve 40 erkek) Suudi Arabistanlı üniversite öğrencisinin (1) öğretmen-öğrenci etkileşimleri ve (2) öğrenme ve (3) değerlendirme için platformun etkinliğine ilişkin algıları araştırılmıştır. Bulgular, üniversite öğrencilerinin bakış açısından L2 öğreniminde dijital eğitimin etkinliği ışığında tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital eğitim, microsoft teams, dijital araçlar, üniversite öğrencileri

Introduction

The teaching-learning process is quickly changing worldwide, moving away from the traditional classroom setting toward a hybrid of traditional and online learning and instruction. Digital tools have become crucial to English language teaching (ELT) and learning both in different classroom settings. In many countries, technology is used to aid and enhance learning in educational settings. Technological tools are hence becoming increasingly prominence to assist teachers in facilitating language acquisition for their learners' language skills. Various terminologies are frequently used to refer to the utilization of technology in education. Some include technology-enhanced learning, digital learning, electronic learning, and online learning. They all refer to a group of

technology-integrated mediums of instruction so as to enhance and facilitate acquisition. In fact, they are used not only for the purpose of educating the learners but also evaluating their performances (Wheeler, 2012). Digital education (DE) points to the utilization of technology as well as instructional strategies with the intention of paving the way for learning and instruction (Fry, 2001). DE encompasses the use of a broad spectrum of approaches, including blended and virtual learning.

Using online digital tools are used to give instructional content and training in DE, which can either be synchronous (where instruction takes place online simultaneously when both teacher and students are present) as well asynchronous (where students have access to the material and instruction at any time through lesson recordings or autonomous online activities). Smartphones, computers, and other devices that are widely accessible, together with a variety of social media and communication applications like WhatsApp and YouTube, are transforming how people live, interact with one another, and even learn. Even though the premise of DE is not new, particularly in light of the widespread success and popularity of a number of mass educational platforms which offer free online courses such as EdX and Coursera, the learning process of foreign languages has fundamentally changed over the last decades (Hidalgo, 2019).

After the outburst of the pandemic, many educational institutions and settings were partially or fully locked down. In fact, the pandemic dramatically affected all types of academic institutions in the world, ranging from with kindergartens, schools, and universities. Before the pandemic, different virtual educational materials as well as platforms were primarily supplemental to the language instruction provided in different educational settings. However, the pandemic brought about a new situation in which education in most institutions was radically adjusted to become entirely online. Due to the complete lack of strategic planning or preparation concerning its global deployment, this digital reform in education settings was unexpected despite being somewhat unavoidable.

Over 1.2 billion pupils worldwide were out of school, ranging from primary schools to universities. While countries' rates of coronavirus infection were different, it is estimated that the educational institutions were locked down in more than 186 countries in the world (Rahman, 2019). Undoubtedly, this emergency reform from the in-person to online education has impacted students to a great extent, and they have affectively been influenced by this educational system.

In Saudi Arabia, similar to other countries, the pandemic impacted how people engage socially, as well as the way the way instructors taught students in educational settings. Indeed, Saudi Arabia's educational institutions would not have used online education in such an impromptu manner if the pandemic had not occurred. The Saudi authorities hence ensured that all educational settings collaborate to effectively implement the new educational delivery during the pandemic when the schools were fully or partially closed. Consequently, the recent circumstances prompted ELT researchers to consider the usefulness of virtual platforms for learning English outside of the classes.

With today's rapid technological advancements, EFL researchers have recently begun to investigate how EFL learners acquire English language outside of the class context with the help of digital devices as well as online resources (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). Results indicate that the major purpose of virtual education is to enhance the quality of learning when at the same time lowering the cost of delivering education to the public (Hamidi & Chavoshi, 2018). Overall, students may benefit from online education since it allows them to learn whenever they want, anywhere, and at their speed. The effectiveness of adopting technology in English language acquisition in Saudi Arabia colleges has been the subject of numerous prior research as well. In addition to in-person training, Alsowayegh et al. (2019), for example, identified that being engaged in online speaking activities as well as watching course-related films improved university EFL learners' speaking and listening abilities. In order to possess an efficient as well as productive virtual education, teachers and authorities need to thoroughly understand the advantages and disadvantages of the platforms so as to be able to identify the appropriate paths of learning. In higher education settings, virtual education needs to be seen as the culmination of all digital facilities that can pave the way for effective implementation of virtual learning.

Over the last years, as aforementioned, with the outburst of pandemic, educational institutions have embraced the facilitative improvements in technology as well as well-enhanced educational platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams to revolutionize teaching and learning drastically. However, since these platforms have recently been taken into close account and thereby there are debates about the efficacy of virtual education during the pandemic, educators focus on the platforms' flexibility and effectiveness so as to deliver resources and content, pave the way for creating student-centered environments, and prove suitability as a supplement to traditional education (Allo, 2020). Online education platforms that facilitate language acquisition are required when migrating to remote learning (Heggart & Yoo, 2018). Microsoft Teams has been

one of the most popular platforms during the pandemic, which promotes synchronous and asynchronous collaboration, both of which are important for distant and remote learning (Poston et al., 2020). Indeed, this platform is considered suitable platforms for usage in official, non-formal, and informal education and supporting distance learning (Hai-Jew, 2020). Microsoft Teams is a digital educational system which enables the instructors as well as the learners with a large number of facilities in the platform. This cloud-based digital platform makes it possible to unify files, meetings, and discussions, to name a few. According to Microsoft website, the application offers a virtual learning environment and is designed to make it simple to transition from chats to content creation. In Microsoft Teams, channels allow instructors and students to collaborate on projects or access learning materials. The platform also enables the users to upload files such as PowerPoint presentations or have access to YouTube videos after creating a new tab which directly connects to the desired file. A built-in store of application is also accessible to the tutor, who can use one of them to build a tab using Quizlet or Survey. Microsoft Teams include audio, video, and desktop sharing feasibilities that can enable the users to interact with the peers as well the teachers in the channels. For users of different skill levels, Microsoft Teams has made various online training videos and instructions available.

As aforementioned, with the emergence of the pandemic there was a necessity to use online educational tools in different educational settings. With the urgent need to implement innovative approaches to educate learners, the moment has come for the digitalization of education. Over the last decades, the utilization of digital storing of materials, collaborative tasks, online courses, digital portfolios, and social platforms in the process of language learning has led to a broader application of Internet technology. With the outbreak if the pandemic, the utilization of such technological tools has come more prevalent. Admittedly, choosing an educational platform that meets the needs of instructors and learners can be advantageous if their benefits, drawbacks, and possibilities are closely considered. In the present investigation, the benefits and the challenges that EFL teachers or learners may perceive when using Teams Microsoft will be taken into scrutiny in higher education settings in the EFL context.

EFL teachers may integrate a range of instructional means in teaching a second language at university contexts. In response to the digitization of the academic environments and the global coronavirus pandemic, digital tools such as Microsoft Teams, Blackboard, Zoom, Skype, Webinar, and Discord have become

highly popular in the field of ELT. More specifically, Microsoft Teams has been the most frequently utilized digital platform for learning and teaching English during the pandemic outbreak in Saudi Arabia. This digital platform can be used on the smartphones as well as the PCs. From my personal experience, it provides them numerous advantages to communicate in real-time.

However, the interactive aspects of online interaction can be quite difficult because of the absence of in-person communication. Because the participants talk at a distance, maintaining a connection between the instructors and students in a digital environment seems to be a pressing issue. Due to the communicator's limited display and video latency, communication may seem to be unauthentic. Furthermore, critical challenges may be involved in online education including the learners' lack of autonomy, unfamiliarity with digital tools, and connectivity problems. As the distance between participants grows, it might result in inappropriate contact and interaction so as to solve a potential setback. It is hence critical for the instructor to maintain control over the learners' participation in class, and to ensure that learning goes smoothly.

The pandemic has forced the EFL practitioners as well as the learners to rely on virtual learning platforms. As an enforcing substitute for im-person lectures, online seminars and webinar meetings, video lectures, and videoconferences have gained popularity over the last years (Rabinovich, 2020), and the popularity of virtual platforms such as Teams Microsoft has significantly increased. Several studies have been conducted on online learning and Teams Microsoft in particular, and they indicate the advantages and disadvantages of this educational platform.

Investigating the students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of this online delivery platforms particularly from the perspective of the students would be enlightening in terms of identifying the way they find this platform effective or malfunctioning. In doing so, this study sought to investigate Saudi university learners' opinions on the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in virtual English language courses.

Research Questions

The three quantitative research questions are as follows:

- RQ1. Is there any difference between male and female university students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in (a) learning, (b) teacher-student interaction, and (c) assessment?

- RQ2. Does age play a determining role in university students' perceptions

regarding the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in (a) learning, (b) teacher-student interaction, and (c) assessment?

- RQ3. Does university students' academic level play a significant role in their perception of the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in (a) learning, (b) teacher-student interaction, and (c) assessment?

Method

In the present quantitative cross-sectional study, we utilized a questionnaire to investigate the effectiveness of using Microsoft Teams in online classes from the perspective of Saudi Arabian university students. The participants in the present study were EFL English preparatory school students from a university in Saudi Arabia, majoring in college of science, engineering, general studies, environmental design, petroleum engineering and geosciences, computer sciences and engineering, and business school. Considering English is the language of instruction in most of this university's departments, enrollment in the English Preparatory School is necessary until students pass a proficiency test or present a validated competency certification. English Preparatory classes are essential because departmental courses are also taught in English. The Preparatory English Program is in charge of helping students gain the English skills, they will need to succeed at a university where English is the primary language of teaching. This intense five-course (half-semester) program, to which all new students are admitted at the start, is meant to consolidate and strengthen the basic English skills learned in school. Four hours of English instruction are offered each day. The goal of the course is to assist students in developing the language skills of speaking, writing, listening, and reading that are essential for academic success. In total, sixty students, ranging in age from 19 to 22 participated. They were all native Arabic speakers and non-native speakers of English language.

Instruments

The effectiveness of online education during the Covid-19 pandemic was assessed in this study using AlAdwani and Anam AlFadley's (2022) 30-item Online Learning using Microsoft Teams Scale. The developers adapted and adjusted the scale based on Rojabi's (2020) conceptual model and Cakrawati's model (2017) to gather data. The scale has three dimensions, namely Interaction, Assessing, and Learning. Each of the dimensions has 10 items. AlAdwani and Anam AlFadley's (2022) study indicated a high correction of 0.901 for Interaction, 0.768 for Assessing, and 0.880 for Learning dimensions, revealing a high internal consistency. The scale also indicated a reliability with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.79, 0.77, and 0.87 for Interaction, Assessing, and Learning dimen-

sion, respectively. In the present study, the result similarly indicated a high reliability of the three subscales with Cronbach's alpha .91 for Learning subscale, .87 for Teacher-student Interaction subscale, and .77 for Assessment subscale. Cronbach's alpha for the full 30-items scale computed as .95, indicative of excellent reliability of the scale. The quantitative data was collected and analyzed using SPSS program. An independent-samples t-test was used to explore the difference for gender, and a one-way ANOVA was run to investigate the potential difference for age and educational level variables.

Results

The study's results are illustrated in this section. The main goal of this study, as stated in the preceding chapters, was to learn how preparatory students perceived the value of digital education for learning the English language. It seeks to understand how students feel about utilizing the Microsoft Teams platform. Sixty students were given a 5-point Likert scale with 30 questions in addition to an interview to collect the data, and the replies were then analyzed.

At the outset, the result indicated a high reliability of the three subscales with Cronbach's alpha .91 for Learning subscale, .87 for Teacher-student Interaction subscale, and .77 for Assessment subscale. Cronbach's alpha for the full 30-items scale computed as .95, indicative of excellent reliability of the scale.

An independent-samples t-test was then run to investigate whether there is a difference for gender in their perception of the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams for remote learning at higher education. As evident in Table 1, descriptive statistics for the two groups revealed that male participants had a non-significantly higher mean score in learning dimension (M = 3.75, SD = 0.98), while that of females was non-significantly higher in teacher-student interaction dimension (M = 3.77, SD = 0.36). However, different from learning and teacher-student interaction dimensions, the female participants' mean score was found to be significantly higher than that of male participants in assessment (M = 4.05, SD = 0.34).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for gender

	Gender	N	Mean	SD
Learning	Male	40	3,75	,98
	Female	20	3,55	,61
Interaction	Male	40	3,71	,68
	Female	20	3,77	,36
Assessment	Male	40	3,77	,45
	Female	20	4,05	,34

The results obtained from the independent-samples t-test (Table 2) indicated a non-significant difference between the scores of male and female university students in learning $t(58) = 0.83$, $p < 0.41$ as well as in teacher-student interactions $t(58) = -0.34$, $p < 0.72$. However, the results identified a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the males and female in assessment $t(58) = -2.43$, $p < .01$.

Table 2. T-test results between the males and the females' perception of effectiveness of Microsoft Teams.

	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Learning	2.28	0.13	0.83	58	0.41
Interaction	5.74	0.02	-0.34	58	0.72
Assessment	0.85	0.36	-2.43	58	0.01

The normality test was also conducted so as to check whether the data is normally distributed. According to Tabachnick et al. (2013), a kurtosis value between +1.5 and -1.5 is considered acceptable for most psychometric purposes, while skewness values falling outside the range of -1 to +1 indicate a substantially skewed distribution (Hair, et al., 2013). A Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p>.05$), normal Q-Q plots, and a visual inspection of the histograms indicated that the scores of the learning dimension (Figure 1) were normally distributed, with a skewness of -.82 (SE= .30) and a kurtosis of -1.29 (SE= .60).

The normality tests for the other dimensions of the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams scale were also found to be drawn from a normally distributed population with a skewness of -,72 (SE= ,30) and a kurtosis of ,60 (SE= ,60) for teacher-student interaction dimension (Figure 2), and with a skewness of ,19 (SE= ,30) and a kurtosis of ,01 (SE= ,60) for assessment dimension (Figure 3).
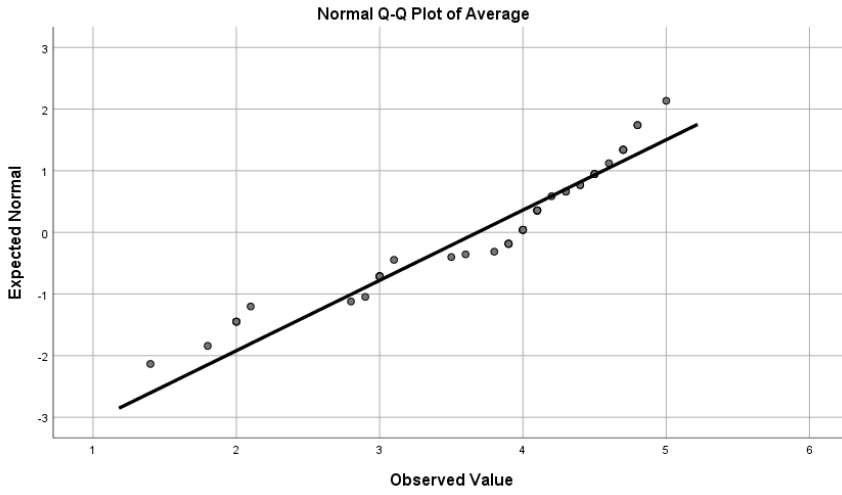
Figure 1. Normal Q-Q plots for learning dimension
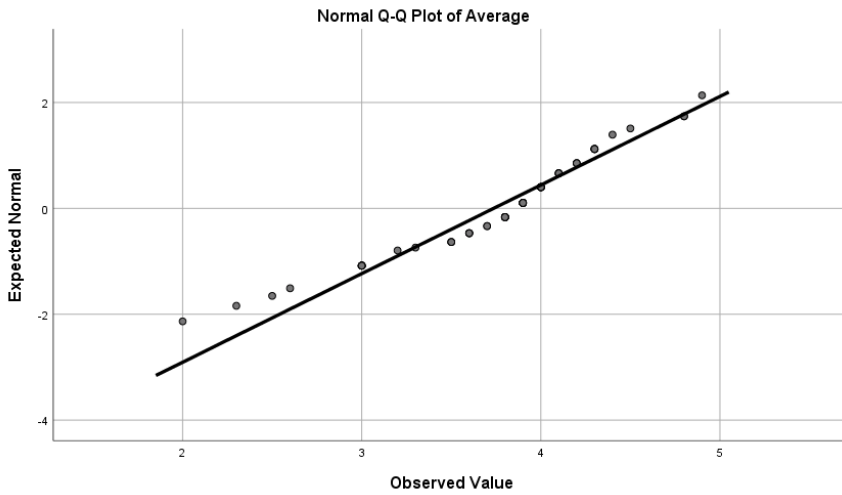

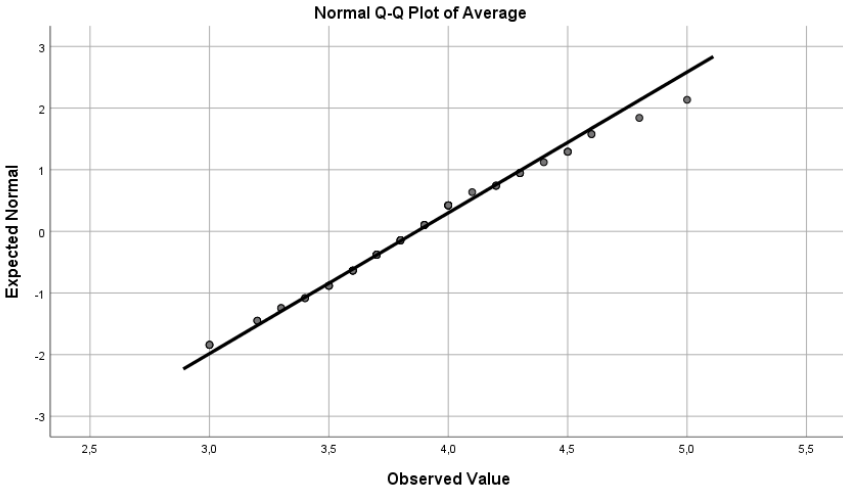**Figure 2.** Normal Q-Q plots for teacher-student interaction dimension

Figure 3. Normal Q-Q plots for assessment dimension

In the second phase of the study, a one-way ANOVA was run to investigate the potential difference between university students' perceptions on the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in learning at higher education. Descriptive statistics for age are indicated below in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for age

	Age	N	M	SD
	19	29	3.61	.17
	20	10	4.08	.19
Learning	21	11	3.54	.24
	22	10	3.64	.28
	Total	60	3.68	.11
	19	29	3.77	.09
	20	10	3.80	.16
Interaction	21	11	3.68	.18
	22	10	3.61	.26
	Total	60	3.73	.07
	19	29	3.93	.07
	20	10	4.01	.11
Assessment	21	11	3.67	.17
	22	10	3.76	.13
	Total	60	3.86	.05

The results obtained from one-way ANOVA for the learning dimension showed no significant difference among the scores of the participants who were nineteen (M = 3.61, SD = 0.17), those who were twenty (M = 4.08, SD = 0.19), those who were twenty-one (M = 3.54, SD = 0.24), and those who were twenty-two years old (M = 3.64, SD = 0.28), $F(3,56)$ = 0.83, $p < 0.48$. Nor was there a significant difference in relation with teacher-student interaction among the scores of the participants who were nineteen (M = 3.77, SD = 0.09), those who were twenty (M = 3.80, SD = 0.16), those who were twenty-one (M = 3.68, SD = 0.18), and those who were twenty-two years old (M = 3.61, SD = 0.26), $F(3,56)$ = 0.25, $p < 0.85$. Similar to the learning and interaction dimensions, no statistically significant difference was found for assessment among the scores of the participants who were nineteen (M = 3.93, SD = 0.07), those who were twenty (M = 4.01, SD = 0.11), those who were twenty-one (M = 3.67, SD = 0.17), and those who were twenty-two years old (M = 3.76, SD = 0.1), $F(3,56)$ = 1.52 $p < 0.21$ (Table 4). Following One-way ANOVA, Games-Howell Post Hoc test was used to compare the learning, interaction, and assessment scores across age. However, no significant difference was identified for any age groups.

Table 4. One-Way ANOVA for age in respect with Microsoft Teams effectiveness

		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Learning	Between Groups	1,942	3	,647	,834	,481
	Within Groups	43,442	56	,776		
	Total	45,383	59			
Interaction	Between Groups	,286	3	,095	,257	,856
	Within Groups	20,773	56	,371		
	Total	21,059	59			
Assessment	Between Groups	,853	3	,284	1,523	,219
	Within Groups	10,457	56	,187		
	Total	11,310	59			

Finally, another one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted so as to explore whether the participants' academic level plays a significant role in their perception of the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in learning in higher education. Descriptive statistics for the academic level are indicated below in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics for academic level

	Age	N	M	SD
	Freshman	28	3.58	0.96
	Sophomore	11	3.90	0.84
Learning	Junior	10	3.69	0.69
	Senior	11	3.71	0.88
	Total	60	3.68	0.87
	Freshman	28	3.12	0.50
	Sophomore	11	3.69	0.62
Interaction	Junior	10	4.79	0.74
	Senior	11	4.67	0.82
	Total	60	4.06	0.67
	Freshman	28	3.93	0.39
	Sophomore	11	3.94	0.41
Assessment	Junior	10	3.71	0.58
	Senior	11	3.75	0.41
	Total	60	3.86	0.43

The results obtained from one-way ANOVA for the learning dimension showed no significant difference among the scores of the freshmen (M = 3.58, SD = 0.96), sophomores (M = 3.90, SD = 0.84), juniors (M = 3.69, SD = 0.69), and seniors (M = 3.71, SD = 0.88), $F(3,56) = 0.34$, $p < 0.79$. Nor was there a significant difference in relation with assessment scores of the freshmen (M = 3.93, SD = 0.39), sophomores (M = 3.94, SD = 0.41), juniors (M = 3.71, SD = 0.58), and seniors (M = 3.75, SD = 0.41), $F(3,56) = 1.04$, $p < 0.38$. However, different from learning and interaction dimensions, the academic level of the participants indicated a significant difference for the interaction dimension. More specifically, there was a significant difference among the scores of the freshmen (M = 3.12, SD = 0.50), sophomores (M = 3.69, SD = 0.62), juniors (M = 4.69, SD = 0.74), and seniors (M = 4.67, SD = 0.82), $F(3,56) = 4.83$, $p > 0.001$ (Table 6).

Table 6. One-Way ANOVA for academic level in respect with Microsoft Teams effectiveness

		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Learning	Between Groups	,817	3	0272	0.342	,795
	Within Groups	44,566	56	0.796		
	Total	45,383	59			
Interaction	Between Groups	,113	3	0.92	4.83	,001
	Within Groups	20,947	56	0.15		
	Total	21,059	59			
Assessment	Between Groups	,600	3	0.200	1.045	,380
	Within Groups	10,710	56	0.191		
	Total	11,310	59			

Discussion

This study probed English preparatory university students' perceptions of the efficiency of the Microsoft Teams platform in online education. In the first research question, the difference between male and female university students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in learning, teacher-student interaction, and assessment was investigated. The findings revealed that the mean scores for the two groups were non-significantly higher for male participants in the learning dimension and non-significantly higher for female participants in the teacher-student interaction dimension. However, different from learning and teacher-student interaction dimensions, the female participants' mean score was found to be significantly higher than that of male participants in assessment.

Bao (2020) investigated the pressure created by virtual education on many Saudi university students during the epidemic, surveying more than two thousand male and female Saudi university students. Results indicated that, more than five hundred of the students were severely anxious because of the abrupt transition from in-person to virtual classrooms. Hence, different from the results of the present study, nearly 30% of both male and female university students indicated to be anxious about the process of learning. It might be attributed to the fact that the study was conducted at the beginning of the pandemic and the university students had a higher level of anxiety.

Echoing the results of the present study, Peterson et al. (2018) and Martin and Tapp (2019) found that synchronous education has promoted students' engagement and collaborative learning, and their access to the educational sources. However, approximately half of the students disagreed that attending classes online improves their ability to collaborate and connect. The implica-

tion drawn from the findings can be that EFL teachers needs to address this synchronous learning deficit by giving students engaging activities and simple assignments, so they can participate, interact, and cooperate in online learning to their full potential.

Additionally, according to Poston et al. (2020), this educational platform seems to be more effective in not big classes. The students can use PowerPoint to do collaborative assignments for their group papers, and the instructors need to persuade and familiarize the students with Teams Microsoft, so they understand how it is used in virtual education. The result is consistent with the present research indicating that this educational platform results in more satisfactory outcomes while being implemented with a small group of students. It was also found that the students actively participated in learning English through online learning because it was a new platform, challenging though, for them. They felt comfortable responding to questions and working together to discuss papers because they were given fascinating materials.

The second research question examined whether students' perceptions of Microsoft Teams' usefulness for learning, teacher-student interaction and assessment depended on their ages. According to the results, the learning dimension showed no significant difference among the participants' nineteen, twenty to twenty-two years old scores. Additionally, there was no noticeable variation in participants' scores for teacher-student interaction. There was no substantial distinction in the participant scores for assessment, just like the learning and interaction dimensions. Teachers should be trained in practical adaptive formative assessment (including self- and peer-assessment, use of rubrics), as well as methods for providing real-time and ongoing feedback to online learners, given that the findings of this study show that the role of assessment is essential for maintaining students' motivation in the online environment.

Third research question investigated whether university students' academic level play a significant role in how they find Microsoft Teams effective in learning, teacher-student interaction, and assessment. The results for the learning dimension showed no significant difference among the scores of the freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Nor was there a significant difference in relation with assessment scores of the freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. However, different from learning and interaction dimensions, the academic level of the participants indicated a significant difference for the interaction dimension. More specifically, there was a significant difference among the scores of the freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors.

A study by Almahasees et al. (2021) showed that the students from different academic levels reported challenges with online platforms. The findings show that these issues are connected to students' struggles with time management, difficulty transitioning to online courses, and lack of direct contact with professors. Aligned with this study, Radovan and Makovec (2015) affirms that improving students' enthusiasm for learning largely depends on the learning environment. Because of this, the learning environment should inspire students to pursue higher education and create an impressive atmosphere. Students' engagement with the educational environment while enrolled in online courses is beneficial for helping students. Accordingly, Lin and Lin (2015) underline that both teacher-student and student-student interactions should be designed to enhance communication and discussion of each activity in the teaching and learning process.

Similar to the results of the present study, there are various benefits to using an online education platform reported in a wealth of studies. For instance, online education can help students sharpen their language abilities, learn new vocabulary, and comprehend the lesson's subject (Cakrawati, 2017). Unlike a strand of studies that found online learning less effective, less pleasant, and more stressful (Dixon et al., 2017; Garris & Fleck, 2022), in the present study, the English preparatory university students mostly reported the benefits of the online learning, interaction, and evaluation. In a different study conducted by Fuaddah and Maharani (2021), Microsoft Teams was indicated to serve as a channel for students' interactions and communications with their teachers, serving as their remote learning solution tool. However, as Rojabi (2020) indicate, some students might still have trouble interacting with their teachers. This is because there is less interaction between students and professors in person or because they are uncomfortable using technology to communicate. The present study also indicated that a sizeable percentage of the students were struggling with the logistics and accessibility of virtual education while working under relatively unfavorable circumstances from home. Aligned with the findings, Ituma's (2011) study revealed that e-learning makes it easier for students to complete their coursework and assessments online, regardless of their location.

Meanwhile, the results suggest that EFL students enhance their language abilities when learning online with Microsoft Teams. The finding could be attributed to a variety of factors. One of them might concern the accessibility of online English-language learning materials to people worldwide. Practicing language skills, learning new terms, and better comprehending the lesson's content are other reasons for using online learning platforms (Alabay, 2018). Another factor is that on-

line learning improves language skills and reduces anxiety in a virtual classroom.

Additionally, preparing for online instruction takes much longer than planning in-person instruction (Guri-Rosenblit, 2018). It hence saves time while learning. The results of the current study, when compared to those of earlier studies, imply that studying using Microsoft Teams is more appropriate for female EFL university students in determining their language competency. This research study also reveals that learning with Microsoft Teams has additional benefits, such as encouraging student engagement. The results are consistent with Sukman and Mhunkongdee's (2021) findings in demonstrating that students preferred in-person instruction to online learning.

Conclusion

The current study clarifies how the Microsoft Teams platform works for teaching English from undergraduate students' perspectives during the Covid-19 Pandemic and. The present study suffers from a couple of limitations. First, a non-random convenience sample was implemented when choosing the participants in the present study. Future research should employ a more structured and representative methodology of sampling the participants. There were sixty college students included in this study. Future studies need to be conducted with a bigger sample size to strengthen the generalizability of the findings. Second, Investigations into the assessment procedures used in online language learning environments are thus necessary. Third, the study only focuses on social interactions between students, teachers, and peers. Their interactions on a broader scale are crucial for future research. Finally, the present study investigated the effectiveness of only Microsoft Teams in online education during the pandemic. Scrutinizing K-12 and university students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of different educational platforms seems to be a fruitful avenue for future studies.

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