The international students’ perception towards online learning using the Tencent Meeting during COVID-19 outbreak

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Abstract. The aim of this study is to find the international students’ perception towards online learning using the Tencent Meeting, or the international version is VooV. The descriptive qualitative design was conducted in this study. The total of participants were thirty students in Guangxi Normal University, China academic year 2019/2020. The data was obtained using an end-of-semester questionnaire and then follow-up interviews. The researchers examined the students’ feedback and found that in general the Tencent Meeting is well received by the students. The participants agreed that online learning using the Tencent Meeting made the learning process well managed, the Tencent Meeting was easy to use, the Tencent Meeting was affordable to learn. This point, the participants were enthusiastic in distance learning and considered that online learning using the Tencent Meeting was efficient during COVID-19 outbreak. At last, the respondents recommended this application to the other students. Drawbacks and suggestions for improvement were also discussed.

Keywords: COVID-19, Mandarin, Tencent Meeting, Distance Learning.

1. Introduction

In December 2019, a new infectious respiratory disease emerged in Wuhan, Hubei province, China and was named by the World Health Organization as COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) [1], [2]. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19, most countries have moved from physical to virtual classroom [3]–[5]. For this reason, the higher education institutions are discovering that new pedagogical modes are required to meet the needs of a generation of learners in such situation. In the previous research, Luo and Yang have examined the usage of Wechat application to study Chinese and reported that the participants mentioned five major benefits of using WeChat to learn Mandarin: expansion of time in learning, linguistic gains, promotion of cultural learning, enhancement of learning motivation, and establishment of a supportive Chinese language learning community [6].

Mandarin Chinese will become one of the world’s top languages by 2050 [7]. Mandarin is also one of four official languages of the Republic of Singapore and one of six official languages of the United Nations [8]. Since Mandarin has been famous for foreigners as a result lead them interested to learn. There are a lot ways are used to learn, moreover in the current condition required them to study online by application [9]. This integrating technology into the teaching and learning process has become a very promising solution [10]. Learners and teachers are not only obeying the rule of social distancing, but also may tackle the problem, like a far distance that is impossible for teachers and students to go to school [11].
The Tencent Meeting enables customers and users to host or join meetings anytime, anywhere. During the coronavirus outbreak, Tencent Meeting is providing free services and connecting users all over mainland China. Its international version, VooV Meeting, has been launched in more than 100 countries and regions around the world in March (www.tencent.com). It will ease users to connect to online learning and training. The Chinese universities, one of them is Guangxi Normal University has been using this application to teach, one of subjects is Mandarin. In this study, the researchers would examine whether the use of Tencent Meeting also eases the students in learning Mandarin just like how Wechat application was found to be helpful in learning a foreign language.

2. Method
The descriptive qualitative design is conducted in this study. The data was collected through an end-of-semester questionnaire and then follow-up interviews. Participants were 30 international students who had finished learning Mandarin in Chinese foundation class, Guangxi Normal University, China. 30 students had studied Mandarin using Tencent Meeting for one semester. The participants were required to fill a questionnaire in terms of their opinions of the use of Tencent Meeting. Since the students studied in their own home, the researchers shared a link questionnaire onto their chatting applications and their electronic mails. The researcher asked them to give ratings on a number of items on a 5-point scale, provide answers Yes or No with 7 general aspects of questions; 1. Infrastructure readiness, 2. Perception of Technology Literacy, 3. Online Learning Skills, 4. Quality of Academic Interaction, 5. Benefits of online learning, 6. Obstacles encountered, 7. Online learning prospects. After finished filling the questionnaire, the respondents joined an interview session with 5 general questions. Each interview lasted 5-10 minutes. After the interview was finished, the researcher analyzed the transcripts of the interview. This strategy is adopted from [12]. The interview questions could be seen in table 1

| Questions                                                                 | Responses |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Have you ever studied online using the Tencent Meeting application before the covid-19 pandemic? |           |
| Is the Tencent Meeting efficient to be used learning Mandarin? Why?     |           |
| Are students enthusiastic in learning Mandarin using the Tencent Meeting? |           |
| What benefits and drawbacks does the tencent meeting have in terms of learning Chinese? |           |
| Do you have any suggestions for improvement?                            |           |

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Results
In order to see the students perception towards the usage of Tencent Meeting in learning Chinese, the researcher has provided a question written in figure 1. All the respondents answered yes (100%) for the availability of a computer and an adequate internet.
As can be seen from the figure 2, in the section of perception of technology literacy, 80% of the respondents agreed that Tencent Meeting makes learning Chinese efficient, while a small number of the respondents said no (20%).

In the section of online learning skills, the ability of students using Tencent Meeting with distance learning, 56.7% and 13.3% stated strongly agree and agree. Strongly disagree and disagree in the rate of 3.3% and 6.7% respectively (figure 3). Further, the figure 4 of the usage of Tencent Meeting to complete the tasks, the highest percentage felt on strongly agree (60%), followed by agree (13.3%). The lowest score belongs to strongly disagree and agree, 3.3% and 6.7%.
Figure 4. The ability of complete the task using Tencent Meeting

In the perception of academic interaction of he Picture 5 showed us that 86.7% of the participants agreed that tutors/teachers responded quickly during online study, while only 13.3% stated that tutors did not give feedback fast.

Figure 5. The percentage of tutors quick respond online learning

The next is benefits of online learning. The figure 6 saw 73.3% strongly agreed to learning Chinese using Tencent Meeting can be done anytime and anywhere. 0% for strongly disagreed and 6.7% stated disagreed.

Figure 6. Study Chinese using Tencent Meeting for anytime and anywhere

The picture 7 showed us that students considered learning Chinese using Tencent Meeting was well managed, the percentage was 40% in the agree column, and 20% for strongly agree. The choices of strongly disagree and disagree were 0%.
Further, based on the diagram below, the percentage of between agree and disagree were not far different. 6% and 4% said agree and disagree, while strongly agree and strongly disagree only two percent difference, 9% and 7% respectively. However, the students who agreed that the cost for learning process using Tencent Meeting is affordable are higher that who said not.

In terms of the obstacle encountered, in the question (picture 9) of the inability of students who were not able to use Tencent Meeting, most students prefer to answer strongly disagree (43.3%), disagree (16.7%). Then, 3.3% and 16.7% for unable to use Tencent Meeting. It means, there were no significant problems encountered.

Diagram 13 and diagram 14 of online learning prospects part revealed that diagram 10, students selected strongly agree (66.7%) toward the ease of using Tencent Meeting as a fast access to study Chinese.
online, and 20% agreed. While strongly disagree and disagree were 0%. And 3.3% The next picture (11) also showed a positive result where 66.7% agreed that The Tencent Meeting is recommended to the other students to study Chinese online, same as the previous picture (10) 0% for strongly disagree and agree.

![Figure 10. Ease of use Tencent Meeting](image1)

![Figure 11. Recommendation for using Tencent](image2)

3.2. Discussion

In the analysis stage, the researchers collected data on the difficulties faced by the students of Chinese foundation class in the interview session. Table 1 shows the difficulties faced by students when using Tencent Meeting.
Table 2. The difficulties found in Tencent Meeting

| Questions                                                                 | Responses                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What drawbacks does the tencent meeting have in terms of learning Chinese? | 1. Students could not write texts in Tencent Meeting during class.         |
|                                                                            | 2. Sometimes students did not attend a class on time.                      |
|                                                                            | 3. The network problems sometimes disturbing the learning process.         |

There were three respondents that the researcher invited to the interview to state their opinions related to the drawbacks of learning Mandarin using the Tencent Meeting. The result showed; 1. Students could not write texts in Tencent Meeting during class.

![Display pictures and writing in Tencent class](figure12.png)

Figure 12. Display pictures and writing in tencent class

During an online class, the students could see the pictures and the writing that the teachers provided on screen (figure 12). The students might to read and to answers questions from the teachers, but they had no chances to write Chinese hanzi that they used to do in an offline class. Further, sometimes the students did not attend a class on time.

The students who studied Chinese foreign language started to use Tencent Meeting to study. This has changed their styles of study from conventional to modern. For any reasons, the way of this study made some students came late to class, and impacted to the teachers and the other students must wait them before a class. As addition, when the network unstable, it instantly disturbed the learning process, the sounds could not heard clearly.

The students could not hear the teachers voice, and vice versa. As a result, this really disturbed the learning process. Moreover, when the lights went out, the internet network connected to the Wi-Fi will immediately disconnect. In the end of project, the researchers inter-viewed 3 students to give out their input and opinion on the Tencent Meeting class and their responses are in the table 3.

Table 3. Students’ interview results

| Question | Responses |
|----------|-----------|
| No       |           |
Have you ever studied online using the Tencent Meeting application before the covid-19 pandemic? 

Never

Is the Tencent Meeting efficient to be used learning Mandarin? Why?

Yes, it is because we have to keep social distancing

Yes, it is. In this digital era, Tencent Meeting provide complete features, like we can hold video conferences

Yes, it is. Learning Mandarin using Tencent Meeting could be well managed

Are students enthusiastic in learning Mandarin using the Tencent Meeting?

Yes, they are

Yes, they are very enthusiastic

Yes, the students are very happy

What benefits does the tencent meeting have in terms of learning Chinese?

Learning Mandarin using Tencent Meeting goes well

It is easy to use

Tencent Meeting can be used in the emergency situation to study like nowadays situation

Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Provide writing feature for students during class

Provide “add friends” option would be better

No suggestions for improvement

4. Conclusion

According to the research above, the researchers concluded that the Tencent Meeting is efficient and helpful to study. This application eases the learning process so that the distance learning was well managed. The participants were enthusiastic studying used the Tencent Meeting during class because they could finish the assignments, could sit the exams, and could hold video conferences. At last, they recommend this application to the other users to learn online.

5. References

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