EFL Students' Perceptions of Using Nearpod in Online English Learning

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ABSTRACT

One of the key elements to success in learning a foreign language is interaction. However, maintaining the appropriate interaction among students in online classrooms can be difficult during the Covid-19 epidemic. To increase the effectiveness of online contact throughout the study process, a variety of platforms have been used, including Zoom, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, and Team Link. This study intends to find out if Nearpod, a website that promotes online learning, makes students more interactive when studying English online. At Van Lang University (VLU), in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, sixty-eight freshmen took part in this initiative for eleven weeks. A mixed-method technique was employed in conjunction with the Perception of Online Interaction Scale and open-ended questions as the two data-gathering tools. The findings reveal that Nearpod encourages interaction in online English learning. The findings have made a big difference in making virtual study easier, which is essential in the dangerous infection of the Covid-19 virus.

Keywords: Nearpod, Interactivity, Foreign language learning, Online teaching and learning

Introduction

"Education without interaction is merely an information transfer." (Bağrıacık Yılmaz & Karataş, 2018, p.2).

In the above statement, the significance of interactivity has been emphasized because it can bring about changes to optimize learning experiences, activate the learning environment, enable the learners to control the education process, help them to realize meaningful learning, facilitate the students' adaptation, and allow participation and communication (Bağrıacık Yılmaz & Karataş, 2018). In addition, it is confirmed that providing a deeper level of interactivity increases student satisfaction and improves the retention of students in online programs (Beyer et al., 2017). Therefore, without interactivity, teaching and study are just a process of giving and receiving information.

Besides, direct interactivity in onsite classrooms is impossible during the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting the whole world negatively. Consequently, students worldwide are supposed to get used to online learning from home via various applications and websites such as MS Teams, Google Classroom, Zooms, etc. Nevertheless, these tools have some drawbacks to a certain degree, such as Google accounts required to access, or lack of interaction (Susanti, Junining &

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Hamamah, 2021), time restriction for Zoom meetings (Tsarapkina, Grigoriev, Alekhina & Mironov, 2020), lack of interaction and engagement (Ha & Ngo, 2021). Furthermore, it is challenging to perform speaking tasks or communication between teachers and learners because of the inadequate functions of these tools. Therefore, increasing interactivity is the key question to effective online learning. Alhuwaydi (2021) found that "EFL teachers' biggest challenges dealing with students online were in six areas: students not using hardcopy learning resources, increased isolation, demotivation due to lack of support and unhealthy learning environments, passiveness, disconnection, and less collaboration" (p.12).

Nearpod is the ultimate answer to the issue of teacher-student interaction, even in the absence of face-to-face communication. Its unique features, including Polls, Draw It, Matching Pairs, Quizzes, Student Pacing, and Open-Ended Questions, make it a potential solution to this problem (Burton, 2019). The use of web-based technology like Nearpod has been identified as an effective teaching and learning strategy that fosters student engagement and facilitates autonomous learning, particularly effective in larger classroom settings (Sanmugam et al., 2019). Therefore, it is evident that Nearpod is not just a tool but a game-changer in the education industry that can transform the way we teach and learn.

Despite the increasing popularity of Nearpod in many countries in online learning and teaching among various subjects (Abdullah et al., 2020; Lowry-Brock, 2016; Shehata et al., 2020), including Vietnam, there is still a research gap in terms of its impact on online English classrooms in Vietnam's highly educational context. While there are descriptions of the functions of Nearpod and how it can be beneficial in teaching and learning (Tran, Ngoc, Thao, & Thanh, 2019), there is limited research that provides data to support the claim that Nearpod can improve or bring about interaction and collaboration in online classes. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by exploring the impact of Nearpod on the interaction level in online English classrooms in Vietnam's highly educational context. The study will provide empirical evidence that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of Nearpod in online teaching and learning environments. In particular, this research seeks to handle the following questions:

1. How does Nearpod affect freshmen's interaction in online English learning at Van Lang University, Vietnam?
2. What are students' perceptions of online English learning with Nearpod?

Literature review

What is Nearpod? Its benefits and drawbacks

Nearpod, cloud-based technology and a multiplatform e-learning tool is used for interactive teaching and learning. Nearpod can be accessed on both websites and mobile phone apps. It enables students to engage in the lecturer's lessons online and offline, regardless of learning space size or type (Sanmugam et al., 2019).

Appropriate e-learning materials and supporting materials must be used to enrich the students' analysis, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Sangsawang,2020, as cited in Beyer et al., 2017). Nearpod, like other online learning platforms, is a more student-centric teaching style and constructive learning approach (Agung & Surtikanti, 2020, as cited in Al-Khresheh, 2021). As an e-learning source of materials as well as supporting materials, Nearpod is a useful collection consisting of teachers' own created lessons, with various templates for designing numerous lesson activities such as 'Time to climb', 'Open-ended question', 'Matching pairs', 'Quiz', 'Flip grid', 'Draw it', 'Collaborate board', 'Poll', 'Fill in the blank', and 'Memory test'. In

addition, it also has a report function to assist teachers in checking students' attendance and participation. Furthermore, with the Teacher resources and Library section, Nearpod offers educators diverse teaching resources as a valuable reference (Beránek & Kovár, 2016; Tran et al., 2019).

Numerous studies have clarified the benefits of Nearpod for online teaching and learning (Perez, 2017; Tran et al., 2019; Burton, 2019; Wang & Chia, 2022). First, it is advised that Nearpod should be employed in crowded classrooms to increase students' interaction. Second, Nearpod can be a fabulous tool for students' engagement and motivation during lectures because it contains the attention - generating features. Third, student-student interaction, or student-teacher interaction, can be conducted through 'collaborate board' or 'draw it activities', reducing students' anxiety in speaking because they have more freedom to share their ideas and discuss other students' answers. Finally, the poll activity and Report section allows teachers can give instant feedback on learners' results (Sanmugam et al., 2019). In other words, Nearpod helps reveal quickly what students achieve and their shortcomings after each lesson, from which teachers may adjust their teaching plans. Therefore, Nearpod is time-saving in grading and assessment.

Modifying the findings of Sanmugam et al.(2019), the concept of the BYOD model (Bring Your Own Device) was added (Hakami, 2020). In this study, Nearpod is considered a BYOD intervention to construct a new learning environment and boost interactivity and collaboration in the classroom. It promotes active learning by giving students more opportunities to participate in learning activities and engage in lively interactions. Nearpod provides a variety of ways to keep students interested in the material being covered in class, enhance their learning experiences, and to boost their satisfaction with their studies (Hakami, 2020). It was also concluded that Nearpod and students' electronic devices can promote active learning and enhance student engagement (McClean & Crowe, 2009). Simultaneously, their research findings emphasized that cloud-based audience response systems like Nearpod can tackle the issue of narrow physical classroom space, which hinders active learning. Nearpod and BYOD approaches can transform the narrow physical learning space into a spacious virtual space. Thanks to this, learners have more virtual rooms for interactive activities.

It has been proven that employing Nearpod in a BYOD classroom is effective as well as efficient for real-time assessment. Nearpod helps teachers collect real-time responses from all students at the same time. Thanks to Nearpod and BYOD learning environments, teachers can know what learners fail to grasp and spend more time analyzing problem areas to improve learning outcomes (Jing & Yue, 2016). Effective feedback or assessment is crucial in motivating students and improving learners' outcomes (Jing & Yue, 2016). Online assessment also encounters some challenges, such as exam cheating, a heavy workload for teachers, loss of time for checking answers, and limitation of question types (Yousef & Abduh, 2021).

The concept of BYOD was also repeated under another name by Abdullah et al. (2020): "PDAs" (personal digital assistants). This research follows the same vein as Sanmugam et al. (2019), but it highlighted the importance of the Nearpod application with interactive activities, which led to improving students' interest in accounting education and confirmed McClean & Crowe's conclusion (2017). While real-time feedback improved learning results with the Nearpod application (Jing & Yue, 2016), the findings of Abdullah et al. (2020) revealed that Nearpod with PDAs model significantly improved learners' academic performance as a result of engagement increase thanks to Nearpod.

Besides those mentioned above merits, Nearpod still has some drawbacks. It only comprises useful features such as a dictionary, highlighting tools, or text-to-speech options. Another

disadvantage of Nearpod is the hardship in reading the content of pdf due to the small size of letters. One noticeable challenge of using Nearpod is the low speed of online content loading, which may lower students' motivation (Tran et al., 2019; Wang &Chia, 2020; Abdullah, Inayati & Karyawati, 2022). To handle these issues, teachers should combine Nearpod with other tools to support learners in looking up word meanings, highlighting, or converting text to speech. In terms of pdf reading, teachers should send pdf files separately to learners. To speed up content loading, lecture slides or lesson videos should not take 15 minutes.

Nearpod in comparison with some other online learning methods

Due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, social distancing is a compulsory option to reduce the spread of infection, entailing the urgent need for online teaching and learning. "At the global level, Educause Association (2020) reported that most universities were able to respond with early intervention procedures moving immediately to distance learning" (Al-Ghamdi et al., 2021, p.64). However, the major challenge of online learning is maintaining interaction among peers, learners and content, and teachers-learners. In fact, "interaction plays a pivotal role in the efficacy and effectiveness of the present-day blended learning systems" (Kumar et al., 2021), and "to increase students' interactions, instructors are recommended that there is a need to develop learning activities that rely on students' devices and that students should be encouraged to involve in these activities when needed" (Santos & Bocheco, 2017, as cited in Hakami, 2020). Therefore, different tools, applications, or websites are recommended to meet these online interaction requirements. Important as interaction is in online learning, many effective tools to support online learning and teaching, such as MS Teams, Google Meet, or Zoom, still lack interactive and diverse activities. Hence, Nearpod, with its diverse activities, may potentially facilitate interaction, motivate students and create an interactive technology-based learning environment. These conclusions have been derived through the implementation of Nearpod in my pedagogical practices. Table 1 shows the advantages of the Nearpod classroom compared with onsite classrooms and MS Teams regarding features and functions.

Definition of Interaction

It summarized the concept of interaction in education as circumstances implemented between learners and the environment, whose purpose is to shift the behaviors of the learners to reach the pedagogical purposes (Bağrıacık Yılmaz & Karataş, 2018). The significance of interaction in online teaching and learning was listed as activating the learning process, optimizing the demands for studying as well as the skills, clarifying both new and existing ambiguous concepts, entitling learners to have control of their learning pace, realizing the meaningful learning, and enabling participation and communication. To be more specific, many researchers concluded that interaction influences students' high scoring, increases success, and motivates students' learning (Dzakiria et al., 2013, Lee & Choi, 2011; Zimmerman, 2012).

It introduced an innovative concept of interactive teaching. Interactive teaching and associated methodologies are encouraged in learning contexts where learners' participation is promoted, expected, and extended to others (Riley and Myer, 2014). It consists of "brief activities that can be used to break up a traditional lecture helping to engage students the entire lecture time." This definition mentions the significant roles of brief activities to engage and motivate students, which forecasts the potential success of the Nearpod application in online teaching because Nearpod offers diverse and short tasks which boost interaction levels.

Table 1
How a Nearpod class gives an edge over onsite class and Microsoft Teams class

	Offline class	Microsoft Teams	Nearpod
Accessibility	Pay for utility costs.	Pay for Outlook 365 accounts.	It is free and easy to register for an account.
Interactive Activities	• There are limited interactive activities because it is time-consuming for preparation (paper, PowerPoints, etc.). • Only several students can do activities due to fixed seat arrangements, narrow spaces, and time limits.	• There are limited interactive activities (quizzes and MS Forms), just for knowledge checking. • Listening skills and speaking skills cannot be checked because audios cannot be added to quizzes and MS Forms. Videos must be processed via many phases to insert links. Therefore, it is time-consuming when teachers design activities on MS Teams.	• Various interactive activities, including games and quiz to check learners' understanding. • Diverse templates available, easy to design. • All English skills can be checked because Nearpod allows adding videos and audios directly. Flipgrid can be used for a speaking activity. Therefore, using Nearpod is time-saving and increases motivation.
Giving feedbacks	• Teachers can give only some general feedback to just several students due to the large class and time limit. • Teachers are not informed of whether all students can grasp the lesson or not.	Teachers cannot see the statistics of all learners' results to point out the most common mistakes and give comments.	Answers are marked automatically. Teachers can get feedback instantly and point out what students need to improve and correct. Nearpod is more time-saving for giving feedback

Aspects of Interaction

Interactivity has been classified into numerous categories so far. Together with the development of e-learning recently, other types of interaction have also been explored, such as the interaction between learners and teaching elements, course designers, supportive elements, contents, interfaces, and administrative staff (Agudo-Peregrina et al., 2014). While these classifications have received controversial arguments, the classification that reaches the most unanimity is learner-content, learner-instructor, and learner-learner interaction (Baturay, 2011; Chou et al.,2010; Kuo, 2010; Sanmugam et al., 2019). Learner-content interaction focuses on changes in learners' comprehension, viewpoints, or cognitive structures after interactive activities of learners with certain content. Learner-instructor interaction relates to communication between learners and experts or educators. This interaction type may occur before, during, or after the teaching process. It is of great importance because it facilitates and motivates learning activities. Learner-learner interaction refers to the cooperation and information exchanges among learners with or without a teacher, which motivates learners and leads to their community-belonging perception (Cannell, 2015).

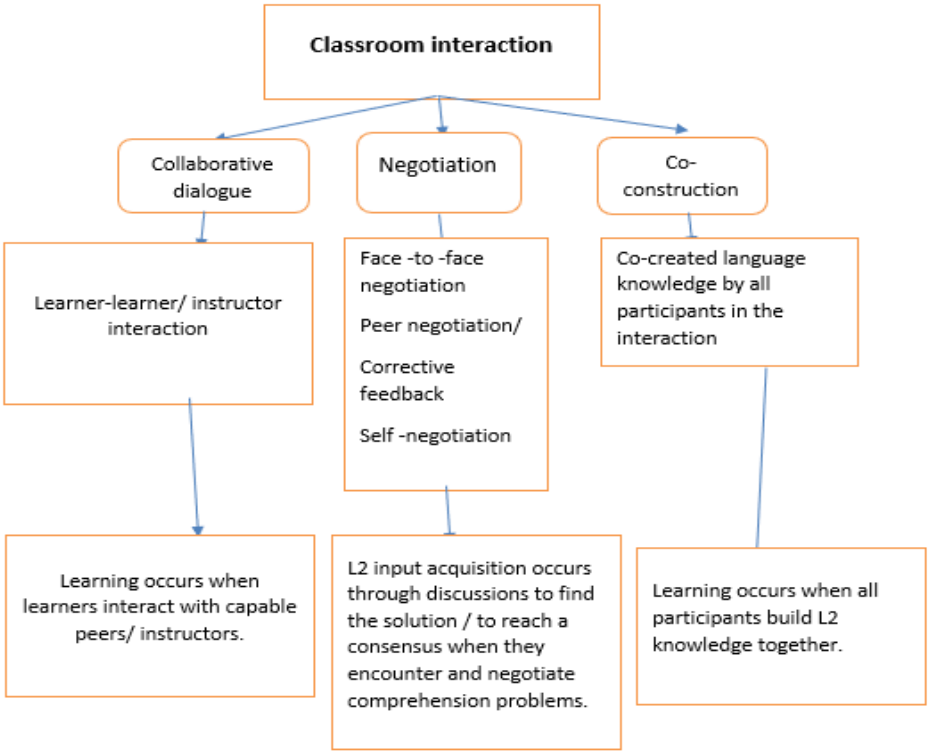
When it comes to interaction in online learning, five categories of interactivity were identified, which feature technological affordance: learner-self, learner-learner, learner-instructor, learner-content, and learner-interface types (Chou et al., 2010). Indicating the overlapping traits of learner-learner as well as learner-instructor, Wei et al. (2015) confirmed four types of online learning interaction: learner-self, human-human interaction, learner-content, and learner-interface.

It was highlighted that communication technologies are important to online education thanks to their motivation of activeness and engagement, resulting in improved learning outcomes and greater satisfaction for learners and instructors (McGilvery, 2016).

Like McGilvery (2016) 's conclusion, it was stated that communication motivation of activeness is a very important means to build rapport among students, other students, and instructors, especially in online instruction (Beyer et al., 2017). Interaction among them can encourage everybody to participate actively in two-way communication. Furthermore, Beyer et al. (2017) also contributed greatly to completing the interactivity theory by useful recommendations for how to improve the three major tiers of interaction: learner-learner, learner-content, and learner-instructor interaction.

Fahim & Seidi's study (2013) also contributed significantly to indicating three major components of interaction: collaborative dialogue, negotiation, and co-construction, which is clarified in Figure 1. Although they are components for effective offline classroom interaction, these components may be utilized in Nearpod online classroom interaction. Virtual classroom interaction created with Nearpod may satisfy the three main components of offline classroom interaction. Through Nearpod's various activities, learners still communicate with their peers and instructors, negotiate misunderstandings or discuss a topic to construct knowledge together. To be more appropriate with the virtual Nearpod classroom, three components of a virtual classroom interaction may be entitled e- collaborative dialogue, e-negotiation, and e- co-construction. This framework works effectively as a predictor for the success of Nearpod when dealing with increasing the interaction in distancing teaching and learning during Covid -19 pandemic.

Figure 1. Three components of classroom interaction, as described in Fahim & Seidi's study (2013*)*



Because of the popularity of Sanmugam et al.'s (2019) classification, this research paper explored the effect of Nearpod on learners' interactions in terms of three categories: learner-

content, learner-instructor, and learner-learner interaction.

Interaction Measurement

Multiple instruments have been employed to calculate the level of interaction, such as "The Course Evaluation Survey" (Baturay, 2011), questionnaires combined from different studies (Hankinson, 2012), questionnaire together with expert opinion consisting of learner-learner interaction dimension (Shackelford and Maxwell, 2012), questionnaire determining the frequency of realization of interaction types (Borup et al.,2013); an interaction questionnaire developed from the scale called "Evaluating Educational Uses of the Web in Nursing (EEUWIN)" (Einfeld, 2014); or questionnaire consisting of learner–self, learner–interface, learner–content, learner– instructor/learner (Wei et al., 2015). Although most of these instruments showed their usefulness and accuracy to a certain degree, two of them still demonstrated some limitations. For example, the measurement tool provided only the reliability information but did not point out the criteria in the survey for other researchers to check (Baturay's, 2011). Similarly, the questionnaire lacks validity and reliability information in Borup et al. (2013) 's study.

The ambiguity in interaction measurement by offering the Perceptions of Online Interaction Scale was resolved, which comprised 30 items and three dimensions (Bağrıacık Yılmaz & Karataş, 2018). This measurement tool is of high validity and reliability because its Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the whole scale was .95. In addition, the Perceptions of Online Interaction Scale was a result of exploratory factor analysis of data obtained from the participation of 177 learners. It was proven as "a valid and reliable tool that may be used in measuring interaction occurring in online learning environments" (Bağrıacık Yılmaz & Karataş, 2018, p.1). Therefore, the Perceptions of Online Interaction Scale was adopted in this research as the measurement tool to evaluate the interactivity level when Nearpod was applied in online learning and teaching.

Methods

Research approach

The research employed a mixed-method approach, using a questionnaire (5-Likert scale) including 11 statements related to student-student interaction, teacher-student interaction, and learner-content interaction. Besides, the open-ended questions are used to explore the participants' experiences in-depth. The mixed method increases the validity and comprehensibility of the project's data because it is useful when either the quantitative or qualitative approach is inadequate to understand best a research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The purpose of the quantitative data in this study (11-question Likert scales in Perception of Interaction Scale) is to identify the presence of freshmen's interaction level in English Online Class with Nearpod. The qualitative data (from 4 open-ended questions) uncover learners' perceptions towards Nearpod in an online classroom and validate Nearpod's effect on interaction level in the online teaching context. Moreover, the qualitative data from the questionnaires embellish and explain the quantitative findings in more depth and get an insight into the multiple tactics to optimize the application of Nearpod for interaction advancement.

Participants

The study was conducted at Van Lang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, for eleven weeks. Sixty-eight undergraduates in their first year at Van Lang university were recruited from different majors to get diverse perspectives. All of them were at the pre-intermediate level,

studied the same textbook, and were taught by the same lecturer. The selection process for participation in the English class involves choosing three classes of students based on their comparable proficiency levels. While these students come from diverse majors, they have all enrolled and were placed into English classes based on the results of a placement test conducted at the start of the academic year. The placement test ensures that all students have the same proficiency level.

Data collection & analysis

To increase the reliability and validity of the research, data collection consisted of an Open-ended questionnaire and the Perception of Online Interaction Scale.

Perception Online Interaction Scale

Perception Online Interaction Scale, adopted from Bağrıacık Yılmaz & Karataş (2018), consisted of 11 items with 5-point Likert scale questions (see Appendix A). Non-probability sampling was employed so that it is easily implemented. All 68 participants (100%) completed the Perception Online Interaction Scale online via Google Form at the end of the course. The reliability index of this scale calculated with SPSS software and Cronbach Alpha formula reached a satisfactory internal consistency with $\alpha = 0.947$ (learner-learner construct), $\alpha = 0.865$ (learner-teacher construct), and $\alpha = 0.935$ (learner-content construct). Moreover, the EFA analysis shows that all items satisfy the reliability and validity because the KMO index is 0.943 (> 0.5); sig.= 0 (<0.05); and all communalities' indexes are higher than 0.4.

However, this version, whose questions are entirely in English, may be incomprehensible to low-level students. Hence, these statements were translated into Vietnamese to facilitate students' comprehension as well as the accuracy of their choice.

Open-ended Questionnaire

Students were given four questions (see Appendix B). The participants' responses were coded and given back to students for accuracy check and coded into themes. The questionnaire data informed the learners' perception of the Nearpod application in the online classroom as well as their attitudes. The learners' responses were also the platform to reply to research questions 1 and 2.

Data Analysis

When it comes to the Perception of Online Interaction Scale, before the analysis, the gathered data was prepared and screened for invalid or incomplete responses. The Perception of Online Interaction Scale dataset was checked for missing data and then analyzed with EFA, reliability test, and one-way ANOVA in SPSS. The mean number of each group was checked to see whether there was interaction in each group. The scale has five levels: (5) Strongly agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, (1) Strongly Disagree. If the mean number of each group is over 3, the method used in that group helps increase interactivity. The data is presented in Table 3. Regarding the open-ended questionnaires, the answers were coded and processed by using thematic analysis. Some typical answers were quoted as evidence for the themes. Finally, the result from 2 sources was aggregated to form the answers to the research questions.

The Implementation

The research was conducted in eleven weeks. The teacher employed interactional activities each week to enhance student interaction via Nearpod online lessons, as seen in Table 2. After 11 weeks, all students completed the Perception Online Interaction Scale. Afterward, all participants answered the open-ended questions about their experience with Nearpod.

Table 2
The implementation of an 11-week lesson

Week	Content	Procedure	Nearpod activities	Interaction types - Interaction components
1	Introduce yourself	Students draw pictures that can tell all about them. Teacher shows them one by one, asks the class to look at each picture and guess something about him/her. Then call out him/her to share and have an introduction	Draw It	● Learner-content interaction.
				● Learner-learner interaction.
				● Teacher-learner interaction.
				● Collaborative dialogue.
				● Negotiation
2	Discussion on Animals in danger	Teacher divides the class into 8 groups and asks them to find details of 1 animal in danger (What, Where, Why). Then, post on board notes, find the common between groups, and agree on Cause and Solutions for endangered animals.	Collaborate Board	● Learner-learner interaction.
				● Collaborative dialogue.
				● Negotiation
				● Co-construction
3	Questions about Music and Film	Teacher creates multiple choice questions. Students must answer correctly and quickly to climb to the mountain first. Teacher follows the ranking to encourage or remind them to be quicker.	Time to Climb	● Learner-content interaction.
				● Teacher-learner interaction.
4	Speaking: Talkshow Overcome yourself	Teacher inserts a link to a story, ask students to read and remember information, then asks comprehension questions, to make a dialogue, then upload clip on Flipgrid.	Web content	● Learner-content interaction.
			Open-ended question	● Learner-learner interaction.
			Flipgrid	● Teacher-learner interaction.
				● Collaborative dialogue.
				● Negotiation
5	Listening 2: an interview with a former TV host	Teachers elicit some questions people often ask for interview, students write on board, teacher put likes on correct questions and asks students to choose the best questions. Then they play audio with quiz.	Collaborate Board and Quiz	● Learner-content interaction.
				● Co-construction
				● Learner-learner interaction.
				● Teacher-learner interaction.
				● Collaborative dialogue.
				● Negotiation
6	Vocabulary: - Musical instruments	Teacher teaches vocabulary, then checks and gives feedback, encourages students to correct wrong answers.	Memory test	● Teacher-learner interaction.
			Matching Pair	● Learner-content interaction.
7	Grammar: First conditional	Teacher uses sway to explain first conditional, then checks with quiz	Sway	● Teacher-learner interaction.
			Quiz	● Learner-content interaction.

8	Speaking: Discussing ways to reduce stress	Teacher presents a clip of ways to reduce stress, then elicit ideas. Students answer using audio record functions given in Nearpod.	Audio	● Learner-content interaction.
			Youtube	● Co-construction
				● Teacher-learner interaction.
9	Reading: Against the odds	Teacher teaches vocabulary, using slides and checks understanding with gap-filling for vocabulary and quiz for reading.	Quiz and Fill in the blank.	● Learner-content interaction.
				● Teacher-learner interaction.
10	Writing about an influential person in the media from your country.	Teacher let students to match the name of influential person with image. Then ask what they know about him/her, guide how to write and give feedback for each.	Matching pair and Open-ended questions	● Learner-content interaction.
				● Teacher-learner interaction.
11	Role play: Virtual travel	Teacher lists some places for student's preparation at home. In class, pick some students randomly to play the role of tour guide while teacher shows virtual images. Another student becomes a traveler.	Virtual Field Trip	● Learner-content interaction.
				● Learner-learner interaction.
				● Collaborative dialogue.
				● Co-construction

Results/Findings and discussion

The Result from the Perception of Online Interaction Scale

Table 3 illustrates that Nearpod can give rise to freshmen interaction, and there is only a minor discrepancy in the interaction levels of these techniques.

Table 3

The descriptive analysis of interaction levels in online Nearpod class

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
LL1	Nearpod	68	4.0294	1.19664
LL2	Nearpod	68	4.0147	1.20314
LL3	Nearpod	68	3.9706	1.13257
LL4	Nearpod	68	4.0294	1.25746
LT5	Nearpod	68	3.5147	1.08576
LT6	Nearpod	68	4.1618	1.17956
LT7	Nearpod	68	4.2353	1.19848
LC8	Nearpod	68	3.9706	1.17143
LC9	Nearpod	68	4.1618	1.14096
LC10	Nearpod	68	3.9706	1.19664
LC11	Nearpod	68	4.1765	1.18374

Table 3 illustrates that Nearpod can give rise to freshmen interaction, and there is only a minor discrepancy in the interaction levels of these techniques. As seen in Table 3, the mean figure of

all items of Nearpod classrooms is all over 3.5. LT6 and LT7 have the highest means (4.1 and 4.2, respectively), which can be interpreted as the interaction between learners and teachers being perceived better than learners-learners or learners- contents interactions. LC9 and LC11 have the highest mean (around 4.1 for each), and LL3 and LT5 have the lowest mean (3.9 and 3.5, respectively). These figures illustrate that using Nearpod brings about interaction in online English classrooms in all three tiers, and the interaction between learners and teachers seems to be higher than that between learners and contents and learners and learners. Among the constructs of the interaction between learners and teachers, LT6 and LT7 have the highest scores may be explained by the fact that the learners appreciated the teacher's feedback and attempt to motivate them during English lessons. Besides, the construct LT5 is 3.5, which represents the low interaction between learners and teachers in terms of asking Questions to the teacher. This figure reflects the reality in both onsite and online classrooms that students in Vietnam rarely ask questions to the teachers, partly because they do not want to challenge their teachers, or perhaps they are too shy to do that. LL3 is lower than other constructs because of not understanding the term "discuss opinions/ concepts with other students". Maybe in their opinions, the discussion must be a face-to-face conversation, while during the lessons, they discussed and contributed their opinions with high frequency with the Collaborate Board, Polls, and Draw It activities.

Results from the Open-ended Questionnaire

Active Participation and Opportunities of Meaning Negotiation

Preferred the online classroom with Nearpod because it can assure active participation and offer more opportunities to negotiate meanings with teachers and peers. Learners' responses collected from open-ended questions showed that most students (45 freshmen). Firstly, they admitted they had more chances to express their viewpoints confidently when unsure of their answers. Their privacy was higher, and losing face problems hardly happened because their answers could be collected in writing form. Secondly, flexibility in a lesson, together with an eye-catching and user-friendly layout, engaged learners to finish the online tasks assigned. Learners found Nearpod online lessons extremely convenient since they could learn whenever and wherever they liked with answer keys as well as obvious materials or guidance available. If students like, they can rewind their lessons for consolidation. Therefore, they became more proactive and independent in their online learning. Thirdly, teachers might immediately detect students' mistakes and give formative assessments, quick comments, or feedback. Thanks to this, students realized and corrected their mistakes as well as had more time for brainstorming innovative ideas. X (male, 19) offered a typical view:

> I prefer the Nearpod online class to the offline one because I have more opportunities to express myself without being afraid of losing face if I'm unsure about my answer. Nearpod is convenient because I can learn the lesson wherever and whenever I like. If I have problems to deal with, I can rewind and review the lesson later. I also like the privacy of my answer since only the teacher can see my answer first. Eye-catching images and easily accessible functions are among the basic factors that make us want to join the lesson dynamically.

Interaction with Teacher and Formative Assessment

Most students (63) believed they interacted well with their teacher. They mentioned their teacher as a facilitator, an advisor, a consultant, and a friend. This is because the teacher gave them obvious instructions before Nearpod tasks, answered their requirements during and after the online lessons, pointed out and corrected their mistakes, and gave feedback and comments

after each lesson. Therefore, they can recognize their strengths and weaknesses after each lesson. Hence, learners agreed that Nearpod in online classes enhanced efficient learning, learning from mistakes, easy interaction with teachers, and helpful feedback from teachers. H (female, 18) expressed her feelings:

> Thanks to Nearpod, I had a lot of interaction with my teacher. She is very nice, and helpful, and always gives quick feedback or corrects our mistakes during or after the online lesson. Communicating with her by asking questions or chatting as a friend is wonderful. Interacting with her helps us know she has a good sense of humor, is enthusiastic, and is helpful. After each lesson, she will point out the strengths and weaknesses so that we will have a better lesson in the next session.

Interaction with Peers

There were mixed opinions about the frequency of peer interaction when online lessons with Nearpod were applied. 38 learners confirmed that they had much interaction with their peers by voting for the best answers from their peers with the Poll function or giving comments to each other by using the Open-ended question function. With Nearpod, participants perceived that they learned more innovative and unique ideas from peers, peer feedback, and discussion tasks via the Collaborative board. However, 17 freshmen found it a bit difficult to interact with other learners in the same online classroom with Nearpod. From their perspectives, they were assigned more individual tasks than group work activities, or some students were lazy with online group work. 13 students denied that they had chances for peer interaction, the reasons for which are anxiety in communication, inability to observe others' work, no interaction on Nearpod but much interaction on social networks. J, female, (18), said that:

> I can learn new ideas from my classmates via Nearpod tasks. After we finish a task, the teacher will show us our answers so that we can comment on each other's work, vote for an excellent answer using a Poll, or discuss and share our ideas on Collaborative Board.

Interaction with Contents

All learners (68) accepted that they had perfect interaction with the contents (materials, activities, and website links) in Nearpod online class. The evidence for the content interaction was offered, such as well-designed materials with fully informed knowledge, selective, attractive, relaxing, diverse, helpful, competitive activities, or games that motivate learners and relate to reality. From realistic, diverse knowledge of regional cultures, festivals were cleverly inserted into Nearpod activities such as Festival description by Drawing functions or Smart maps. Additionally, useful websites linked to Nearpod and fantastic quizzes for knowledge consolidation boost the interaction levels between students and contents, which leads to learners' acquisition of new lexis, grammatical structures, and cultural and scientific knowledge. K, male (19), reported that:

> I think the materials that our teacher has provided are very interesting, logical, well-prepared, and fully informed. Besides, the activities were designed as games, so we're very excited to join in. Furthermore, useful websites for English learning are also linked to the Nearpod websites, which encourages our self-study.

Discussion

The Nearpod online learning project results indicate that this website is an effective tool in online English learning. That helps increase freshmen's interaction level in learning English online. The Perception of Interaction Scale data demonstrates that students Nearpod can bring about the interaction between learners and learners, learners and teachers, and learners and contents. This reinforces the conclusion of Murillo-Zamorano et al. (2019) that using a BYOD model (Bring Your Own Devices) as Nearpod helps students to interact more with each other in the class. However, the interaction figure of Nearpod has discrepancies among the interaction levels among three tiers, in which the interaction between learners and the teachers seems to be higher than between learners and contents or between learners and learners. These findings answered the first research question: Nearpod can lead to interaction level in English classrooms. In addition, qualitative data from the open-ended questions revealed that learners had positive attitudes towards Nearpod in online classrooms and were actively and independently engaged in Nearpod learning activities. These findings are in line with those of Sanmugam et al. (2019) and Kaddoura & Al Husseiny (2021).

Applying Nearpod in English online classrooms also addresses the problem of unwillingness to oral practice raised in Akkakoson's study (2016). More importantly, because Nearpod ensures high privacy of learners' answers, their fear of losing face gradually gives room for confidence, comfort, and enjoyment. Using Nearpod also offers students more opportunities to express their viewpoints and benefit from teacher correction (during and after the lessons), peer correction, and self-correction (during and after the lesson). Furthermore, Nearpod activities let learners have more room for creativity. Learners can consolidate their old lessons and expand their grammatical and lexical repertoire by rewinding lecture videos. These findings are similar to what was concluded by Santos et al. (2018) as well as Sanmugam et al. (2019). Using Nearpod also tackles the obstacles of large classes and inactive learning, which was mentioned in Sanmugam et al. (2019).

Using Nearpod tasks in the classroom has significantly enhanced student interaction levels. Various functions such as Draw It, Collaborate Board, Time to Climb, Flipgrid, Memory Test, Matching Pair, Audio Youtube, and Quiz have contributed to this outcome. The Draw It function allows students to sketch their ideas or responses and share them with their peers, encouraging creative expression and enhancing communication. Collaborate Board, on the other hand, allows students to work on the same document simultaneously, promoting teamwork and collaboration. Time to Climb provides a gamified quiz-like format that can encourage students to compete with one another while learning new material. The use of Audio Youtube can also be beneficial in promoting listening comprehension and building vocabulary. Lastly, the Quiz function provides students with immediate feedback and enables the teacher to identify areas that need further attention. Overall, the various functions of Nearpod tasks can foster a more interactive learning environment and engage students in various ways. Flipgrid allows students to record and share videos of themselves discussing various topics, while the Memory Test and Matching Pair functions stimulate student engagement by testing their retention of new material.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

The first limitation of this study is its small sample size of 68 participants for each group. Future studies may gather data from a larger population to accurately identify the interaction levels of Nearpod in English online classes compared with the traditional offline class. Besides, how much difference in the interaction levels among classrooms with Nearpod and offline classrooms is also an inspiring topic to explore in future research. Secondly, from the detailed

analysis of open-ended questionnaires, there should be more than one teacher conducting the coding process to assure the objectiveness of the coding as well as the validity and reliability of future research into interaction level in online classes with Nearpod. Finally, an unexpected finding is that most students admitted that the various activities with Nearpod can enhance their autonomy in learning. Hence, the effect of Nearpod on students' autonomy or self-study can be a topic worth further investigation because there is already some evidence that online learning can increase self–study awareness (Trinh, 2023). Therefore, the influence of Nearpod, an online tool on the level of self-study, might be a potential topic for further research.

The use of Nearpod in teaching and learning English can have significant practical implications for educators and students alike. By integrating technology into the classroom, Nearpod provides a dynamic platform that can engage students in interactive and collaborative learning experiences. It can allow students to participate in a range of activities, including quizzes, collaborative boards, and multimedia presentations that can facilitate the learning of English more effectively and engagingly. Nearpod can also help educators personalize instruction, providing tailored learning experiences catering to individual students' unique needs and interests. Additionally, Nearpod can be used as a tool for formative and summative assessments, enabling teachers to monitor students' progress and provide feedback that can support their learning. Here are some suggestions for English teachers and students to use Nearpod to increase interaction in both online and onsite classroom settings:

- Collaborative boards: Use Nearpod's collaborative board feature to create a virtual space where students can share ideas, brainstorm, or collaborate on group projects.
- Draw it: Encourage students to use the "Draw it" feature to illustrate their understanding of a concept or idea. They can then share their drawings with the class, prompting discussion and feedback.
- Time to Climb: Use Nearpod's "Time to Climb" feature to create interactive quizzes that encourage friendly competition and engage students in a fun and interactive way.
- Flipgrid: Use Nearpod's integration with Flipgrid to create video discussions or debates on various topics. Students can share their opinions and ideas with their peers, fostering engagement and interaction.
- Memory Test and Matching Pair: Use Nearpod's Memory Test and Matching Pair features to help students learn and remember new vocabulary words, grammar rules, or literary terms in a fun and interactive way.
- Audio Youtube: Use Nearpod's "Audio Youtube" feature to incorporate authentic listening and speaking activities into your lessons. Students can listen to and respond to various videos or podcasts, prompting discussion and interaction.

Nearpod provides a range of interactive features that can increase interaction and engagement in online and onsite English language classrooms. By incorporating these features into their lessons, teachers can foster a more collaborative and interactive learning environment, promoting higher levels of engagement and learning outcomes for their students.

Conclusion

The main objective of this study is to identify the interaction level in English online classrooms in the Vietnam context when Nearpod was employed. Based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Perception of Online Interaction Scale, the open-ended questionnaires, it can be concluded that Nearpod can help boost interaction levels in English online classrooms, motivate learners to participate in lessons actively, and inspire students to express themselves confidently. While the small sample limits the generalizability of the results, this study provides new insight into a new technique that helps increase interaction levels with peers and teachers in a virtual classroom, which has a significant meaning in the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on these conclusions, practitioners should consider the benefits of Nearpod on other English skills together with a bigger number of participants. Further research is needed to determine whether Nearpod can impact students' autonomy and self-study. Thanks to the results from the research, Nearpod should be employed as a vital and long-term method tool in teaching English online to increase students' interaction and address the problems of limited preparation time, crowded classes, lack of motivation, and less creativity.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

	Statements	*Strongly Disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neutral*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*
Learner–learner interaction	I think that the feedback I receive from other students will contribute to me. (LL1)	○	○	○	○	○
	My communication with other students will enable me to benefit from the course more. (LL2)	○	○	○	○	○
	I enjoy discussing opinions and concepts with other students. (LL3)	○	○	○	○	○
	I think that using the experiences of other students will contribute to my learning. (LL4)	○	○	○	○	○
Learner–instructor interaction	I can confidently ask questions to the instructor. (LT5)	○	○	○	○	○
	I think that the feedback from the instructor are useful. (LT6)	○	○	○	○	○
	The instructor tries to motivate us for learning. (LT7)	○	○	○	○	○
Learner–content interaction	I think that I have the opportunity of practicing what I have learned in this course. (LC8)	○	○	○	○	○
	Examples given in the course enable me to concretize the subject. (LT9)	○	○	○	○	○
	I think that course materials stimulate my interest in the course. (LT10)	○	○	○	○	○
	I think links to relevant websites and online materials in this course will support my learning. (LT11)	○	○	○	○	○

APPENDIX B: *Open-ended question*

1. In your opinion, between offline class and online class, which one do you participate in more excitedly and have chances to express your opinion better? Please give some examples for your answer.
2. What do you think about your interaction with the teacher in the offline class? (Did you have class time to express your opinions? Did the teacher help you when you have difficulties during the lesson? Did the teacher give useful feedback after you have done your tasks?)
3. What do you think about your interaction with your classmates? (Did you have a chance to work in groups or communicate with your friends? Did you learn from your friends?)
4. What do you think about the materials provided by your teacher? (Lesson videos, handouts, guidance, learning tools...) Can you learn anything froman in-class discussion? Give specific examples.