

## ENHANCING STUDENTS' ENGLISH AND DIGITAL LITERACIES THROUGH ONLINE COURSES: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the benefits of incorporating online courses, MyELT, for General English (GE) curricula and to investigate the challenges that negatively affect the expediency of the courses in improving the students' English proficiency and digital literacy. 351 participants were randomly selected and responded to a questionnaire and out of which 15 were conveniently selected for a semi-structured interview. Qualitative data was also collected through personal journaling to record hidden challenges for the expediency of MyELT. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and content analysis. The findings correlated and revealed that MyELT courses were beneficial in their flexibility as they helped fulfilling GE courses' description and proportionately improved students' English proficiency and digital literacy. Neither students' perceptions nor teachers' roles and background were challenging factors. The expediency of MyELT was, thus, challenged by four factors namely: teachers' teaching practices, their inability to mentor students' performance which further instigated some students to do unethical practices, the company system of accessibility, and MyELT courses content.

**Keywords:** Online course, blended learning, ICT, flexibility, digital literacy, English proficiency.

### INTRODUCTION

To become a global citizen in the 21st century, English proficiency and digital literacy are essential skills for survival. Qualifying Tests of English for International Communication (TOEIC) and Internet Core Competency Certification (IC3) are prerequisite graduation requirements for The Ministry of Higher Education in Thailand. The government has been endeavoring to promote and develop its educational system by incorporating English and ICT in universities' curricula in a way to meet the global demands. The Thai government is supporting these prospects by providing equipped educational facilities that make the students' learning more practical, expedient, and meaningful. The administrators and lecturers are working collaboratively to enhance students' English proficiency and digital literacy. They unwaveringly adopt the

latest teaching methods and policies that will effectively develop the students' 21st-century learning skills.

Nowadays, students need English proficiency and digital literacy to obtain sustainable jobs and/or further their education. English proficiency refers to "the ability of students to use English language to make and communicate meanings in spoken and written contexts" (Murray, 2016, p. 70). Meanwhile, digital literacy describes "the ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers" (Gilster, 1997, p. 1). Online course refers "to a period of instruction lasting one academic period in which all course materials, student deliverables, and human interactions take place via a digital or electronic medium" (Kiriakidis et al., 2011, p. 119). Adapting online learning courses enhances students' both English and digital literacies. Online learning courses prove to be beneficial for students as they are flexible in terms of accessibility (Kumi-Yeboah, 2015), unexpansive (Samsuri et al., 2014), and suitable for students' needs and context (Gillett-Swan, 2017). Appana (2008) and Gilbert (2015) explain that online learning courses help to solve the problem of large classes, develop students' problem-solving skills, enhance students' language and digital literacies and encourage students' interaction. Nevertheless, there are different challenges (e.g. teachers' and students' lack of digital literacy (Jacobs 2013) digital divide (Journell, 2007) unsuitability of online courses' content with the students' needs and context (Lichtman, 2010), the complexity of the online system (Jacob, 2013) and students' poor time management (Adams & Blair, 2019) that considerably have affected the expediency of EFL learners' online learning experience. However, there is no conclusive empirical evidence about the benefits and challenges of online learning courses in the Thai context, particularly while using MyELT.

In the academic year 2019-2020, English lecturers at Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University (NSTRU) selected and utilized World Link commercial textbook series along with MyELT platform provided by Cengage to enhance the Thai EFL learners English and digital literacies. This type of blended learning was meant to allow the students to independently practice what they learned in class at home. Their exercises address the macro and micro-skills of English. The students utilized MyELT for a full academic year but in the end, no significant improvement was perceived in their test results. Therefore, a detailed investigation was needed to unveil the challenges that negatively affected the expediency of MyELT.

The present study is significant as it exposes the challenges of online learning among the Thai EFL learners. The findings of this study will add new knowledge and some suggestions for lecturers and administrators to reconsider the integration of online courses to improve the learners' English proficiency and digital literacy. The study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges that negatively affect the expediency of online learning courses. The present study specifically attempts to answer these questions:

1. What are the benefits of incorporating MyELT online courses in the English GE curricula?
2. What are the challenges that negatively affected the expediency of MyELT?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Benefits of Online Learning Courses

Online learning can be divided into three categories, fully web-based learning, blended learning, and traditional learning with web-based supplements (Gilbert, 2015). The present study focuses on a type of blended learning in which teachers deliver regular classes utilizing different ICT tools and thereafter assign students to practice the language independently via (MyELT), class-based online courses to enhance their English proficiency and digital literacy. Through the system, teachers can assign group and/or individual tasks and trace students' performance. Incorporating online courses in the EFL learning context is beneficial as it fits students' diverse academic needs and contexts (Cater et al., 2012; Gilbert, 2015; Gillett-Swan, 2017). Their flexibility provides different pathways and opportunities for students who want to continue and/or improve their education with no restrictions of time and location.

The flexibility of online learning cannot be overstated as it is prevalent in all online courses. The effectiveness of these courses depends chiefly on the students, who can choose convenient times to concentrate on learning (Cater et al., 2012). Online courses help the students to learn and improve their English proficiency and digital literacy at any time and in any place suitable for their learning needs. The learners can choose

“when, where and how to learn” (Hartnett, 2016, p. 2). This flexibility helps particular students to continue their education while fulfilling other obligations like having a part-time job. Students always have positive perceptions of online learning courses as they reduced logistic demands, increased learning adaptability, and technology-enhanced learning, promoting a more enjoyable and successful academic experience (Gillett-Swan, 2017). Online learning courses contradict the belief that ‘learning is one size that fits all students’. It gave the students the freedom to overcome the time and location restrictions (Hartnett, 2016).

Online learning courses are beneficial for students who want to improve their English proficiency through self-regulated learning (Phanchanikul, 2015; Gilbert, 2015). Those students utilize various “cognitive and metacognitive strategies to accomplish their learning goals” (You & Kang, 2014, p. 126). They can manage their time, initiate a conversation with their teachers when they encounter difficulties, and reflect skillfully on their learning (Gilbert, 2015). Online courses improve students’ English as they encourage them to learn, practice the language independently and develop their autonomy (Skibba, 2013). Comparably, Gilbert (2015) found that online courses “not only taught students course material but also how to be “an independent and responsible student.” (p. 23). They help reducing students’ anxiety which emanates from their fear of making mistakes, peers’ reactions, and teachers’ unsupportive feedback while using the language in traditional face-to-face learning (Martin, & Valdivia, 2017). The virtual reality of online learning makes “students feel safe” (Chien et al., 2020 p. 26) and more motivated to practice the language without fear of others’ reactions. Appana (2008) found that “the benefit of the online delivery method is that the associated anonymity can result in greater participation from all students, including “shy” ones” (p. 9). Students’ digital literacy is also a causative factor for students’ anxiety.

McGuinness and Fulton (2019) believe that the adoption of online learning modes develops students’ information and digital literacy skills “particularly when the courses in question are embedded within academic curricula and delivered at point-of-need” (p. 3). This literacy assists students’ education especially in today’s situation where only “digitally literate students can search and manage, scrutinize and integrate digital information (Tang & Chaw, 2014). They will have the ability to read, understand and gather information from different digital sources (Spires & Bartlett, 2012). Therefore, incorporating online courses open pathways for students who develop digital literacies as an integral part of their learning to become “more effective in their study and more employable on graduation” (McGuinness & Fulton, 2019, p. 3). According to Vinogradova and Shin (2020) “helping students to develop digital literacy in English classroom is no longer optional” (p. 223) as they need to adjust with today’s digital culture (Gkonou et al, 2016). Online courses are cheaper than face-to-face courses as they fit students’ time and needs (Annetta et al., 2010).

Online learning courses have the potential to create educational opportunities for students with a cheaper cost. Samsuri et al. (2014) significantly assert that online courses are “cost-effective than traditional learning because less time and money is spent by learners on traveling. This means when students embark on e-learning, they can be thrifty” (p. 140). This feature has proven to be of great value, particularly for students with irregular schedules due to parenting obligations or work (Idrizi et al., 2018). Besides, avoiding the frequent commute to university reduces expenses and saves students’ time. It is beneficial especially for those who live in far areas from the campus (Bryan, 2007). Online learning courses “offer a more flexible and personalized form of education, allowing the students to progress at their pace and on their time” (Kumi-Yeboah, 2015, p. 140). They help students to save money spent on house rent and food especially those who come from low-income families. In the Thai context, there is still a dearth of literature about the benefits and challenges of online learning.

### **The Challenges of Online Learning among EFL Learners**

Online learning courses among EFL learners are always liable to some challenges which affect students’ learning experience. Students nowadays are digital natives (Kennedy et al., 2008) yet some of them have negative attitudes and perceptions about online learning (Smidt et al., 2014) as it limits personal interaction with peers and teachers and increases students’ sense of isolation (Croft et al., 2010). The digital divide and the lack of digital literacy are persistent challenges for online learning among EFL learners (Journell, 2007). Jacobs (2013) rejected the perception that today’s EFL learners are ‘tech savvy’, commenting that they are not well-acquainted with basic desktop applications and use technology for entertainment but not for

educational purposes. The teachers' inability to mentor students' performance in online learning instigated some students to do some unethical practices such as copying or cheating (Gamage et al., 2020). Chami (2020) attributed these unusual practices to the pressure of study and the difficulty of assigned tasks.

Teachers' roles in online learning are not different from those in traditional face-to-face learning (e.g. Aggarwal & Bento, 2000; Cowan, 2006). In the classroom, teachers play roles as facilitators, guides, mentors, tutors... etc.) to assist students to overpass learning difficulties and enhance their understanding (Cullingford, 2016). However, during online learning teacher plays similar roles (Collison et al., 2000; Cowan, 2006) but with dissimilar spontaneity particularly in terms of interaction, support, and feedback (Craig et al., 2008). Nir-Gal (2002) found that students in online courses expect guidance in four domains: "the technical-operational domain, the task-oriented domain, the personal-emotional domain, and the social domain" (p. 1). Nevertheless, teachers cannot copy traditional classroom teaching roles and teaching practices to an online learning experience. For successful teaching and learning to take place, Craig et al. (2008) thus suggest that "both teachers and students need to be clear on the roles that they are expecting of each other. A mismatch between these expectations can lead to frustration and a less than satisfactory teaching or learning experience" (p. 206). Regardless, teacher's lack of digital literacy and online teaching experience, and online courses' content are some other challenges that impair the expediency of online learning (Zawacki-Richter & Anderson, 2014).

Online learning courses' content and system of accessibility are frequently called into question when it comes to investigating the challenges of an online learning experience (Gilbert, 2015; Dashtestani, 2014). The unsuitability of online courses' content with the students' needs and/or context negatively affects their experience of online learning (Gilbert, 2015). Lichtman (2010) finds out this as a "common problem in e-learning domain and happens not only in MOOCS but also in any web-based learning system" (p. 198). According to Appana (2008) course content is an essential factor that determines its success or failure and thus the online courses designers put into account the students' needs and context. Besides, the students expect online courses' content and system of accessibility to be easy to understand and navigate (Yang & Cornelius, 2004) as the students feel discouraged and sometimes opt to drop out of the courses due to the difficulty of the system and/or the online courses' content (Kyei-Blankson et al., 2019). Therefore, Jacob (2013) suggests "they must be comfortable with the technology. That means that the technology employed must be user-friendly. The course should be easy to navigate to the links provided" (p. 7).

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

The study employed a mixed-methods design including a questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and journaling to get a full picture and deep understanding of a phenomenon under study (Kumar, 2019). Mixed methods refer to the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study (Flewitt & Ang 2020). Mixed-methods research "provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and/or qualitative research and helps in answering questions that cannot be answered by quantitative or qualitative approaches alone" (Creswell & Clark, 2017, p. 12).

### **Research Context**

The context of the study was MyELT online courses for Thai undergraduate students who studied English GE courses at NSTRU, Thailand. In 2020 English teachers at the Language Center selected and utilized commercial textbook series along with MyELT platform for five GE courses (Intensive English, English for Daily Life, English for Communication, English for Application, and English for Working Skill) to enhance students' English proficiency and digital literacy. The students utilized MyELT online courses for an academic year in two semesters. The syllabus in MyELT platform consists of three levels Intro, level 1, and level 2. Each level contains 12 units and each unit contains exercises that address the four skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In our context, we offer 5 English courses i.e. (Intensive English course, English for Daily Life, English for communication, English for application English for working skill) and we use one level of MyELT courses for two subjects, for example, online Intro course will be used for Intensive English and English for Daily Life due to the limit of time. These courses are classroom-based online courses that

give the students chance to practice at home what they have learned in class. The duration for each course is one semester. The teacher can assign all the units at one time or unit by unit. They also can extend the time if some students could not finish the assigned tasks on time. For evaluation, the students' performance will be assessed automatically by the system. At the end of each unit or all the units, the teachers will download the detailed progress report which shows the students' names, emails, number of assigned exercises, number of completed exercises, and grade for the correct answers that the students have done during the course.

## Participants

The study involved 354 Thai undergraduate students at NSTRU who studied GE courses from five faculties as shown in Table 1. A simple random sampling strategy was employed. It gave a chance for all members of the population to be chosen in the sampling group and helped in getting reliable findings (Lamb, et al., 2011). The sample size was determined through Krejcie and Morgan's formula (1970).  $N = 4156$ ,  $x^2 = 3.184$ ,  $p = 0.5$ ,  $e = 0.05$ .

$$n = \frac{x^2 N p (1 - p)}{e^2 (N - 1) + x^2 p (1 - p)}$$

$$n = \frac{3.814 \times 4156 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2 \times (4156 - 1) + 3.841 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)}$$

$$= \frac{3990.799}{10.3875 + 0.96025} = \frac{3990.799}{11.34775} = 351.6819634$$

$$\approx 352, \quad \text{Thus, } n = 352$$

For the semi-structured interview, 15 students; three from each faculty, were voluntarily selected from the questionnaire sampling group.

**Table 1.** Demographic data

| Faculties                      | Population | Percentage | Sampling group |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| Humanities and Social Sciences | 1,101      | 26         | 92             |
| Education                      | 1,005      | 24         | 85             |
| Management Sciences            | 715        | 18         | 64             |
| Science                        | 598        | 14         | 49             |
| Industrial Technology          | 737        | 18         | 64             |
| Total                          | 4,156      | 100        | 354            |

## Instruments

A questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and journaling were employed.

## Questionnaire

A questionnaire with 34 items through 5 Likert scales was used to collect quantitative data. Likert Scale helped in gathering data "about affective dimensions of teaching and learning, such as beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and preferences" (Richards & Lockhart, 1994, p.10). The questionnaire was utilized to reach

students and find out the benefits and challenges of incorporating online courses. First, the questionnaire was adapted from Lai and Aksornjarung, (2018); Noom-Ura, (2013); Yunus et al. (2013); Ngampornchai and Adams, (2016), who similarly explored the benefits and challenges of online courses in EFL pedagogy. Second, the questionnaire was revised by language experts in the field to enhance its inclusiveness and reliability. Third, it was translated into Thai to help the students to overpass the language barrier and understand the meaning of each item correctly. Finally, it was adjusted in Google Form and prepared in Quick Response Code (QRC) to be shared with the students.

### **Semi-structured Interview**

A semi-structured individual interview was employed to give the students chances to express the benefits and challenges of online courses. A semi-structured interview was flexible and “offered great latitude in data collection” (Galletta, 2013, p. 104) as it allowed the respondents to express their opinions and ideas in their way (Chevalier et al., 2014). It “enabled the researchers to obtain an in-depth understanding of the interviewees’ attitudes, behavior, and perceptions” (Christiansen, 2014, p. 517). Meanwhile, it gave the interviewees chance to disclose other hidden issues which were not asserted in the questionnaire (Austin & Pinkleton, 2015). It contained a list of pre-determined and follow-up questions that covered the main important aspects and attempted to answer the research questions. Taking the research objectives as the main criteria, the interview questions were prepared using the questionnaire findings which helped us to explore some of the issues in greater depth and further correlate the quantitative and qualitative findings (Ruhe & Zumbo, 2008).

### **Journaling**

Journaling or personal journal is “a formal personal writing that expresses perceptions, experiences, dreams, and creativity from the perception of the self” (Hemphill-Pearson, 2008, p. 61). A personal journal was employed in this study as it added more depth in understanding the challenges that impaired the usefulness of MyELT in improving students’ English proficiency and digital literacy. It gave the researchers a chance to include other related issues that were not included in the previously utilized instruments. For personal journal, the researchers acted as human instruments to capture the tacit challenges and benefits of utilizing online courses to augment students’ language learning and digital literacy skills. The main sources of data for the personal journal were notes from real-life experience as the researchers worked as teachers at NSTRU and from the ‘LINE Group’ that connected all the GE teachers and the company coordinators.

### **Data Collection**

The quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire from January 18 to March 26, 2020, at NSTRU, Thailand. A set of survey was adapted and administered using Google Form. and QR code. Seven teachers distributed the questionnaire by sharing the QR code or link in their classes after explaining to the students the purpose of the study. In the end, we received 354 responses and after cleaning the data 351 were considered suitable for data analysis.

The qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interview and personal journal. 15 students, three from each faculty had the interview in March 2020 at Language Center. The researchers made appointments with the participants at a time they preferred. Before the interview, the researchers explained the purpose and procedure of the interview. The interviewees were also informed that their interviews will be recorded for the sake of data accuracy. For personal journal, the researchers observed and noted down their experiences while teaching and utilizing MyELT for a full academic year. They took into consideration the benefits and challenges that the students and other teachers faced whilst utilizing MyELT. They also collected data from LINE Group which was created to connect the teachers and the company coordinators if they would face any problems. Journaling guidelines and issues were pre-determined based on the research questions.

## Data Analysis

The questionnaire data was analyzed descriptively using means, percentage, and standard deviation through Excel 2016. The data were carefully input, doubled checked, and then cleaned the incomplete or repeated responses to minimize the errors and get reliable findings. After that, the data was inputted into SPSS 22 and the normality of the data was confirmed with skewness and kurtosis between -2 and +2 for all items (George & Mallery, 2003). Further, to examine the reliability of the questionnaire statements, Cronbach's alpha was used. Items with less than .70 were excluded from the data analysis. The findings show that all the items have higher than .70. Therefore, all the items were included in the data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to "summarize sets of numerical data to conserve time and space" (Mackey & Gass, 2011 p. 85). In course of this study, the key themes were identified by comparing the means value across the tables in all questionnaire items.

The qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews and personal journals were analyzed through qualitative content analysis. Harding (2018) gave three steps for content analysis, first, to "transcribe the data" (p. 56). Then researchers familiarized themselves by reading the transcripts thoroughly and repeatedly to be immersed with the data and become more informed. Second, "codes were used and initial categories were identified" (Ibid, pp.83-84). The researchers double-checked the transcripts again to identify the emerging themes that would fulfill the research objectives. The researchers picked up and grouped some of the themes which made a significant contribution to answer the research questions. Third, the major themes were listed, grouped, and titled in a cohesive manner to be matched with the quantitative findings.

## FINDINGS

The present study aims to examine the benefits of incorporating online courses in GE curricula. MyELT was incorporated to enhance students' English and digital literacies.

**Table 2.** Benefits of MyELT ( $\alpha = .950$ )

| Subject Matters                                                                                            | $\bar{x}$ | SD   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| MyELT is beneficial as it is flexible for our schedules and also meets the course[s] description.          | 4.10      | 0.80 |
| MyELT makes studying English easy as we can study anywhere and anytime.                                    | 4.08      | 0.86 |
| It saves our time as we can do it at home instead of in class.                                             | 4.15      | 0.76 |
| MyELT is helpful as it solves the issue of our big classes.                                                | 4.03      | 0.85 |
| MyEIT eliminates anxiety and shyness which we experience in the big diverse classes.                       | 4.02      | 0.89 |
| MyELT is useful for us as it enhances our digital literacy skills.                                         | 4.10      | 0.83 |
| MyELT simplifies learning English because we can access it from our mobile and no need for carrying books. | 4.06      | 0.86 |
| MyELT enhances our understanding of English as we get enough time to practice and enjoy learning English.  | 4.07      | 0.85 |
| This MyELT was specifically designed for Thai students to improve their English proficiency.               | 4.06      | 0.87 |

Table 1 indicates that MyELT is beneficial in its flexibility ( $\bar{x} = 4.10$ ,  $SD=0.80$ ) as it fulfills courses' descriptions and objectives. MyELT was useful as it improved to some extent students' digital literacy ( $\bar{x} = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ) and simplified their language learning by using their mobile ( $\bar{x} = 4.06$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ) instead of carrying the book. Besides, MyELT ameliorated students' English Proficiency ( $\bar{x} = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) as they got enough time to enjoy and practice the language independently.

The interview data similarly showed that MyELT was useful as it covered course descriptions and objectives. It helped the students to revise and practice the language independently anytime and anywhere as some interviewees stated:

*“MyELT can be used anytime and anywhere” (IV5, IV8). “I can make use of my free time through it. MyELT helps us to review what I have studied in the classroom or what I have learned from the class again. So we can develop our English skills to use in the classroom. We like MyELT. We can revise our lessons wherever we want.” (IV3)*

The data also indicated that MyELT assisted them to develop their English macro and micro-skills as two interviewees asserted:

*“MyELT helped us to improve life skills and micro-skills of English” (IV2). “It assisted us to string words/vocabulary into a sentence with correct grammar rules. MyELT videos helped us to improve critical and analytical skills as well” (IV6).*

The students were aware that MyELT was meant to enhance their digital literacy and develop their language abilities as some interviewees explained:

*“MyELT emphasized the fundamental of English language practice. It helped me to revise my background knowledge of English in all skills. I learned a lot of vocabulary from MyELT” (IV15). “MyELT improved my technology skills and language skills like speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills.” (IV9, IV12)*

Journaling data comparably exposed that:

*The students liked MyELT as it fit their time. The assignments are available on their mobiles, they could do it anytime and anywhere. It enhanced their English proficiency and digital literacy as both are integrated into online course learning. They could practice the language independently and repetitively as the company added the chance for doing each assignment many times, until ten attempts. (Personal Journal, Feb. 15, 2020)*

The study also investigated the challenges that negatively affect the usefulness of MyELT. It debated whether students’ perception, teachers’ role, and background, teachers’ teaching practices, and the company system and its online course content were the factors that challenged its effectiveness.

**Table 3.** Students perception ( $\alpha = .818$ )

| Subject Matters                                                                                | $\bar{x}$ | SD   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| MyELT is one of the best options to improve our English at the CEFR level.                     | 4.09      | 0.84 |
| MyELT gives us a better model than that of the teacher in the class.                           | 3.80      | 1.05 |
| MyELT helps to develop our English proficiency as its exercises cover the four skills.         | 4.06      | 0.90 |
| MyELT is an excellent option as it improves our digital literacy skills.                       | 3.98      | 0.93 |
| MyELT takes into account the students’ needs as it is updated and planned to improve our 4 Cs. | 4.01      | 0.86 |
| It wastes our time that we can use to do other home works given by other teachers.             | 3.62      | 1.08 |
| It creates stress on us and affects our focus on other subjects.                               | 3.53      | 1.15 |
| It is boring as we study things two times in class and online.                                 | 3.51      | 1.17 |

Table 3 exposed that the usefulness of MyELT was not negatively affected by students’ perceptions. They perceived MyELT as the best option to improve their CEFR level ( $\bar{x} = 4.09$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ) as it took into account their needs ( $\bar{x} = 4.01$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ) and helped them to develop their English proficiency ( $\bar{x} = 4.06$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ). They also discerned MyELT as an excellent option to improve their digital literacy ( $\bar{x} = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ) with its pedagogical design.



The interview data similarly showed that the students' perception affected positively the expediency of MyELT. The students had a sound conception that MyELT was included into their GE curricula to enhance their digital literacy and develop their language abilities as some interviewees explained:

*"MyELT helped us to improve life skills and micro-skills of English" (IV2). "It assisted us to string words/vocabulary into a sentence with correct grammar rules. MyELT videos helped us to improve critical and analytical skills as well" (IV6).*

The students were cognizant that MyELT would develop their English macro and micro-skills as two interviewees asserted:

*"MyELT emphasized the fundamental of English language practice. It helped me to revise my background knowledge of English in all skills. I learned from MyELT so many vocabularies" (V15). "MyELT improved my speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills." (IV12)*

Teachers' roles (e.g. as a guide, mentor, facilitator, etc.) and educational background were investigated in Table 3 as they were doubted as one of the challenges that negatively impact the usefulness of MyELT and the students' improvement.

**Table 4.** Teachers roles and background ( $\alpha = .933$ )

| Subject Matters                                                                                                                          | $\bar{x}$ | SD   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Teachers have a good idea of MyELT.                                                                                                      | 4.10      | 0.82 |
| They teach all the language skills and areas in class and give us a few exercises to practice at home what we have learned in the class. | 4.08      | 0.88 |
| They prepare and plan to improve our English proficiency in the CEFR.                                                                    | 4.10      | 0.91 |
| They guide us to solve the difficult exercises in MyELT.                                                                                 | 4.08      | 0.90 |
| The mentor closely checks our progress in English through MyELT.                                                                         | 4.05      | 0.93 |

Table 3 revealed that the usefulness of MyELT was neither challenged by the teachers' role nor background. In contrast, they had a clear idea about the English subject ( $\bar{x} = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ). The data indicated that the teachers played different positive roles as facilitators ( $\bar{x} = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), guides ( $\bar{x} = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ), and mentors ( $\bar{x} = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ) which in return benefited the students from practicing the language and improved the utility MyELT.

The Interview data identically confirmed that the teachers' role and educational backgrounds were supportive for the students' access to MyELT as some interviewees stated:

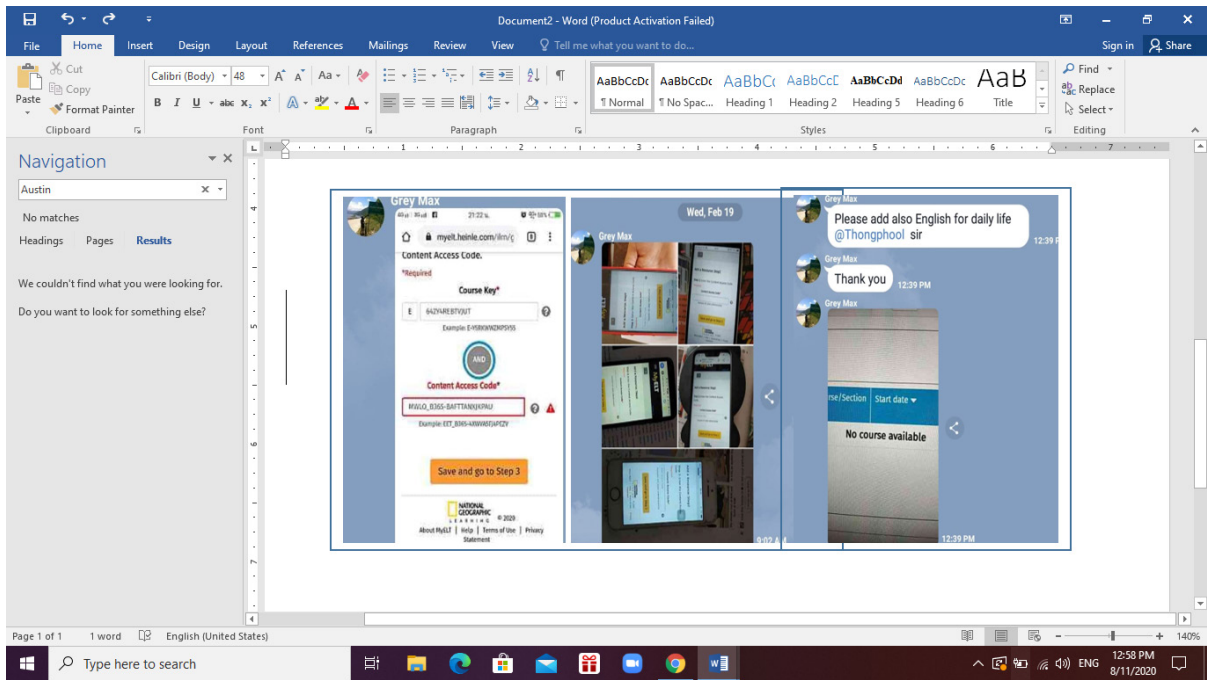
*"No problems, the teacher explains clearly in class so that we can do everything" (IV4). "They help us in explaining every problematic matter before doing exercises" (IV11). "The teacher helps and explains what we don't understand. They help us to solve the problems we have. We can contact our teachers to consult them directly at any time". (IV1, IV8, IV10)*

The teachers played different supportive roles (e.g. facilitator and guide) as several interviewees stated:

*"Some teachers help us right from the start, from getting MyELT code to login into the program or when some students who have not finished the exercises, teachers will remind us or keep contacting us for individual alert" (IV1, IV8). "Teachers help us to solve problems we have encountered and explain in detail if we don't understand". (IV2, IV6, IV7, IV8, IV12).*

Journaling data likewise showed that the teachers played indispensable roles in facilitating and helping the students to access MyELT platform as shown in Figure 1 and noted that:

*The teachers created courses in their account, took the students to the computer room, shared their course keys with the students, guided them to create their accounts and access the platform. They checked the percentage of completion and if any student encountered problems they contacted the company as shown in Figure 1 and solved the problem. (Personal journal, Feb. 19, 2020)*



**Figure 1.** Examples of the teacher contact with the company

However, an interviewee unveiled the fact that teachers' role was limited to technical support only as the interviewees explained:

*“Teacher helps me in all the problems I have faced, helps me to solve all the technical problems but they cannot teach us to understand the contents in the textbook” (IV8).*

Journaling data similarly documented that:

*The teachers used to assign exercises in every unit without checking the content in each exercise and whether the students could do it or not. Thereafter, the teachers did not follow up on who and how do the students practice and answered those assignments (Personal Journal, Feb. 2, 2020).*

Teachers teaching practices were also essential, yet a questionable element of the online teaching and learning processes. Teaching practices provide a safe and orderly environment that enables students to acquire and reflect new knowledge.

**Table 5.** Teachers' teaching practices ( $\alpha = .924$ )

| Subject Matters                                                                                                                   | $\bar{x}$ | $SD$ |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| It is very challenging for us because we sometimes get difficult exercises and the teachers don't help.                           | 3.57      | 1.10 |
| It is confusing as the exercises are different from those teachers teach in the class.                                            | 3.73      | 1.05 |
| There is no close mentoring the teacher in the improvement of students' language and digital literacy skills.                     | 3.53      | 1.12 |
| The students' improvement is not the teachers' priority, the teacher focuses on the percentage of completion despite who did it.  | 3.47      | 1.21 |
| It is useless as it accommodates the teachers' needs and not the students' needs.                                                 | 3.50      | 1.18 |
| It is ineffective and inaccurate as some students copy the answer from friends which is beyond the teacher's inspection or reach. | 3.62      | 1.13 |

Table 5 indicated that the usefulness of MyELT was affected to some extent by teachers' teaching practices. The students got confused as MyELT assignments were different from those which the teacher taught in class ( $\bar{x}=3.73$ ,  $SD=1.05$ ). The teachers' used to assign some exercises without checking their content ( $\bar{x}=3.47$ ,  $SD=1.21$ ) and/or whether the students could do it or not. The difficulty of some assignments and teachers'

inability to mentor the students' improvement ( $\bar{x}$ =3.53,  $SD$ =1.12) instigated some students to copy the answers from their friends ( $\bar{x}$ =3.62,  $SD$ =1.13) and do some unethical practices to finish MyELT.

The qualitative data comparably confirmed that teachers teaching practices negatively affected the practicality and usefulness of MyELT. Teachers did not mentor the students' performance and improvement. Journaling data revealed that:

*The teachers assigned all online exercises for all the units at once without checking the assignment content. They left the students without follow-up who and how they did MyELT. The students accumulated all their assignments until few days before the deadline then started searching how to do those assignments. (Personal Journal, Feb 25, 2020).*

The interview data explicitly exposed that the students got confused as the teachers assigned a lot of exercises and some of them are very difficult i.e. unlike those they studied in class. These challenges urged some students to revert to unethical practices such as copying and paying money to friends as some interviewees stated:

*“Some students don't do it by themselves. They just ask their friends who finished it to take pictures and send them via smartphone for copying” (IV6). “There are answers to all the exercises. No need for students to use their efforts to finish them all” (IV12).*

Further, the absence of teacher mentoring of the students' performance challenged the usefulness of MyELT as a few interviewees stated that:

*“Some students paid for doing some exercises because the teacher assigns too many units at a time and the contents are difficult to gain expected score” (IV1). “Some students paid for doing the excises. Teachers cannot control” (IV12).*

Both teachers teaching practices and students' performances challenged the expediency of MyELT which was aimed to improve students' English and digital literacies. The company's system and the content of MyELT were also contentious challenges that had a negative impact on the expediency of MyELT.

**Table 6.** The company's system and MyELT content ( $\alpha = .927$ )

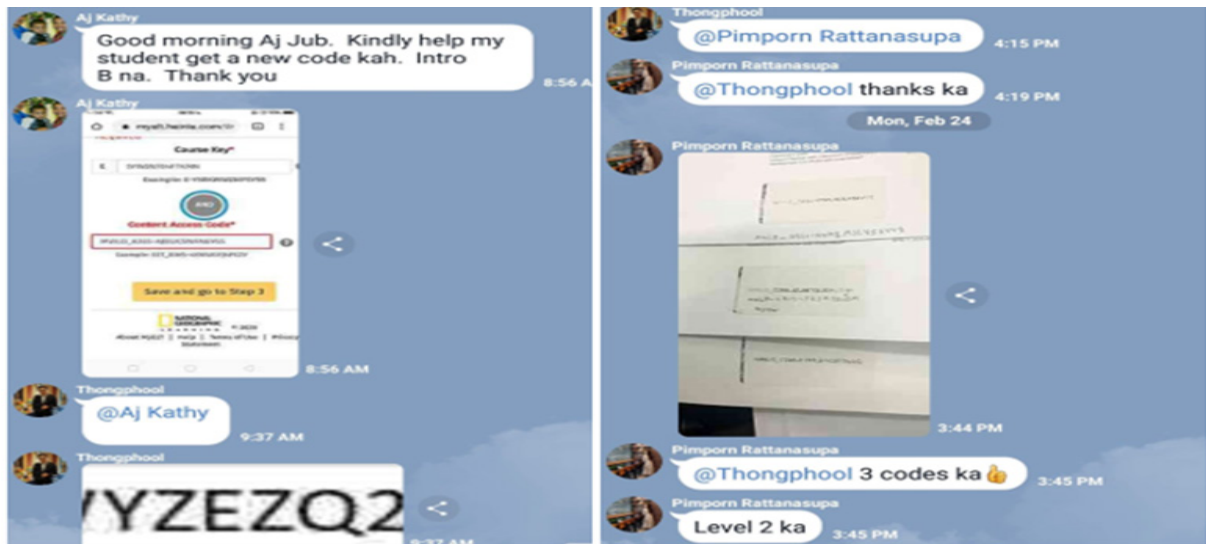
| Subject matter                                                                                      | $\bar{x}$ | SD   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| It has many problems with the accounts, codes, login, and evaluation system.                        | 3.47      | 1.17 |
| It is overloaded with exercises which made the online practice a kind of punishment for us.         | 3.36      | 1.23 |
| It is difficult for those who are technologically deficient or don't have smart mobiles.            | 3.62      | 1.11 |
| It is complicated because we don't have enough technological competence.                            | 3.60      | 1.11 |
| MyELT is difficult because it gives only exercises.                                                 | 3.82      | 0.94 |
| It was not prepared for the Thai students as we cannot do the speaking exercises due to our accent. | 3.53      | 1.13 |

Table 6 showed that MyELT system and the content of the online course were inevitable challenges that critically affected its usefulness. The students encountered many problems in creating the account and using the access code ( $\bar{x} = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ). It system is difficult for the students ( $\bar{x} = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ) due to their lack of digital literacy and devices. Its expediency was negatively affected by its complicated system ( $\bar{x} = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ) and the unsuitability of its content with the Thai context ( $\bar{x} = 3.53$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ).

The interview data identically confirmed that MyELT system was one of the major challenges that brought about the ineffective of MyELT several interviewees explained:

*“The login process is too long. The program is difficult and seems to be complicated” (IV2, IV8, IV9)  
“If we type wrong password twice, we cannot log in to our exercises. It is very annoying especially with the codes” (IV13).*

The personal journal data similarly documented constant complaints about the content access codes. Many books used to be equipped with access codes that were either not working or irremovable as shown in Figure 2. In such cases, the teachers would seek the company's coordinator's help to get new codes through the LINE Group.



**Figure 2.** Content codes problems (either irremovable or not working)

Journaling data in Figure 1 and Figure 2 also reflected that the usefulness of MyELT was affected to a great extent by the company's long and complicated system as it was noted:

*The company has a long process of registration; however, it is normal for publication international companies. Despite this, the students find it demotivating and challenging. The teacher has to guide the students in the registration process otherwise students will not be able to access the platform (Personal journal, Feb 10, 2020).*

Besides, journaling data exposed that the content of MyELT did not fit the students' context. The system denied accepting students' voice recording repetitively because of their accent. Whilst arguing with the teachers' and course coordinators, it was documented that:

*The teachers evaded assigning any speaking exercises to their students despite their level as the system could catch the student accent; only the native accent, forgetting about the varieties of World Englishes and the actuality of English as a lingua franca (Personal Journal, Feb 20, 2020).*

## DISCUSSIONS

Lecturers at NSTRU incorporated commercial series along with MyELT platform to improve GE curricula and enhance students' English proficiency and digital literacy. The students utilized MyELT for a full academic year but in the end, no significant improvement was perceived in the students' test results. A mixed-methods design was used and the quantitative and qualitative findings correlated and revealed that MyELT was beneficial in its flexibility as it helped fulfilling courses' description and proportionately improved students' English proficiency and digital literacy. Students' perceptions, teachers' roles, and backgrounds were not challenging factors. The expediency of MyELT was thus challenged by four factors namely: teachers teaching practices, teachers' inability to mentor students' performance which further instigated some students to do unethical practices, company system of accessibility, and MyELT courses' content.

To address the first research question, the quantitative and qualitative findings revealed that MyELT was beneficial particularly with its flexibility in fulfilling English GE courses' description. Cater et al., (2018) comparably explained that online courses were effective to achieve particular goals especially for students who can choose a convenient time to concentrate on learning. Gillett-Swan, (2017) also found that integrating online courses enhanced learning, promoted a more enjoyable and successful academic experience. Besides, the findings indicated that MyELT improved to some extent the students' English proficiency and digital literacy. Phanchanikul (2015) and Gilbert (2015) had a similar view that online courses improve English proficiency for students who had self-regulated learning. These students had time-management skills, cognitive and metacognitive strategies to accomplish their learning goals. Gilbert (2015) found also that online courses "not only taught students course material but also

how to be “an independent and responsible student.” (p. 23). In our context, MyELT inadequately improved the students’ English and digital literacies as its expediency was impaired by challenges related to the teachers’ teaching practices students’ performance, MyELT system, and online courses content.

To address the second research question, the findings exposed that the usefulness of MyELT was neither differently-abled by students’ perceptions, nor teachers’ roles and background. The students’ perceived MyELT as a good option to improve their CEFR level as it addressed the language macro and micro-skills. Skibba (2013) upheld the same idea with Chien et al., (2020) that online courses encouraged the students to learn, practice the language independently and develop their autonomy. The students feel safe and more motivated to practice the language without fear of peers’ reactions. Besides, the students considered MyELT as a good tool for enhancing their digital literacy. McGuinness and Fulton (2019) similarly found that the integration of online learning modes develops students’ information and digital literacy skills especially when the courses are employed within academic curricula and delivered at point-of-need. On the teachers’ part, the findings showed that they played different supportive roles (e.g. as guides, facilitators, and mentors) in an attempt to enhance students’ English and digital literacies. Both Collison et al., (2000) and Cowan (2006) shared a similar view that the teachers’ roles during online teaching were similar with those in the classroom but dissimilar in the spontaneity of interaction, support, and feedback. However, teachers teaching practices were indicated as one of the challenges that negatively affect the usefulness of MyELT.

The data significantly exposed that the expediency of MyELT was critically affected by four factors: first, teachers teaching practices, teachers’ inability to mentor students’ performance which instigated some students to do some unethical practices, MyELT system, and courses content. Regarding teaching practices, the respondents stated that teachers’ support was confined to the technical issues (e.g. login, changing the access code, the password, and the course key) but not the pedagogical aspects. They teach something different while MYELT exercises are different and more difficult. They simply selected a number of exercises with no knowledge of their content. Nguyen et al., (2014) pertinently found that the students’ improvement would be hindered by different factors including “giving unclear instructions” (p.94). Besides, they exposed that the teachers did not help when students faced difficult online exercises. Second, the expediency of MyELT was critically affected by teachers’ inability to mentor students’ performance. This instigated some students to do some unethical practices (e.g. copy from classmates and/or pay money for English major students to do MyELT tasks for them) to finish the assigned exercises and get the score. Diego (2017) attributed this unusual phenomenon to “the difficulty of the subject and the peer influence” were some of the vibrant factors for those unethical practices. In addition, Chami (2020) referred the students’ copying or paying money to other students to do their assignments to the “stress, interruption, the lack of study skills and the pressure of exams and grades” (p. 112). The findings of this study mirrored Diego (2017) and Chami (2020) findings that the students resorted to these practices due to the pressure of plenty of assignments of other subjects, the difficulty of MyELT online tasks, and the scarcity of the teachers’ follow-up.

Third, the expediency of MyELT in improving students’ English proficiency and digital literacy was challenged by its system of accessibility. The students encountered problems with the content access codes as most of those codes were either viscid (sticky and would be destroyed when trying to be removed) or not working as in Figure 2. In such cases, the teachers would contact the company for providing alternative codes as in Figure 1. Some students especially those who did not have computers and laptops detested MyELT due to its long and complicated system of registration. Jacob (2013) found a similar problem with online learning courses and thus suggested that “the technology employed must be user friendly. The course should be easy to navigate to the links provided” (p. 7) to help students to develop their English and digital literacy skills. Fourth, MyELT courses content was another challenge that negatively affect the evolvement of students’ English proficiency and digital literacy. The students explained that MyELT courses content was inappropriate for their context especially in the practicing speaking skill. The system used to reject repetitively the students’ recorded answers due to their accent which did not match with the native accent. According to Appana (2008), online course content is an important factor that determines its success or failure. The online course designers must consider students’ needs and context (Dashtestani, 2014). Regardless, Lichtman (2010) similarly found the unsuitability of online course content as a “common problem in e-learning domain and happens not only in MOOCS but also in any web-based learning system” (p. 198).

## CONCLUSION

The present study examined the benefits of incorporating online courses in the English GE curricula. It also investigated the challenges that negatively affected the expediency of MyELT. The quantitative and qualitative findings correlated and indicated that MyELT was beneficial in its flexibility as it helped fulfilling courses' descriptions and to some extent improved students' English proficiency and digital literacy. Neither students' perception, nor teachers' role and background were challenging factors for the usefulness of MyELT in improving the students' English proficiency and digital literacy. The expediency of MyELT was thus challenged by four factors namely: teachers teaching practices, teachers' inability to mentor students' performance which further instigated some students to do unethical practices, company system of accessibility, and MyELT courses content. These quantitative and qualitative findings inform teachers that enhancing the students' English proficiency and digital literacy can be accomplished by incorporating online learning courses in a blended learning design. To cope up with the current challenges, teachers must go through the online course exercises before teaching and be assigned to evade the contradictions between what is assigned and what has been taught. They have to assign the online exercises unit by unit with a regular strategy of following up the students' performance in view of avoiding the students' unethical practices and contract cheating or copying. Assigning all the course tasks and exercises at once demotivates the students and incites them to search for alternative ways to finish their assignments rather than improving their English and digital literacies. To assist the students to learn, practice the language, and achieve the desired specific goals the teachers must improve their teaching strategies and effectively play the roles of being facilitators, guides, mentors, and resource teachers. They have also to reconsider incorporating online courses that fit their context and embrace varieties of world Englishes. However, it is essential to mention that the study was limited to NSTRU context only. Therefore, further studies are suggested to include more universities within Thailand. It would be fruitful if researchers consider exploring teachers' points of view and what challenges they believe impaired the expediency of MyELT.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Questionnaire

**The Language Center**  
**Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat**  
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**Thailand**



**Title: Enhancing Students' English and Digital Literacies Through Online Courses: Benefits and Challenges.**

The study aims to examine the benefits of incorporating online courses, MyELT, for General English (GE) curricula. It also aims to investigate the challenges that negatively affect the expediency of the courses in improving the students' English proficiency and digital literacy. Below is a questionnaire on a Likert Scale about the utility of Cengage online course or what is known as MyELT and its contribution to improve the student English proficiency aligns with the CEFRRRL

**Note:**

1. This questionnaire is not for commercial purposes, but rather for academic quest and inquiry, as we aim to help our students' pedagogical development
2. All the responses will be kept confidential and no names will be disclosed
3. Please select only one option in each row

| No                          | Questions                                                                                                  | Strongly agree<br>(5) | Agree<br>(4) | No opinion<br>(3) | Strongly disagree<br>(2) | Disagree<br>(1) |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Benefits of MyELT.</b>   |                                                                                                            |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |
| 1                           | MyELT is beneficial as it is flexible for our schedules and also meets the course[s] description.          |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |
| 2                           | MyELT makes studying English easy as we can study anywhere and anytime.                                    |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |
| 3                           | It saves our time as we can do it at home instead of in class.                                             |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |
| 4                           | MyELT is helpful as it solves the issue of our big classes.                                                |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |
| 5                           | MyEIT eliminates anxiety and shyness which we experience in the big diverse classes.                       |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |
| 6                           | MyELT is useful for us as it enhances our digital literacy skills.                                         |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |
| 7                           | MyELT simplifies learning English because we can access it from our mobile and no need for carrying books. |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |
| 8                           | MyELT enhances our understanding of English as we get enough time to practice and enjoy learning English.  |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |
| 9                           | This MyELT was specifically designed for Thai students to improve their English proficiency.               |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |
| <b>Students' perception</b> |                                                                                                            |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |
| 10                          | MyELT is one of the best options to improve our English at the CEFR level.                                 |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |
| 11                          | MyELT gives us a better model than that of the teacher in the class.                                       |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |
| 12                          | MyELT helps to develop our English proficiency as its exercises cover the four skills.                     |                       |              |                   |                          |                 |

|                                         |                                                                                                                                          |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 13                                      | MyELT is an excellent option as it improves our digital literacy skills.                                                                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14                                      | MyELT takes into account the students' needs as it is updated and planned to improve our 4 Cs.                                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15                                      | It wastes our time that we can use to do other home works given by other teachers.                                                       |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16                                      | It creates stress on us and affects our focus on other subjects.                                                                         |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17                                      | It is boring as we study things two times in class and online.                                                                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Teachers' roles and background</b>   |                                                                                                                                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18                                      | Teachers have a good idea of MyELT.                                                                                                      |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19                                      | They teach all the language skills and areas in class and give us a few exercises to practice at home what we have learned in the class. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20                                      | They prepare and plan to improve our English proficiency in the CEFR.                                                                    |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21                                      | They guide us to solve the difficult exercises in MyELT.                                                                                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22                                      | The mentor closely checks our progress in English through MyELT.                                                                         |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Teachers' teaching practices</b>     |                                                                                                                                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| 23                                      | It is very challenging for us because we sometimes get difficult exercises and the teachers don't help.                                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 24                                      | It is confusing as the exercises are different from those teachers teach in the class.                                                   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 25                                      | There is no close mentoring the teacher in the improvement of students' language and digital literacy skills.                            |  |  |  |  |  |
| 26                                      | The students' improvement is not the teachers' priority, the teacher focuses on the percentage of completion despite who did it.         |  |  |  |  |  |
| 27                                      | It is useless as it accommodates the teachers' needs and not the students' needs.                                                        |  |  |  |  |  |
| 28                                      | It is ineffective and inaccurate as some students copy the answer from friends which is beyond the teacher's inspection or reach.        |  |  |  |  |  |
| The company's system and MyELT contents |                                                                                                                                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| 30                                      | It has many problems with the accounts, codes, login, and evaluation system.                                                             |  |  |  |  |  |
| 31                                      | It is overloaded with exercises which made the online practice a kind of punishment for us.                                              |  |  |  |  |  |
| 32                                      | It is difficult for those who are technologically deficient or don't have smart mobiles.                                                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 33                                      | It is complicated because we don't have enough technological competence.                                                                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 34                                      | MyELT is difficult because it gives only exercises.                                                                                      |  |  |  |  |  |

Thank you very much

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Mrs. Phanit Singhasuwan

Asst. Prof. Dr. Chamaiporn Buddharat

## APPENDIX 2

### Interview Guide

| Research question                                                                           | Predetermined questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Follow up questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Other remarks |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Introduction                                                                                | <p>First of all, thank you so much for sparing few minutes of your time. We are conducting research entitled: Enhancing Students' English and Digital Literacies Through Online Courses: Benefits and Challenges. The study aims to examine the benefits of incorporating online courses, MyELT, for General English (GE) curricula. It also aims to investigate the challenges that negatively affect the expediency of the courses in improving the students' English proficiency and digital literacy. We assure you that no names will be disclosed and the findings will be used for this study only. We are going to record the interview on our mobile for transcribing it later.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |               |
| 1. What are the benefits of incorporating MyELT online courses in the English GE curricula? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the main advantages of MyELT that you experienced in terms of flexibility and easiness to practice the language?</li> <li>2. What are the main advantages of MyELT that you experienced in terms of digital literacy?</li> <li>3. What are the main advantages of MyELT that you experienced in terms of improving your English micro and macro language skills?</li> <li>4. How did it help you to save time and improve your English?</li> <li>5. Did it make learning English easier or more challenging, How and why?</li> <li>6. Do you think MyELt fits your situation in learning English as a foreign language, how and why?</li> <li>7. Why do some students consider it the best option to practice the language?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>Class size<br/>Anxiety<br/>Shyness<br/>Learn more vocabulary<br/>Enhanced digital literacy!!</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |               |
| 2. What are the challenges that negatively affected the expediency of MyELT?                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you think about MyELT?</li> <li>2. Do you perceive it improves your English skills?</li> <li>3. What exercise do you prefer to do in MyELT?</li> <li>4. Does it help to improve your English listening and reading skills? Why/why not?</li> <li>5. Does it mean to enhance your digital literacy skills? How, why, and why not?</li> <li>6. What areas did you think MyELT help you to improve?</li> <li>7. Why do you think the LC included MyELT in your GE courses?</li> </ol> <p>*****</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What about the teachers, do they have good knowledge about MyELT?</li> <li>2. Do they help you to improve your 4 skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing?</li> <li>3. Have you ever asked the teacher to help in MyELT, what was the reply?</li> <li>4. If you face difficulty in MyELT, do the teachers help or what do you do?</li> <li>5. Who follows up your improvement in MyELT?</li> </ol> <p>*****</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does MyELT effectively improve your English skills, or just gave extra work for you?</li> <li>2. If your classmates face difficult exercises what do they use to do?</li> <li>3. What about your speaking skill, does it get any improvement?</li> <li>4. What about the rumor that some students saying some students spay money for other students to do their assignments?</li> <li>5. Is it true that some students copy their friends' answers by sharing their responses in FB messenger groups?</li> </ol> | <p>Save your time<br/>Give a better model than the teacher?<br/>Is wasting time?<br/>Needs a lot of effort?</p> <p>Teachers don't help<br/>They teach something different<br/>MyELt exercises are something different from the things you study in class?<br/>Company codes problems?<br/>The system is easy to access?<br/>Content is hard?<br/>Does the system reject my speaking assignments?<br/>Accent issue</p> |               |

### Appendix 3: Sample if Observation

The journaling used to be done by the researchers i.e. the teachers in their daily life interaction with the students. Here I typed them from my notebook for these samples.

#### Personal journal.

This purpose of this journaling is to collect data about the role of MyELT in enhancing the students digital and literacies and English skills.

**Feb. 15, 2020**

Saturday afternoon, the time in which the teachers have to present monthly their progress report in a meeting with the head of the language center. In this regular meeting, teachers present their teaching progress, teaching method and strategies as well as the issues and challenges which they have faced and how do they tackle them. During the meeting, some teachers raised different issues about MyELT, and the constant problem of the codes. They also explored how it helps developing the students' language skills.

One teacher disclosed the fact that, MyELT is practical in some skills but not all. He asserted that the students complained to him saying that, they can do the reading, vocabulary and grammar exercise but not the speaking ones. He appended that, the system rejects the students answer even they do it many time. He hypothesized that the system accepts only the native accent and not the Thai students accent, suggesting that the teachers should not assign any speaking exercise because students waste a lot of time with no benefits or outcomes.

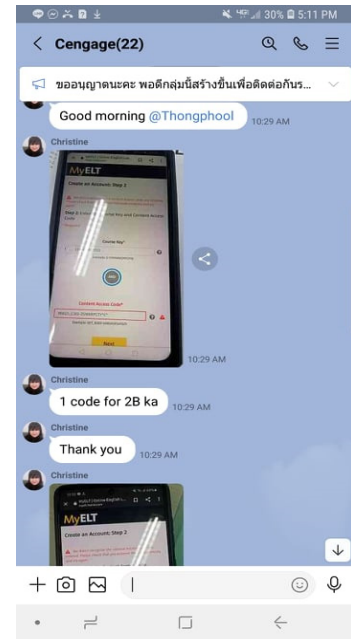
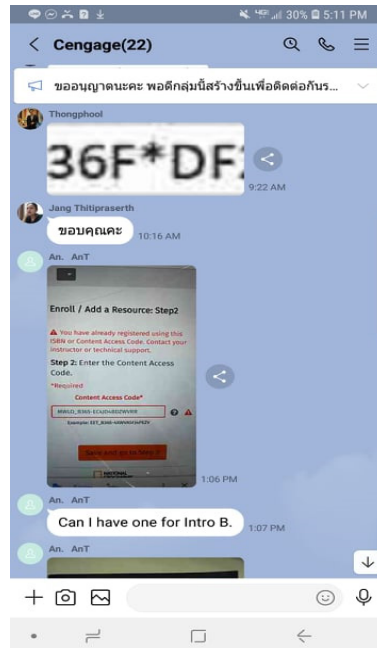
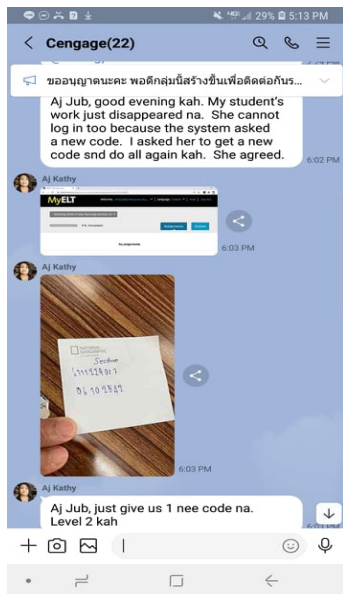
Another teacher, acknowledged the contribution of MyELT in enhancing their English proficiency and digital literacy as both are integrated into online course learning, as it fits the students digital age and the shy nature of the Thai students, giving them chance to practice the language independently at home. He explained that it also helped in fit the students' time by its flexibility. The assignments are available on their mobiles, they could do it anytime and anywhere. They could practice the language independently and repetitively as the company added the chance for doing each assignment many times, until ten attempts. Meanwhile, he explained a concern about the students' performance because they get the same grades 370, 370, 370. He postulated that the students created a Facebook messenger group in which the good students answer the exercises and make screen shoot and share it with all the students. That is why they get similar score. It is very difficult for the teachers to trace back the students' performance because MyELT was meant to be done at home not under the teachers' supervision. It cannot be done in class because the teacher is required to move on in the syllabus and teach new lessons in very session. This put a question mark on how to improve it practicality and whether it develop the students' English and digital skills or not!!

**Feb. 16. 2020**

It is very tiresome and we are helpless as teacher 55555. The practicality of MyELT is very fragile. In the office some teachers talking to the secretary of the Language Center about the issue of some students pay money for English major students to do the exercises for them so that they will get the grades of MyELT.

**Feb. 19. 2020**

Apart from my class, I saw in LINE group three teachers asking the company coordinator to give them new codes as there are a number of students who bought the codes and the codes are not working. The company coordinator replied immediately and gave them new codes to help the students to create their access account and start practicing the language.



**Feb. 20, 2020**

Thursday class, English for communication, feeling exhausted in long class for 3:20 minute standing and teaching a class with 75 mixed abilities students. As soon as I finished the class three students came over and asked me, teacher speaking exercises we cannot do. System refuses. I said let me have a look in the office. I am so tired now na. Another student came and asked for my help as he forgot his password. I took his email address and told him that I am going to reset it for him from my system and send him the new password.

During the lunch I discussed with my colleagues, they said they assigning any speaking exercises to their students whether they are English major or from other faculties because the system could catch the student accent; as if they don't take into account World Englishes.

**Feb. 21, 2020**

Students like MyELT and they don't like it, it helps but it does not help, I don't understand, we are confused.

## APPENDIX 4

### Tabular findings.

| Research objective                                                                                                                                                                         | Questionnaire findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Interview findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Personal journal findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Other remarks |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--|
| Objective one:<br><br>The study aims to examine the benefits of incorporating online courses, MyELT, for General English (GE) curricula.                                                   | 1.1. MyELT is beneficial in its flexibility ( $\bar{x} = 4.10$ , $SD = 0.80$ ) as it fulfills courses' descriptions and objectives.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1.1. It helped the students to revise and practice the language independently anytime and anywhere as some interviewees stated:<br><br>"MyELT can be used anytime and anywhere" (IV5, IV8). "I can make use of my free time through it. MyELT helps us to review what I have studied in the classroom or what I have learned from the class again. So we can develop our English skills to use in the classroom. We like MyELT. We can revise our lessons wherever we want. (IV3)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Journaling data comparably exposed that:<br><br>The students liked MyELT as it fit their time. The assignments are available on their mobiles, they could do it anytime and anywhere. It enhanced their English proficiency and digital literacy as both are integrated into online course learning. They could practice the language independently and repetitively as the company added the chance for doing each assignment many times, until ten attempts (Personal Journal, Feb. 15, 2020) |               |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                            | 1.2. MyELT was useful as it improved to some extent students' digital literacy ( $\bar{x} = 4.10$ , $SD = 0.83$ ) and simplified their language learning by using their mobile ( $\bar{x} = 4.06$ , $SD = 0.86$ ) instead of carrying the book                                                                                                            | 1.2. MyELT assisted them to develop their English macro and micro-skills as two interviewees asserted:<br><br>"MyELT helped us to improve life skills and micro-skills of English" (IV2). "It assisted us to string words/vocabulary into a sentence with correct grammar rules. MyELT videos helped us to improve critical and analytical skills as well" (IV6).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |               |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                            | 1.3. Besides, MyELT ameliorated students' English Proficiency ( $\bar{x} = 4.07$ , $SD = 0.85$ ) as they got enough time to enjoy and practice the language independently.                                                                                                                                                                                | 1.3. MyELT was meant to enhance their digital literacy and develop their language abilities as some interviewees explained:<br><br>"MyELT emphasized the fundamental of English language practice. It helped me to revise my background knowledge of English in all skills. I learned a lot of vocabulary from MyELT" (IV15). "MyELT improved my technology skills and language skills like speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills." (IV9, IV12)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |               |  |
| Objective two,<br><br>It also aims to investigate the challenges that negatively affect the expediency of the courses in improving the students' English proficiency and digital literacy. | 2.1. The usefulness of MyELT was not negatively affected by students' perceptions. They perceived MyELT as the best option to improve their CEFR level ( $\bar{x} = 4.09$ , $SD = 0.84$ ) as it took into account their needs ( $\bar{x} = 4.01$ , $SD = 0.86$ ) and helped them to develop their English proficiency ( $\bar{x} = 4.06$ , $SD = 0.90$ ). | 2.1. The interview data similarly showed that the students had a sound conception that MyELT was included into their GE curricula to enhance their digital literacy and develop their language abilities as some interviewees explained:<br><br>"MyELT helped us to improve life skills and micro-skills of English" (IV2). "It assisted us to string words/vocabulary into a sentence with correct grammar rules. MyELT videos helped us to improve critical and analytical skills as well" (IV6).<br><br>2.2. The students were cognizant that MyELT would develop their English macro and micro-skills as two interviewees asserted:<br><br>"MyELT emphasized the fundamental of English language practice. It helped me to revise my background knowledge of English in all skills. I learned from MyELT so many vocabularies" (V15). "MyELT improved my speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills." (IV12) |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |               |  |

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|                        | <p>2.2 The usefulness of MyELT was neither challenged by the teachers' role nor background. In contrast, they had a clear idea about the English subject (<math>x = 4.10</math>, <math>SD = 0.82</math>). The data indicated that the teachers played different positive roles as facilitators (<math>x = 4.10</math>, <math>SD = 0.91</math>), guides (<math>x = 4.08</math>, <math>SD=0.90</math>), and mentors (<math>x = 4.05</math>, <math>SD = 0.93</math>) which in return benefited the students from practicing the language and improved the utility MyELT.</p>                                                                                        | <p>2.2. The teachers' role and educational backgrounds were supportive for the students' access to MyELT as some interviewees stated:</p> <p>"No problems, the teacher explains clearly in class so that we can do everything" (IV4). "They help us in explaining every problematic matter before doing exercises" (IV11). "The teacher helps and explains what we don't understand. They help us to solve the problems we have. We can contact our teachers to consult them directly at any time". (IV1, IV8, IV10)s</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>2.2 The teachers played indispensable roles in facilitating and helping the students to access MyELT platform as shown in Figure 1 and noted that:</p> <p>The teachers created courses in their account, took the students to the computer room, shared their course keys with the students, guided them to create their accounts and access the platform. They checked the percentage of completion and if any student encountered problems they contacted the company as shown in Figure 1 and solved the problem. (Personal journal, Feb. 19, 2020)</p>                |  |
| <p>-----<br/>-----</p> | <p>-----<br/>-----</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>-----<br/>-----</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>2.3. The data also unveiled the fact that teachers' role was limited to technical support only as data exposes</p> <p>The teachers used to assign exercises in every unit without checking the content in each exercise and whether the students could do it or not. Thereafter, the teachers did not follow up on who and how do the students practice and answered those assignments (Personal Journal, Feb. 2, 2020).</p>                                                                                                                                              |  |
|                        | <p>2.3.1. The students got confused as MyELT assignments were different from those which the teacher taught in class (<math>x= 3.73</math>, <math>SD =1.05</math>). The teachers' used to assign some exercises without checking their content (<math>x = 3.47</math>, <math>SD = 1.21</math>) and/or whether the students could do it or not. The difficulty of some assignments and teachers' inability to mentor the students' improvement (<math>x= 3.53</math>, <math>SD = 1.12</math>) instigated some students to copy the answers from their friends (<math>x = 3.62</math>, <math>SD = 1.13</math>) and do some unethical practices to finish MyELT</p> | <p>2.3.1. The utility of MyELT was affected by teachers' teaching method as they assigned a lot of exercises and some of them are very difficult i.e. unlike those they studied in class. These challenges urged some students to revert to unethical practices such as copying and paying money to friends as some interviewees stated:</p> <p>"Some students don't do it by themselves. They just ask their friends who finished it to take pictures and send them via smartphone for copying" (IV6). "There are answers to all the exercises. No need for students to use their efforts to finish them all" (IV12).</p> <p>2.3.2. The absence of teacher mentoring of the students' performance challenged the usefulness of MyELT as a few interviewees stated that:</p> <p>"Some students paid for doing some exercises because the teacher assigns too many units at a time and the contents are difficult to gain expected score" (IV1). "Some students paid for doing the excises. Teachers cannot control" (IV12).</p> | <p>2.3.1. Teachers' teaching practices negatively affected the practicality and usefulness of MyELT. Teachers did not mentor the students' performance and improvement. Journaling data revealed that:</p> <p>The teachers assigned all online exercises for all the units at once without checking the assignment content. They left the students without follow-up who and how they did MyELT. The students accumulated all their assignments until few days before the deadline then started searching how to do those assignments. (Personal Journal, Feb 25, 2020).</p> |  |



|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p>2.4.1. MyELT system and the content of the online course were inevitable challenges that critically affected its usefulness. The students encountered many problems in creating the account and using the access code (<math>\bar{x} = 3.47</math>, <math>SD = 1.17</math>). It system is difficult for the students (<math>\bar{x} = 3.62</math>, <math>SD = 1.11</math>) due to their lack of digital literacy and devices. Its expediency was negatively affected by its complicated system (<math>\bar{x} = 3.60</math>, <math>SD = 1.11</math>) and the unsuitability of its content with the Thai context (<math>\bar{x} = 3.53</math>, <math>SD = 1.13</math>).</p> | <p>2.4.1. MyELT system was one of the major challenges that brought about the ineffectiveness of MyELT several interviewees explained:</p> <p>“The login process is too long. The program is difficult and seems to be complicated” (IV2, IV8, IV9) “If we type the wrong password twice, we cannot log in to our exercises. It is very annoying especially with the codes” (IV13).</p> | <p>2.4.1. The usefulness of MyELT was affected to a great extent by the company's long and complicated system as it was noted:</p> <p>The company has a long process of registration; however, it is normal for publication international companies. Despite this, the students find it demotivating and challenging. The teacher has to guide the students in the registration process otherwise students will not be able to access the platform (Personal journal, Feb 10, 2020).</p> <p>2.4.2. The usefulness of MyELT was affected by its system. It denied accepting students' voice recording repetitively because of their accent. Whilst arguing with the teachers' and course coordinators, it was documented that:</p> <p>The teachers evaded assigning any speaking exercises to their students despite their level as the system could catch the student accent; only the native accent, forgetting about the varieties of World Englishes and the actuality of English as a lingua franca (Personal Journal, Feb 20, 2020 ).</p> |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|