

Initial Observations of the Utilization of Zoom Software for Synchronous English as a Foreign Language Oral Communication Classes at a Japanese University

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Abstract : In 2020, oral communication classes at many universities in Japan switched to online and hybrid lessons because of the coronavirus pandemic. Teachers had to adapt their practices immediately and deal with the challenges of the online environment. Even for experienced teachers, this still presented a problem as many had not conducted online classes before. Simultaneously, for many students, this type of learning was completely alien to them, and they had to adapt to the challenges faced by communicating in English online. This study collected data from 418 first grade students in the first semester of English communication classes at a technical university in Tokyo, Japan. Zoom software was used throughout the learning period. Though there were many challenges in the setting up and implementation of Zoom classes at the university, the results indicated that the students enjoyed the format and made the most of the circumstances. This proved the robustness of the course that was taught in regular lessons and the adaptability of teachers and students to challenges in a very short timeframe.

Keywords : zoom, hybrid lessons, communicative english, online teaching

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