

Korean and Chinese University EFL Learners' Perceptions of and Attitudes toward Online and Face-to-Face Lectures During COVID-19

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This study reports Chinese and Korean university EFL students' perceptions of and attitudes toward online and face-to-face English language learning modes during COVID-19. Few previous studies have focused on how students thought of online and face-to-face learning experiences of subjects regarding new concept learning and delivery of new contents. Research gravitating around English courses showed students' mixed perceptions. The survey was conducted for 302 Korean and 337 Chinese university students who took communication-oriented English courses. Descriptive statistics and qualitative data analysis were used for analysis. Results indicated that students preferred face-to-face English learning with some specific indications of achieving a stronger help and quality for communicative competence in language. Online learning also benefited students with a sense of both flexibility and independence. Positive components of face-to-face learning for language education might be considered for online education while incorporation features such as flexibility and independence to enrich language education during COVID-19.

Key words: COVID-19 language learning/teaching, online learning, face-to-face learning, college English language instruction, communicative language courses

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1. INTRODUCTION

The year of 2020 begun with the outbreak of COVID-19, and the virus was declared of being a global pandemic on March 1st (World Health Organization: WHO, 2020). All levels of education (i.e., kindergartens to universities) have been locked down across the globe, and the everlasting educational philosophy (Sokolová, Papageorgi, Dutke, Stuchlíková, Williamson, & Bakker, 2020) of physically interactive classroom education has been stripped away from our daily lives.

The Korean Ministry of Education (KMOE) mandated on March 3rd, 2020 that all school education be conducted through online instructions. On February 4th, the Chinese Ministry of Education issued guidelines for organization, arrangements, and management of online teaching/learning during the first semester of COVID-19 pandemic. Universities in both Korea and China in the first COVID-19 semester were directed to offer lectures only through online platforms.

However, in both Korea and China, a growing number of voices in higher education questioning the quality of online education have been identified, particularly from such majors dealing with interaction-, testing- or laboratory-oriented subjects. Interaction-based courses such as English language struggled to meet the quality of interpersonal interaction and interactive communication practices that are required for the intended educational outcomes.

COVID-19 persisted over the fall semester of 2020. The KMOE permitted universities to conduct face-to-face lectures for such courses with some rigid guidelines (i.e., distancing and masking in classrooms). An interactive-activities-language course, *Action English*, in a national university located in the center of Korea was permitted to offer a face-to-face lecture just for four weeks followed by 12 weeks of online teaching. In China, right after the 1st COVID-19 semester, students now were housed within a school campus, not to leave from the premise and were required to take a face-to-face English communication course, *College English*, in a national university located in the northern China.

In both countries, online education has been being implemented at the mercy of the pandemic surges for more than a year. Then, both groups have experienced face-to-face English education up to this time period. It is a scholastic obligation to observe a reality of the COVID-19 learning/teaching and, thus, conduct Korean and Chinese EFL learners' perceptions and attitudes toward learning through both online and face-to-face mediums during the 2020 COVID-19 semesters. As learning about students' perception on both online and face-to-face situations is pivotal, this study decides to include both Korean and Chinese college students as participants.

To achieve the present study's aim, the following research questions are sought to answer:

- 1) How do students in Korea and China perceive their learning through face-to-face and online for interaction-oriented English courses during the COVID-19 semesters?
- 2) How do students present their attitudes after learning through both face-to-face and online lectures toward interactive-activities-based English courses?

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. Studies on Online and Face-to-Face Teaching and Learning

The previous literature (Doyumğaç, Tanhan, & Kıymaz, 2020; Lee, 2010; Saykili, 2018) conceptualizes that online education includes all media-mediated outlets for education with the exception of the traditionally conceptualized face-to-face in-classroom interactive education. Before the COVID-19, studies gravitating around online education centered on the advantages and disadvantages of teaching/learning online. Quality, flexibility, sensitivity, communication, and technical support services were reported to make online experiences positive (Helgesen & Nettet, 2007; McGorry, 2003; Rovai, 2003), while unethical plagiarism (Lucky, Branham, & Atchison, 2019; Singh & Hurley, 2017; Ubell, 2017) was a critical issue. Many other studies on online education sought the comparison between face-to-face and online learning/teaching and investigated the necessary online education infrastructure (Alexander & Golja, 2007; Bliuc, Goodyear, & Ellis, 2007; Coates, James, & Baldwin, 2005; Lee & Lee, 2008; Lee, Yoon, & Lee, 2009; Lester & King, 2009; Levy, 2007). Most recently, Dixon, Christison, Dixon and Palmer (2021) reported that hybrid (ideal combination of face-to-face with online) education can be as effective as traditional face-to-face education when certain quality of interaction and management of learning can be met. This study focused only on qualitative analysis and students' outcome studies.

During the COVID-19, Kim, Shin, and Jung (2020) in Korea probed into some strong correlations among the factors of learners (i.e., motivation, achievement, and level of interest), instructors (feedback, interaction, professionalism, and comprehensibility of delivery), system (accessibility, convenience, and diverse mode of presentation), and learning (satisfaction and effectiveness). In their factor analysis, learners' active participation and autonomous learning, prompt instructors' feedback, and accessibility and convenience of online infrastructure were highlighted to be the most important variables for 100% online education. From the relatively large sample (i.e., 400) of professors and students of universities in the Arab world (i.e., Algeria, Egypt, Palestine, and Iraq), Lassoued, Alhendawi and Bashitialshaaer (2020) identified some of the critical obstacles to getting quality in distance learning during the COVID-19; interestingly, all the obstacles included

self-imposed obstacles as well as pedagogical, technical, financial, and organizational ones. Pedaste, Mitt and Jürivete (2020) reported the effect(s) of using mobile augmented reality in K-12 inquiry-based learning in Estonia and found that the implementation of the inquiry-based learning seemed successful in achieving some cognitive learning goals, but not in motivational and emotional aspects.

Doyumğaç et al. (2020) critiqued that while previous studies successfully identified the factors affecting online teaching and learning, they partially discussed those without determining how they were orchestrated for effective learning or lacked discussions on what to change based upon the identified advantages and disadvantages of online education. The most recent meta-analysis, Dixon et al. (2021) did not include the research published within the COVID-19 pandemic emergency situations and we urgently need to understand teaching modes, online and face-to-face, from students' perspectives. In the global situation of the COVID-19, the curriculums involving laboratory-oriented courses, experiment/testing-required courses, and interactive-activities-based language courses - all pedagogically meant to be taught face-to-face, are taught exclusively online. This, however, has been so far implemented mostly without adequately/pedagogically addressing the pros and cons of online components. It is with a great urgency that the pros and cons of online education as well as face-to-face in the emergency situation of the COVID-19 need to be understood in detail.

2.2. Research on Students' Perceptions on Online and Face-to-Face Language Courses

Much research has been conducted to learn about students' performance and perception on online vs. face-to-face education in different subjects such as psychology, sociology, chemistry, and biology (Maki, Maki, Patterson, & Whittaker, 2000; Twigg, 2003; Wang & Newlin, 2000; Waschull, 2001) as well as computer and speech communication (Allen, Bourhis, Burrell, & Mabry, 2002; Benoit, Benoit, Milyo, & Hansen, 2006; Lester & King, 2009). The classes taught in those studies were content heavy courses which might not necessarily require strong communicative/interactive teaching and learning as language courses. Unlike English language curricula which are based upon interactive discourse/scaffolding practices along with comprehending face-to-face cues, students learn new concepts and knowledge of chemistry, biology, psychology, and geography. These content heavy courses would still benefit from interactions, but students are more likely to focus on new contents, instead of practicing discourse interactions. The nature of the learning contents might have influenced their interactions and learning experiences in class.

Several studies have reported on online English language courses. Thirteen junior high schools provided students in a rural Iran with both concurrent and non-concurrent interactive

online platforms. The online access to English education was considered important since the students normally could not get it (Moqadam-Tabrizi, 2018). These online courses addressed a lack of resources, time restrictions, and inequality of budgeting by providing educational opportunity for students in this less funded area. The pre-recorded videos of lectures, smart electronic boards, desktop sharing, chat rooms, online practice tests, and audio interaction were implemented, and the students also recorded their audio and video performances for teacher feedback. It was not clear whether this program had concurrent interactions for language learning or the practice portion of their education. But the online English program satisfied the students in general even though the research did not have a control group to compare their perceptions on the same curriculum both through face-to-face and online mediums.

Tratnik, Urh, and Jereb (2019) taught an English business course through both online and face-to-face at a tertiary education level in Slovenia. The online class brought in a series of interactive multimedia activities using Moodle online learning tools and communication technologies. Students taking the online teaching received the same detailed instructions and timely feedback as face-to-face students did. Students had forum discussions in chats. For their assessment, they were evaluated in their use of business English vocabulary and reading, listening, writing, and speaking. The only difference was that while students interacted with the instructor more orally in face-to-face class, the online group received more written feedback or engaged more with written language practices. As students might be able to physically interact with their classmates in face-to-face class more, those taking the face-to-face course were gratified more with their learning experience. It is interesting to notice from this curriculum that it has focused a lot on business content vocabulary acquisition and the activities for learning business English skills. Students here were to learn both English language skills and content-heavy business knowledge, compared to regular foreign language courses.

In a more regular foreign language curriculum, Sriwichai (2020) surveyed what students thought of their learning through a blended English course, having both online and face-to-face lectures. Students showed high level of technological preparedness, and the combination of face-to-face and online learning modes facilitated students' learning. However, loss of concentration with the considerable class size, difficult online interactions with teachers and classmates, and ineffective time management for two different learning modes were identified as difficulties with blended learning. This study has unpacked students' problems related to learning via the blended outlets and contended that interaction is a pivotal issue that students dislike about online teaching/learning.

The nature of language courses is not about learning new contents or concepts, but about acquiring and using communicative competency only through practicing language(s) in a speech community. In this sense, language classes would show their own pedagogical

considerations to address when designing and implementing both online and face-to-face education. Here, understanding students' perceptions after experiencing both online and face-to-face courses of English in the COVID semesters will add a new insight. This study seeks to investigate students' perceptions on both online and face-to-face English lectures and to understand if their attitude(s) has changed after they have received both mediums of teaching and learning, in both Korean and Chinese universities.

3. METHDODOLOGY

3.1. Contexts and Participants

3.1.1. Korea

The university sampled for this study is a national university situated at the hub of the Korean peninsula. Students are admitted to the institution with the Sureung (the Korean equivalence of SAT) scores with high-intermediate to high. All the students are required to complete 6 English credits from the two courses (i.e., *Action English* and *English Reading & Discussion*—teaching on speaking, listening, reading, reviewing, and presenting) to be qualified for commencement. In the COVID-19 year of 2020, all the courses were mandated to be taught exclusively online platforms (i.e., lecture videos, Blackboard or Edmodo, Zoom, and other SNS tools). In the fall semester of 2020, only four weeks of face-to-face class out of 16 weeks were allowed for the general English courses as the courses were indispensable in needing face-to-face interactions/discourses for developing their communicative competence.

302 students who took the communication-based English courses across different academic majors (i. e., science (52.98%), education (13.91%), business (11.58), medicine (5.63%), and liberal arts majors (11.25%)) were collected. 97% were freshmen and the rest were re-takers. Students' level of English proficiency varied depending on their majors, however, generally their TOEIC scores ranged from 400 to 620 according to freshmen Mock TOEIC test result (only listening and reading).

3.1.2. China

The sampled university is a key national university located in the northern province of China. Students' Gaokao (the Chinese College Entrance Exam) scores are within the top 15% of all the candidates to be admitted to the institution. All the students are required to complete 16 English credits (192 credit hours in total) to qualify for graduation. Their English

curriculum focuses on developing the students' language proficiency in the four skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The course is named *College English* which is further subdivided into a course focusing on reading and writing as well as a course on viewing, listening, and speaking. To make this research more reliable, the course surveyed in the questionnaire is the viewing, listening and speaking course. The class is conducted in English and Chinese. There are an average 75 to 90 students per class. In the spring semester of 2020, this course had to be taught exclusively online. Teachers designed their lectures through the medium of Rain Classroom, Tencent QQ, Tencent Meeting, Zoom, and other SNS platforms. In the fall semester of 2020, face-to-face class returned to normal, and online classes became an alternative or a complementary to face-to-face classes. Teachers use online platforms to assign preview tasks and homework or post flipped class materials. When teaching face-to-face, teachers can still use the online platform (Rain Classroom) at the same time in the face-to-face classroom for students to post their oral and written performance online for evaluation and feedback.

337 students who took the Viewing, Listening and Speaking course across different academic majors (i.e., engineering (84.27%), science (8.31%), and Architecture (7.42%)) has participated in the study. 99.41% were sophomores and 0.59% were re-takers. Students' level of English proficiency hinged upon mostly on their majors, however, generally their English College Entrance Examination scores ranged from 85 to 140 (out of 150) on average according to their Gaokao scores (listening, reading, and writing).

3.2. Questionnaire and Data Analysis

The questionnaire has been based upon Fish and Snodgrass (2015) with some revisions to reflect the nature of language courses. Their survey was to learn about international students' perceptions on their online and face-to-face business classes. These were developed for business major students and the nature of language courses targeting foreign language learners needed to be addressed. The questions about "interaction", "immediacy of feedback" (Mather & Sarkans, 2018), and "instructor's presence" (Park & Kim, 2020) were added to include the nature of language learning as foreign language learners. The unrelated variables that Fish and Snodgrass (2005) included the difference between undergraduate and graduate students, students' costs involved, gender were excluded. The survey used the Likert scale questions (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

The survey has looked into the four parts: (1) eliciting basic information about their year of study and majors, (2) students' perceptions on effectiveness of face-to-face and online teaching and learning, (3) students' attitude change(s) toward efficacy(ies) of both face-to-face and online teaching and learning, and (4) individual comments (See all from Appendix A). Twelve items on students' perceptions of both face-to-face and online teaching and

learning and seven items on attitude changes have been included as these participants have experienced both modes of learning. Students' suggestions and comments have been collected to get complete perception(s) about their face-to-face and online learning experiences. The internal consistency of the survey from the Cronbach's alpha was 0.93 for Part (2) and 0.84 for Part (3).

The survey has been translated into both Korean and Chinese and cross-checked for the accuracy of the meaning in both languages. In Korea, students participated in the survey through the google link. In China, a similar online tool, Wenjuanxing (www.wjx.cn), has been used for the students to respond to the questionnaires.

As for analyzing the data, descriptive statistics have been used. We try not to generalize the Korean and Chinese groups. Therefore, descriptive analysis has not been utilized to determine statistical differences, but the data has been displayed to provide the overall patterns. For clarity, however, we explain the Korean and Chinese data separately. For students' suggestions and comments, a qualitative theme-based analysis has been implemented to understand students' representative ideas and comments about online and face-to-face English classes. While the qualitative analysis has been conducted for the comments collected, students' comments were limited as they were voluntary. Thus, our analysis was very limited in its depth and elaboration.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Students' Perceptions on Face-to-Face and Online Teaching in the COVID-19 Semester

Table 1 and Table 2 disclose the students' perceptions on face-to-face and online teaching and learning in this COVID-19 semester. The respondents inclined to believe that face-to-face class had more strengths, showing the mean slightly more toward "agree" than neutral for the items such as 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 13 (See Table 1). Except the Korean group's replies indicating face-to-face class being more convenient (Item 1—the mean of 2.98 with the SD of 1.05) and encouraging more self-autonomous learning (Item 5—the mean of 2.88 with the SD of 1.07), respondents' answers showed their general preferences toward face-to-face (See Appendix B for the percentages).

TABLE 1
Students' Perceptions on Face-to-Face and Online

Items	Korea		China	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Face-to-face class is easier/ more convenient than online class.	2.98	1.05	3.95	0.92
2. I am motivated more in face-to-face class than in online class.	3.66	1.02	3.81	1.02
3. I enjoy interactions with a professor through face-to-face classes more than through the online environment.	3.67	1.00	3.90	0.98
4. I think face-to-face requires more self-discipline to attend than online class.	3.56	0.98	3.55	0.98
5. I think face-to-face encourages more self-autonomous learning than online class.	2.88	1.07	3.82	0.97
6. I think that learning via face-to-face helps to improve my English communication better.	3.63	0.97	3.99	0.92
7. I learn more through face-to-face than through online.	3.53	0.97	3.96	0.91
8. I like professor's face-to-face feedback better than online feedback.	3.47	0.99	3.90	0.99
9. I think I speak in English more in face-to-face than online class	3.70	0.97	3.78	0.98
10. I think I listen to English more in face-to-face than online class.	3.48	1.03	3.86	0.95
11. Overall, I think face-to-face class is more efficient and effective than online class for improving my English communication skills.	3.70	0.90	3.86	0.90

Note. The numbers have been rounded to two decimal places.

To identify three trends standing out in the data that were highlighted as crucial for online education, communication, professors' feedbacks, speaking (Kim, Shin, & Jung, 2020; Mather & Sarkans, 2018), the following figures visualize the results of items 6, 8 and 9. As shown in Figure 1, a large portion of respondents (Item 6, 63.79 % of Koreans agree to strongly agree and 69.93% of Chinese agree to strongly agree) perceived that face-to-face class helped to improve their English communication better.

FIGURE 1
Students' Perceptions on English Communication Improvement through Face-to-Face

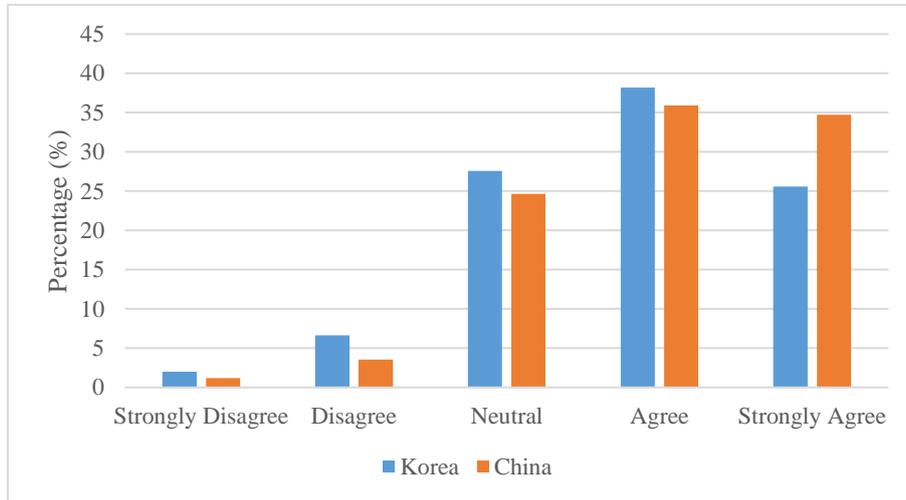


Figure 2 shows that professors' feedback through face-to-face settings tended to be preferred (Item 8, 57.80% of Koreans, 65.28% of Chinese). While 100% online "teaching" is conducted, the issue of face-to-face feedback from professors should be thoughtfully considered when planning for overall class management and student "learning".

FIGURE 2
Professors' Feedback Preferences: Face-to-Face over Online

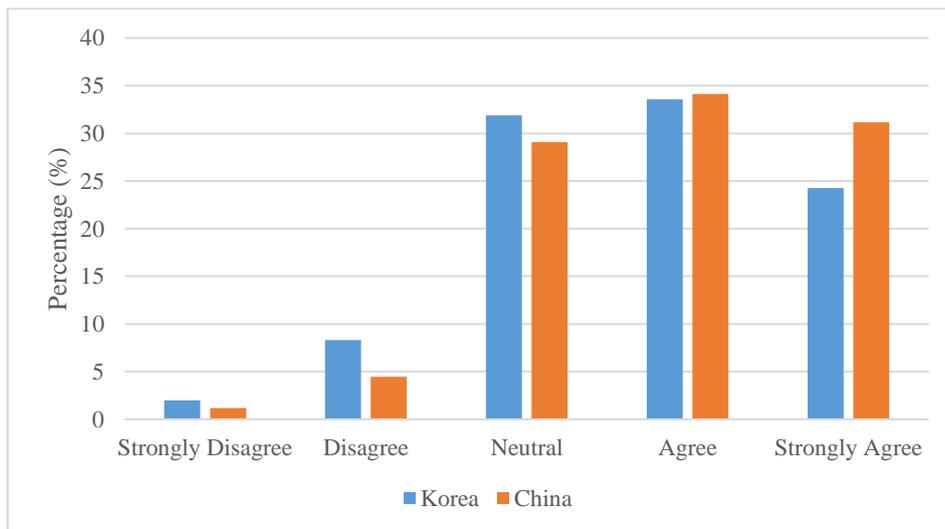
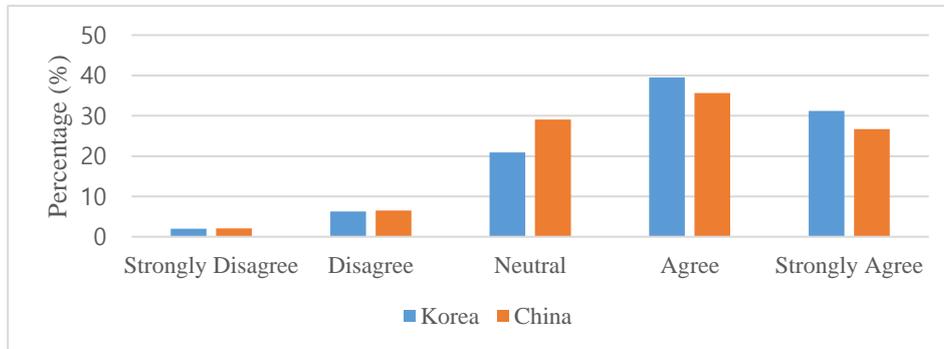


FIGURE 3
Students’ Perceptions on Speaking English More in Face-to-Face



According to Figure 3, 70.76% of Koreans showed “agreed” to “strongly agreed,” and 62.32% of Chinese (62.32%) agreed to strongly agreed that they speak English actively more in face-to-face settings than in online (Item 9), suggesting that most of the respondents critically perceived that such communicative skills as speaking and listening occurred more through face-to-face settings.

Table 2 and Figures 4 and 5 display students’ reasons to prefer face-to-face to online English classes. Respondents enjoyed direct social interactions (69.97% of Koreans and 78.34% of Chinese) and higher degree of ‘self-concentration’ in language learning with face-to-face English classes (63.04% of Koreans and 75.67% of Chinese).

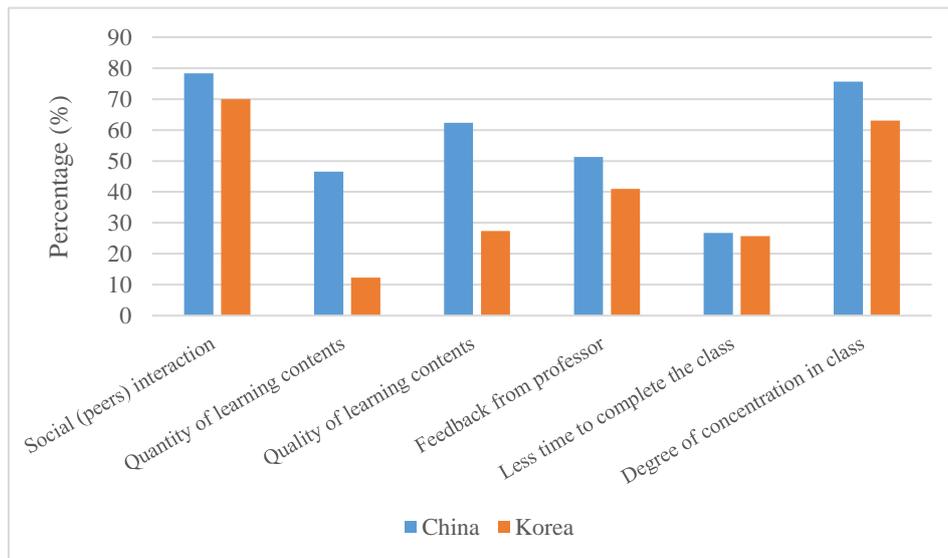
TABLE 2
The Reasons for Face-to-Face and Online English Classes

The Reasons for Face-to-Face Class Preference		
Items	Percentage	
	Korea	China
Social (peers) interaction	69.97	78.34
Quantity of learning contents	12.25	46.59
Quality of learning contents	27.39	62.31
Feedback from professor	40.92	51.34
Less time to complete the class	25.74	26.71
Degree of concentration in class	63.04	75.67
The Reasons for Online Class Preference		
Items	Percentage	
	Korea	China
Flexibility	80.53	85.76
Independence	66.34	69.44
Quantity of learning contents	14.52	37.98
Quality of learning contents	12.21	28.49
Feedback from professor	13.53	22.26
Degree of concentration in class	20.46	30.56

Note: The numbers have been rounded to two decimal points.

It is interesting to see while Korean students have not thought that the quantity of learning contents in face-to-face (12.25%) and online (14.52%) are different, Chinese students have thought that of learning contents is larger in face-to-face (46.59%) than through online (37.98%).

FIGURE 4
The Reasons for Face-to-Face Class Preference



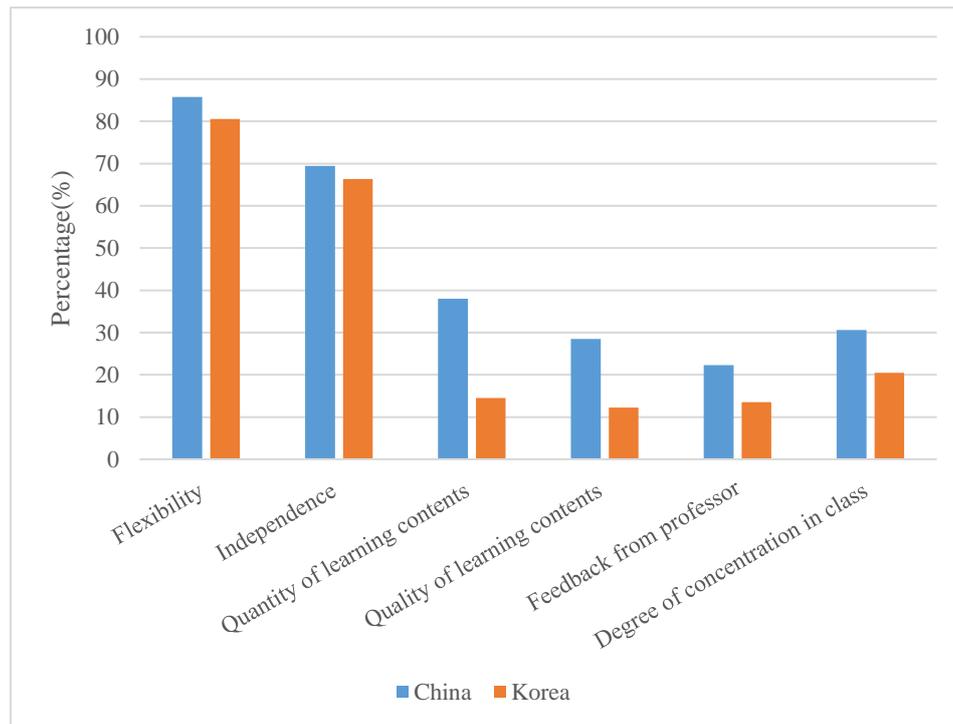
27.39% of Korean respondents and 62.31% of Chinese ones thought that the quality of learning contents was good in face-to-face. Only 12.21% of Koreans and 28.49% of Chinese students believed that the quality of their online education was good. Both Korean and Chinese respondents preferred to have feedback from professors through face-to-face interactions (40.92% of Koreans and 51.34% of Chinese) rather than via online (13.53% of Koreans and 22.26% of Chinese).

While the overall preferences for face-to-face classes were obvious, the respondents saw some advantages in online classes. Online English classes brought them a sense of both flexibility (80.53% of Koreans and 85.76% of Chinese) and independence (66.34% of Koreans and 69.44% of Chinese). Incorporation of these features is limited in online settings.

Overall, students have perceived positively on face-to-face English classes. Respondents especially found it valuable to practice English speaking more and get professors' immediate feedback through interpersonal engagements. For any language courses that require ample communication practices, the significance of meaningful contexts for language discourses through face-to-face contacts and immediacy of feedback needs to be highlighted to better

enhance students' communicative competence.

FIGURE 5
The Reasons for Online Class Preference



4.2. Students' Attitude Change toward Face-to-Face and Online English Classes throughout the COVID-19 Semester

Our data do not show significant attitude change among students toward face-to-face and online English learning experiences. Before this COVID-19 semester, students perceived that their face-to-face learning experiences were positive as we can see from the item 1 in Table 3 (Item 1, the mean of 3.49 with the *SD* of 1.16 for Koreans and the mean of 3.91 with the *SD* of 0.87 for Chinese). For the percentage, 32.33 % of Koreans exhibited “agree” and 19.33% of Koreans exhibited “strongly agree” that face-to-face was better (Table 4). 39.76% of Chinese “agreed” and 28.19% of Chinese “strongly agreed” before they learned through both modes of learning.

According to the item 2 in Table 3 and Table 4, after experiencing both face-to-face and online English lectures, respondents remained that face-to-face was better (Item 2, the mean of 3.40 with the *SD* of 1.05 for Koreans and the mean of 3.84 with the *SD* of 1.00 for Chinese).

For the percentage, 48.68 % of Koreans stick to agreeing to strongly agreeing (31.79% answered “agree” and 16.89% answered “strongly agree”) and 34.42% Chinese “agree” and 30.27% chose “strongly agree” that they still believe that face-to-face turned out better than online (Item 2 in Table 4).

TABLE 3
Students’ Attitude Change after Experiencing both Face-to-Face and Online

Items	Korea		China	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Before this semester, I thought face-to-face was better.	3.49	1.16	3.91	0.87
2. Now I think face-to-face is better than online.	3.40	1.05	3.84	1.00
3. Before this semester, I thought I practice English speaking and listening more through face-to-face than through online.	3.66	0.94	3.86	0.91
4. Now I believe that I think I practice speaking and listening more through face-to-face than through online.	3.72	0.90	3.71	0.91
5. I would recommend face-to-face <i>Action English/College English</i> to my friends.	3.79	0.93	3.68	0.99
6. I would recommend online <i>Action English/College English</i> to my friends.	3.53	0.95	3.45	1.06
7. I would rather attend face-to-face <i>Action/College English</i> class than online.	3.56	1.01	3.78	0.94

Note: The numbers have been rounded to two decimal points.

Before the Covid-19 semesters, respondents thought that they had practiced English speaking and listening more through face-to-face than through online (Item 3, the mean of 3.66 with the *SD* of 0.94 for Koreans and the mean of 3.86 with the *SD* of 0.91 for Chinese; 42.05 % of Koreans “agree” and 21.19% “strongly agreed” and 37.42% of Chinese “agree” and 27.30% of them “strongly agreed”). Students continued to believe that the amount of speaking and listening practices remained similar, which did not reveal significant attitude change (Item 4, the mean of 3.72 with the *SD* of 0.90 for Koreans and the mean of 3.71 with the *SD* of 0.91 for Chinese; 44.19 % of Koreans “agree” and 22.26% “strongly agreed” and 34.42% of Chinese “agree” and 21.96% of them “strongly agreed”).

TABLE 4
Students' Attitude Change in Percentage

Survey Questions	Students	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Before this semester, I thought face-to-face was better.	Korea	6.33	16.33	25.67	32.33	19.33
	China	0.89	2.97	28.19	39.76	28.19
2. Now I think face-to-face is better than online.	Korea	4.30	13.25	33.77	31.79	16.89
	China	1.78	7.42	26.11	34.42	30.27
3. Before this semester, I thought I practice English speaking and listening more through face-to-face than through online.	Korea	2.65	5.63	28.48	42.05	21.19
	China	1.78	2.67	30.86	37.39	27.30
4. Now I believe that I think I practice speaking and listening more through face-to-face than through online.	Korea	1.66	4.98	26.91	44.19	22.26
	China	1.48	4.75	37.39	34.42	21.96
5. I would recommend face-to-face English classes to my friends.	Korea	1.99	3.99	27.91	39.87	26.25
	China	3.26	4.75	36.20	32.34	23.44
6. I would recommend online English classes to my friends.	Korea	3.00	7.33	37.33	36.33	16.00
	China	5.64	8.61	39.17	28.49	18.10
7. I would rather attend face-to-face English classes than online ones.	Korea	1.66	11.92	34.11	30.79	21.52
	China	2.37	4.45	30.27	38.58	24.33

Moreover, with the items 5 and 6 from Tables 3 and 4, respondents reported that they would more likely to recommend face-to-face lecture of their English courses to others than online ones. Table 3 (the mean of 3.79 with the *SD* of 0.93 for Koreans and the mean of 3.68 with the *SD* of 0.99 for Chinese) supported that they would recommend face-to-face English lectures. Participants, on the other hand, showed willingness to recommend online English courses (the mean of 3.53 with the *SD* of 0.95 for Koreans and the mean of 3.45 with the *SD* of 1.06 for Chinese), but lower than their recommendation of face-to-face English courses. In percentage wise, 39.87% of Korean students would recommend and 26.25% of Koreans “strongly” recommended face-to-face English classes, while 36.33% “agreed” and 16% “strongly agreed” to recommend online lectures. 32.34 % of Chinese ones would “recommend” and 23.44% “strongly recommend” face-to-face English classes. On the other hand, only 16% of Koreans and 18.10% Chinese respondents “strongly recommended” online English courses. While the participants have not modified their own beliefs on the efficiency/effectiveness of face-to-face English classes, they have also tended to like face-to-face version more in their recommendation to their peers.

On the item 7 in Tables 3 and 4, 30.79% of Korean students “agreed” that they would like to take face-to-face English courses and 21.52% of them “strongly agreed” that they would

choose them via face-to-face. In addition, 38.58% Chinese “agreed” and 24.33 % of them would “strongly agree” to attend face-to-face English classes. This shows that participants would like to take face-to-face more than the online version of English classes.

4.3. Qualitative Analysis on Students’ Comments/Suggestions

98 comments (53 were from Koreans and 45 from Chinese participants) were collected from the open question (i.e., “Any other suggestions/comments”). Two themes were analyzed from the respondents’ comments: one on teachers’ pedagogy and the other on face-to-face vs. online. 54 comments out of 98 were on teacher pedagogy—their general satisfaction about teacher pedagogy (i.e., 25 comments, such as *I enjoy the professor’s lecture on practical grammar based on naturally emerging English conversations. I want to learn more about this type of practical grammar*, Korean # 14), suggestions of alternative pedagogy (3 comments, as in *leave some questions for students to think for themselves when teaching online*, Chinese #28) and more students’ participation, mainly for speaking (4 comments, *Speaking is more important than listening, so we need more time intensive in speaking instead of listening*, Chinese #1) and interactions between teachers and students or among students (18 comments, such as *I hope that in face-to-face instruction, teachers can increase interactions rather than simply ask people to answer questions*, Chinese #16) was suggested, while heavy workloads/homework were mentioned in 4 comments.

The other 35 comments regarded face-to-face and online learning (21 comments of preference of face-to-face, as in *I learn more knowledge from and more focused in face-to-face classes*, (Chinese #27), and *I prefer face-to-face learning. I physically meet my classmates and professor and feel a sense of belonging. It is a true community building* (Korean #12). 9 comments on preference of online, as in *Teaching through Zoom will have the same effect(s) as face-to-face* (Korean # 36). 5 comments displayed combining online platforms with face-to-face lectures would be positive, such as *the combination of face-to-face with online education might be adopted* (Chinese # 15).

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results demonstrated that the students preferred face-to-face English classes to online ones. With the improvement in communicative competence in English, their perceived amount of speaking/listening in English has come out greater with face-to-face lectures. The perceived satisfaction with professors’ face-to-face feedbacks in classrooms has been sought from the respondents. These findings are consistent with the previous research on English classes conducted through the online platforms (Moqadam-Tabrizi, 2018; Sriwichai, 2020;

Tratnik, Urh, & Jereb, 2019). Moreover, the participants believed that the quality of learning contents and the degree of concentration in classes were stronger with face-to-face classes.

Online education did bring in flexibility and independence whereas social and personal interactions are stronger in face-to-face one. While the students did not display strong attitude changes, they believed that their listening and speaking discourse practices occurred more with face-to-face settings. The respondents' comments indicated that they wanted to have more opportunities to speak and more immediate interactions/scaffolding with professors in classes. Some comments on his/her preference toward face-to-face classes were shown.

It is the current study's calibration that, for any language courses aiming to develop students' oral communicative competence in the COVID-19 semesters, online teaching and learning could not fully substitute/replace face-to-face classes. Extending the previous studies (Moqadam-Tabrizi, 2018; Sriwichai, 2020; Tratnik et al., 2019), the present study suggests that the nature of teaching and learning involved in different subjects/courses does make an important difference(s) in learners' perceptions and their language learning experiences in the language communicative competence. Korean and Chinese participants have appreciated actual social/personal interactions for the language practices and professors' immediate feedback/scaffolding. They also would rather encourage their peers to take the courses through face-to-face classes.

To better address students' needs for the language uses and practices during these pandemic semesters, the present study contends that providing synchronized oral discourse practices and strong social/personal interactions actively with professors' physical presence particularly dealing on immediate feedback/scaffolding should be highlighted into the current online language courses. If English courses that are meant to develop students' communicative competence are offered online, these three considerations are extremely crucial to be addressed. The instructional approaches should always address synchronized oral discourse practices and strong social interactions among the participants and with the instructors at all times. Educators should make sure students feel professors' physical presence even in online educational situations. We argue that immediate feedback and scaffolding that are essential for oral language development should be incorporated in online English education.

In terms of the positive components of online education, it is noticeable how students responded that they tend to have slightly more self-discipline in face-to-face English learning. This can mean that having them required to come and join in face-to-face learning does provide more opportunities for them to be self-disciplined for their learning. As students feel less self-disciplined in online learning, the issue of self-disciplined learning should not be left for students to be responsible for. Educators, especially language educators that want to develop students' communicative competence, should provide step-by-step guidance that

can help students to be self-disciplined. Many parts of the curriculum should have some self-discipline components so that students can engage in learning contents and social interactions in such ways that they can be responsible for their own learning progress.

Related to students' perceptions of online learning as a factor to facilitate their autonomous learning, students do not show consensus. This means that while some students find online learning to be helpful for their autonomous learning, the other students believed that they have hard time taking online English class autonomously. Instead of generalizing that all online learning to be strongly connected to self-autonomous learning, we should always understand not all online learning automatically involves autonomy in language learning. The same will be true for face-to-face learning. Face-to-face learning should also encourage learners' self-autonomy to motivate them better and to make learning occur effectively.

Previous research tended to show more written communication modes than oral modes especially in online educational contexts and did not articulate balancing both oral and written modes of communication. Building upon Moqadam-Tabrizi (2018), Tratnik et al. (2019), and Sriwichai (2020), the research findings showed that bringing in the positive components of face-to-face classes, both oral and written modes of communication should be included in systematic ways to diversify social communication and interaction. This reflects that language teachers should consider more diverse forms of communications and more integrative approaches of mixing up both oral and written interactions with students.

This study has only concerned of the perceptions and attitude changes of university students from both Korea and China and based only on the particular language courses that are targeted to improve students' English language communication skills. The other variables of instructors' teaching styles, students' individual preferences, and the unique environmental factors of online platforms as well as face-to-face teaching/learning would have interacted with how these participants answered to the present study's questionnaires. Teachers' professional and personal capacities (i.e., knowledge, behaviors, and affective filters) do make a difference in students' perceptions and attitudes along with success in communicative competence of the language, and these should also be investigated further to understand in the realm of the COVID-19 semesters.

The special situation with the COVID-19 pandemic definitely impact students' experiences in these English courses. The contextual differences between China and Korea have not been the main focus of this research, and the intercultural difference and students' perceptions on online teaching and learning in the era of COVID-19 can be a promising topic for future research. Our research shed light on a reality-check on students' perceptions along with attitude changes on online versus face-to-face English learning during the COVID-19 semesters from both Korean and Chinese university samples. While online education has still been mandatory and continuing to be inclusive, it is a scholastic mission to look and

think the ways to bring what teacher-learners' immediate interactions/scaffolding in face-to-face confinements means to these currently activating online platforms. This hopefully makes learners' learning experience be enriched qualitatively with combining online and face-to-face components in any language teaching/learning.

Applicable levels: Tertiary

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5. I think face-to-face encourages more self-autonomous learning than online class. 我认为面对面学习比在线学习更能鼓励学生自主学习。	①	②	③	④	⑤
6. I think that learning via face-to-face helps to improve my English communication better. 我认为面对面的学习可以更好的提高我的英语交流能力。	①	②	③	④	⑤
7. I learn more through face-to-face than through online. 相比线上课，面授课使我学到更多知识。	①	②	③	④	⑤
8. I like professor's face-to-face feedback better than online feedback. 比起在线反馈，我更喜欢教授面对面的反馈。	①	②	③	④	⑤
I think I speak in English more in face-to-face than online class. 我认为我在面授课上说的英语比在线课堂上多。	①	②	③	④	⑤
10. I think I listen to English more in face-to-face than online class. 我认为我在面授课上听的英语比在线课堂上多。	①	②	③	④	⑤
11. I like face-to-face class for the following reasons (Check all that apply) 我喜欢面授课的原因如下(勾选所有适用的)	① social(peers) interaction 社交(同龄人)互动 ② quantity of learning contents 学习内容数量 ③ quality of learning contents 学习内容质量 ④ feedback from professor 教授的反馈 ⑤ less time to complete the class 更少的时间来完成课程 ⑥ degree of concentration in class 上课时注意力的集中程度				
12. I like online class with for following reasons (Check all that apply) 我喜欢线上课的原因如下(勾选所有适用的)	① flexibility 灵活性 ② independence 独立性 ③ quantity of learning contents 学习内容数量 ④ quality of learning contents 学习内容质量 ⑤ feedback from professor 教授的反馈 ⑥ degree of concentration in class 上课时注意力的集中程度				
13. Overall, I think face-to-face class is more efficient and effective than online class for improving my English communication skills. 总的来说，我认为面授课比线上课能更有效地提高我的英语交流能力。	①	②	③	④	⑤

C. Students' attitude change on effectiveness of face-to-face and online teaching	Strongly Disagree 非常不同意	Disagree 不同意	Neutral 中立	Agree 同意	Strongly Agree 非常同意
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(学生对面授和在线教学效果的态度转变)	同意				意
1. Before this semester, I thought face-to-face was better. 在这学期之前, 我认为面授课更好。	①	②	③	④	⑤
2. Now I think face-to-face is better than online. 现在我认为面授课比在线课更好。	①	②	③	④	⑤
3. Before this semester, I thought I practice English speaking and listening more through face-to-face than through online. 在这学期之前, 我认为我更多的是通过面授课的方式来练习英语口语和听力, 而不是通过在线课。	①	②	③	④	⑤
4. Now I believe that I think I practice speaking and listening more through face-to-face than through online. 现在我认为我更多的是通过面对面的方式来练习口语和听力, 而不是通过网络。	①	②	③	④	⑤
5. I would recommend face-to-face College English: Viewing, Listening Speaking to my friends. 我会向朋友推荐《大学英语视听说》面授课。	①	②	③	④	⑤
6. I would recommend online College English: Viewing, Listening Speaking to my friends. 我会向朋友推荐《大学英语视听说》线上课程。	①	②	③	④	⑤
7. I would rather likely to attend face-to-face College English: Viewing, Listening Speaking class than online. 比起线上课, 我更愿意参加《大学英语视听说》面授课。	①	②	③	④	⑤
D. Other suggestions and comments 其他建议及意见 (如: 面授讲课, 线上授课建议, 教学方法等)					

APPENDIX B
Percentage Result of Students' Perception

Perception Survey Questions	Korea					China				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Face-to-face class is easier/ more convenient than online class.	5.96	21.52	35.76	26.82	9.93	1.48	2.97	27.00	36.50	32.05
2. I am motivated more in face-to-face class than in online class.	3.32	6.64	29.57	34.22	26.25	2.67	6.23	28.78	32.05	30.27
3. I enjoy interactions with a professor through face-to-face classes more than through the online environment.	2.99	4.65	26.58	35.55	30.23	1.48	4.75	29.97	29.67	34.12
4. I think face-to-face requires more self-discipline to attend than online class.	1.99	7.64	26.91	37.87	25.58	4.45	10.98	34.72	24.63	25.22
5. I think face-to-face encourages more self-autonomous learning than online class.	5.00	30.33	33.67	19.67	11.33	2.08	5.04	29.97	34.12	28.78
6. I think that learning via face-to-face helps to improve my English communication better.	1.99	6.64	27.57	38.21	25.58	1.19	3.56	24.63	35.91	34.72
7. I learn more through face-to-face than through online.	2.65	6.62	36.42	33.11	21.19	1.19	2.67	28.49	34.42	33.23
8. I like professor's face-to-face feedback better than online feedback.	1.99	8.31	31.89	33.55	24.25	1.19	4.45	29.08	34.12	31.16
9. I think I speak in English more in face-to-face than online class.	1.99	6.31	20.93	39.53	31.23	2.08	6.53	29.08	35.61	26.71

10. I think I listen to English more in face-to-face than online class.	2.65	10.93	30.79	32.78	22.85	1.48	3.86	32.64	30.86	31.16
13. Overall, I think face-to-face class is more efficient and effective than online class for improving my English communication skills.	0.99	6.62	30.79	39.74	21.85	1.48	2.97	30.56	38.28	26.71