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Strategies and Approaches to Teaching English as a Foreign Language Online: Students' Perceptions and Satisfaction

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Abstract

The COVID-19 outbreak was a turning point in the history of education that permanently altered the public's perspectives regarding learning online. Since that time, the popularity of teaching English as a Foreign Language virtually has increased and emerged as an attractive, innovative, and continuously shifting area of language education.

The aim of this thesis is to research the strategies, approaches, and digital tools that can be effectively implemented in online EFL classrooms. The emphasis is on investigating students' perceptions and levels of satisfaction with the online language learning experience in the context of language acquisition, enjoyment, and motivation factors.

The first chapter begins with a brief overview of the crucial definitions and types of online courses. It also compares online and face-to-face learning and outlines the benefits and challenges that students may encounter when learning English online. Further on, the chapter discusses the role of the teacher in the process of developing foreign language skills online and covers possible assessment techniques and motivation components. Lastly, some specific activities and techniques to teach language skills online are described, and digital tools and resources are evaluated.

The second chapter delineates some common methods and approaches that can be applied in an English language online classroom, focusing on its main features and benefits. Among others, techniques such as TPR, CLIL, and mind mapping are presented.

The third chapter illustrates the research study designed and conducted by the author. It demonstrates the results of a questionnaire conducted among a group of students who have learned English either privately or through an educational platform online. The main purpose of the questionnaire is to measure students' satisfaction with their online language learning experience in terms of language acquisition, enjoyment, and motivation factors and to find out which methods and resources they consider interesting or effective.

Keywords: online teaching, methodologies, digital resources, language acquisition, student perception

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Chapter I

Online Teaching and Learning

Background

Various technological advancements and the increasing demands and needs of society have led to the rapid development of the Internet and made it an essential component of our daily lives. The Internet has become a common and widely used tool for work and study purposes thereby giving rise to online learning and teaching. Thanks to the process of globalization and the invention of the World Wide Web system, people from all over the world started to be able to communicate and share information in an easy and accessible way, creating great opportunities for both students and teachers nowadays (Perry & Pilati, 2011). As claimed by many authors (Joksimović et al., 2015, Sala-Suszyńska, 2017), the use of new technologies is no longer the future but the reality of education. Due to the Web's simplicity of use and capacity to offer multimedia, online learning is becoming more and more popular and being introduced in schools and homes at a fast pace (Harasim, 2000). Moreover, the interest in online learning is anticipated to increase even more over the next several years as more students request it and more teachers accept it (Perry & Pilati, 2011). It means that the computer is becoming to be considered not only as an entertaining gadget but also as an educational instrument and learning aid. In addition, according to Sala-Suszyńska (2017), the computer can even become a substitute for peer contact and relations in the future.

1. **Crucial terms and definitions**

1.1 **Online Learning**

There exist numerous definitions of online learning and the explanation of this method of education is interpreted by many authors differently. Generally, the term is used to describe a type of instruction where students are taught in a completely virtual setting. The term online learning was initially introduced in the 1990s with the

development of the Internet and used in relation to distance education (Perry & Pilati, 2011). Maddison et al. (2017) define online learning as learning conducted through the use of computers, network, and a range of multimedia and internet platforms and tools. They also highlight that online learning is frequently referred to as e-learning, virtual learning, web-based learning, or computer-assisted learning. Basar et al. (2021) describe online learning as a learning process that takes place between instructors and students using numerous digital platforms like "Whatsapp", "Zoom", or "Google Classroom". Furthermore, they underline the fact that online learning relates to being taught by teachers online and carrying out the tasks or activities assigned by them. It is important to remember that it is not a self-study experience accomplished by students. According to, Joksimović et al. (2015), online learning is a type of learning where all instruction is offered online and there is no need for the students or teachers to be present at the same time or location. Similarly to Basar et al. (2021), they state that online learning is not a self-learning process and it does not resemble the traditional distance education method which is usually based on conventional videoconferencing, the transmission of television or radio, DVDs, or autonomous educational programs or lessons. In addition, online learning is a much broader term than distance learning which mainly refers to studying remotely from school but still having the responsibility to appear during exam time. Ratheeswari (2018) illustrates e-learning as learning via an information network (Internet) which covers both formal and non-formal levels of education. In his article, he describes the importance of implementing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching. He believes that ICT is a crucial component that can help students adapt to the modern, technological era and develop their digital skills. He also classifies e-learning as one of the best tools that provided progression of students' education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Allen & Seaman (2003) characterize online learning as a series of meetings, delivering at least 80% of the material online and commonly not including face-to-face meetings. Finally, Molinda (2005) states that online learning is an attempt to link students with learning resources such as databases, libraries, or teachers with the help of media.

1.2 Distance Learning

As mentioned before distance learning is also a form of remote education however it differs from online learning. The term distance learning refers to individual students working independently at a convenient time, location, and at their own speed (Seljan et al., 2006). The authors Moore et al. (2011) and Guri-Rosenblit (2005) agree that distance learning is an effort made to give students who live far away from educational institutions access to learning. It is available for students wherever they are or when they want to learn. Guri-Rosenblit (2005) highlights that in distance learning students are almost always instructed individually rather than in groups. They are apart from the teacher and other students which is why the process of distance learning resembles a self-learning experience. This type of learning can be also compared to the classic correspondence courses where students correspond with the instructor, hand in their assignments, and get their course materials via email. Unlike online learning which is typically realized fully online, distance learning may entail recurrent in-person consultations with a tutor. Nevertheless, realizing the assignments are the standard and the classwork or meetings with the teacher are occasional (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005). In some circumstances, distance learning courses can be also taught using audio or video recordings. All in all, in comparison to online learning, distance learning is less participatory and more self-paced.

1.3 Face-to-Face Learning

Face-to-face learning is a traditional and the most common form of learning. It is a type of instruction in which students participate in a lesson with a teacher and are physically present in the classroom. The lesson takes place in a real-time and location, and both the students and teachers have the possibility to communicate, interact, and collaborate with each other. Allen & Seaman (2003) define face-to-face learning as a course that does not involve the use of online technology. It is a traditional type of learning in which the content is delivered orally or in writing. The entirety of the course is taught in the conventional classroom settings and the ratio of the content delivered online is zero. Moreover, face-to-face instruction entails a planned schedule of classes and it is usually not as flexible as online, or distance learning. What

distinguishes the traditional learning method from others is that students can receive rapid feedback about their work or learning progress from the teacher and build social ties with their peers. Although face-to-face learning has been the standard method of education for a long time, online learning is slowly replacing the traditional learning method and being accepted by more and more people or educational institutions.

2. Types of online courses

It is possible to distinguish several types of e-learning programs as they are constantly evolving and moving forward. Online courses are conducted in a variety of ways, starting from participating in live sessions, watching recorded lectures, or even taking part in a lecture physically. Some of them can also combine both live and recorded lectures or include written assignments. The mode in which the student wants to participate in a lesson depends on his needs, personal preferences, and conditions. As claimed by Psoinos (2021), some of the most popular online course formats are synchronous, asynchronous, and blended programs.

2.1 Synchronous courses

Synchronous programs take place in real time, meaning that they demand the presence of the teacher and student on a website, or platform at a specific time. The term "synchronous" refers to classes that are time and location-specific and require everyone to log in to the platform simultaneously (Psoinos, 2021). What is more, synchronous courses require students and teachers to have a solid internet connection and efficient technical devices in particular. During synchronous classes, participants can work in groups or pairs, share different thoughts and views, exchange materials, and generally interact with each other. This type of learning can be specifically convenient for students who want to experience the real classroom atmosphere but because of time constraints or diverse personal factors are unable to do it. Some examples of synchronous learning include chat and instant messaging, video and audio

calls, live webcasts (live streaming of a media presentation), and virtual classrooms (Psoinos, 2021).

2.2 Asynchronous courses

Asynchronous programs are time-independent and do not oblige participants to be available at a given time. Online courses that use asynchronous learning mode allow for the recording of sessions, uploading of educational materials, and completion of various assignments by students at their own pace and time. Asynchronous courses are usually easy to follow for students because they require them to log in to an online platform only and finish the coursework or test within a certain amount of time allocated (Psoinos, 2021). Moreover, they do not disturb students' or teachers' daily professional or personal routines. They typically have a precise and structured framework with learning blocks used to track students' progress, while interaction takes place through discussion boards, forums, and blogs where students post messages, reply to each other, and have a discussion. Asynchronous courses can be particularly effective for students and teachers who are residing in different countries or parts of the world as it is a very flexible way to study or teach. It can be also convenient for students with busy schedules who prefer to study in their free time for example, late in the evening or at night (Psoinos, 2021).

2.3 Blended/hybrid courses

Blended programs also called hybrid programs integrate traditional classroom presence with online activities. They combine face-to-face education with technology-based learning methods like online conversations, virtual lectures, and interactive modules. Based on this strategy, teachers can use the advantages of both conventional and online learning methods to give students a more flexible and individualized learning experience. While other blended learning models may place a greater emphasis on technology-based activities, some may place a greater emphasis on face-to-face instruction. The models and regulations depend usually on the objectives of the educational program and the requirements of the school. For instance, some schools

employ the component of asynchronous homework while others order students to work in groups online on a given task, or project and then present it in person. According to Psoinos (2021), the onsite-to-online ratio of the lesson may change but it shouldn't exceed 50%, whereas Allen & Seaman (2003) state that the proportion of the content delivered online in blended courses varies from 30% up to 80%. Ultimately, the objective of blended learning is the same, developing an interesting and engaging learning environment.

2.4 Web-facilitated courses

Other types of programs are web-facilitated programs which combine elements of both online learning and face-to-face learning. These programs offer students the comfort and adaptability of online learning while also allowing for the advantages of in-person instruction in the classroom. Allen & Seaman (2003) interpret web facilitated course as a course that facilitates a face-to-face course via online technology. In addition, they claim that 1 to 29% of the web-facilitated course is usually delivered online, for instance, the online component may include exercises like quizzes, discussions, or assignments whereas the traditional component may consist of lectures, work in groups, projects, or practical exercises. Besides that, the syllabus can be posted by the teacher using WebCT or Blackboard. Currently, the use of web-based technology is considered very helpful as it can assist teachers in improving students' engagement and delivering more individualized learning experience. It can also increase students' motivation and foster greater collaboration (Allen & Seaman, 2003).

3. Comparison of online learning and traditional face-to-face learning

In the past decades, learning and teaching have mainly taken place in a traditional classroom format. However, with the development of technology, online learning has gained popularity and started to be used by a lot of people. Despite the fact that both strategies aim to educate pupils, there are some significant distinctions

between them that may have an impact on the learning process. In this section, the differences between these two strategies will be examined.

According to Bencheva (2010), there exists an argument that the conventional learning method is the most effective one, and other methods are consistently viewed as being less effective or even worse. Nonetheless, the research demonstrates that the online learning method is as effective as the traditional learning method and there is no evidence to support this claim. Online learning combines a lot of elements that are recognizable from traditional learning, for instance, students' presentations or group debates and discussions. Furthermore, it offers other benefits which do not appear in traditional learning such as time to process the information and respond, better communication among students in terms of quality, the capacity to hold an open discussion where each student has a greater opportunity to speak their mind, knowledge being shared between students themselves, superior motivation and engagement, and finally better access to various information.

Bencheva (2010) compares traditional and online learning in terms of different factors which are divided into 8 categories: classroom discussions, learning process, subject matter, emphases in the learning process, motivation, teacher's role, location of learning, and lesson structure. Firstly, when it comes to classroom discussions, she claims that in the traditional classroom, the teacher talks more than the student while in the online classroom, the student talks the same amount of time or even more than the teacher. Secondly, in the traditional classroom, the entire class participates in the learning process and there is no individual study. In opposition, the online learning process is done in groups or by each student individually. Thirdly, in the traditional classroom, the material or subject taught by a teacher depends on the study program or curriculum whereas in the online classroom, the subject matter can be chosen by the student and the lesson can be based on different information sources such as web data banks. Next, in the traditional classroom, both students and teachers are busy meeting the requirements of the program. Students are not engaged in critical thinking or problem-solving but they are simply working on the tasks assigned by the teacher. In contrast, in the online classroom, students look for and gather information from web data banks or different sources, the learning experience is real and the material is richer. Regarding the motivation factor in the traditional classroom, the student's motivation level is usually lower as the material is not as interesting as in the online classroom, sometimes the subject matter can also seem "distant" to the student. In the

online classroom instead, the level of motivation is higher thanks to the usage of technology and more personal or "closer" to the student topics. Concerning the role of the teacher in the traditional classroom, the teacher is the authority and the source of information while in the online classroom, the teacher's role is different because he orders the students to search for the information. Finally, with respect to the location of learning, in the traditional classroom, the learning occurs at school whereas, in the online classroom, there is no established location. Last but not least, in the traditional classroom, the lesson's format and time allocation are determined by the teacher, yet in the online classroom the main element affecting the structure of the lesson is the group dynamics.

Rzeźnik (n.d.) describes the traditional classroom as closed, centralized, and tangible. The first component "closed" refers to the space in the classroom that is isolated from the external environment in order to facilitate students' learning process and concentration. In the traditional classroom, the only sources of distraction from learning are usually the view outside the window, other learners, or the use of the telephone. The author also believes that most cases of lack of concentration are easy to notice and solve. Unfortunately, the isolation of the traditional class from the outside world has been criticized many times, especially in the case of teaching foreign languages. The majority of methodologists claim that such an arrangement is artificial and does not ensure communication authenticity. The second important feature of the traditional class is its centralized character. It means that the students and teacher meet physically in one place and time. Due to this fact, students are generally more motivated as they are enforced to a certain degree of involvement in the learning process. It is also crucial to note that in the traditional learning environment, participants are of the same age, which creates coherence in the context of life, or educational experience. The last aspect of the traditional classroom is its tangibility. To put it another way, the traditional form of learning includes material elements such as the school building, blackboards, or desks. These elements can not only make learning more attractive but also have an impact on the effectiveness of teaching processes and managing the students' group.

On the contrary, the online classroom is portrayed as open, diffused, and intangible. The first term "open" relates to the fact that in the virtual classroom, both students and teachers have continuous and unlimited access to the Internet which means that they can switch between different windows or browsers, while still being

active in the lesson. Moreover, the learning process occurs in a workplace or private environment like home. As a consequence, it can be challenging to isolate the students from other stimuli and the environment and provide them with conditions conducive to learning or concentration. Another feature that distinguishes the virtual classroom from the traditional one is its diffiusity, meaning greater diversity of learners. Online courses can be attended by people who would not go to a traditional classroom, due to various limitations such as place of residence, type of work, or disability which can result in a problem with matching the content of the course to the needs of learners. The last feature of online learning is its intangibility, signifying that it exists fully in a virtual setting and does not provide any direct contact with the school or other people.

Rzeźnik (n.d.) also highlights that it is possible to notice significant differences between the time and classroom management in an online classroom and a traditional classroom. When it comes to time management, in a traditional classroom there is a clear division between classroom work and homework, whilst an online classroom is active 24/7 and there is no separation of classroom work and homework. Instead, the students have to fulfill various tasks that should be carried out in a group or individually. Concerning classroom management, it can be assumed that what is easy to observe and monitor in a traditional classroom, in a virtual classroom can remain mostly invisible. Some typical aspects of group dynamics invisible to the online instructor include nonverbal communication, interest in the lesson, interactions between group members outside of official forums, moods, and conflicts. On the other hand, there exist some aspects that are easier to observe in the virtual environment rather than in the traditional one, such as the individual work and progress of each learner.

Taking into consideration all of the factors mentioned above, both of the methods have their differences and their own advantages and disadvantages. Nevertheless, it is the student's decision whether to pursue their educational path online or in a traditional way. The choice can be based on aspects such as individual learning style, schedule, or access to resources. The benefits and challenges of online learning will be explored more in the next sections.

3.1 Benefits of online learning

As has already been stated, online education has emerged as a significant method of teaching and learning. Similarly to face-to-face learning, it has its supporters and opponents. Some people are more comfortable learning online while others prefer traditional lessons. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that thanks to its convenient and interactive approach, online learning can be a dynamic tool for individuals trying to improve their language skills and succeed in a globalized society.

According to Anggrawan & Jihadil (2018), apart from developing students' competencies, e-learning fosters independent and group learning processes and creates efficient interactions. In their opinion, online instruction can effectively replace face-to-face instruction in the cognitive domain. One of the biggest benefits of online learning is its flexibility and accessibility. Students can connect anytime and anywhere provided that the environment of the classroom is conducive to learning. There is no demand for dressing up or looking formal so it is a more comfortable solution for the students. Roblyer & Doering (2010) claim that online learning tends to prioritize learning interactions rather than interactions with others. The learning process is more self-centralized and students are often able to create their own schedules. Moreover, it makes it possible for students to access the materials how many times they want, review them, and make progress at their own pace. It also develops self-discipline, organizational and technological skills. Another benefit is the use of diverse forms of multimedia such as audio, videos, games, and quizzes which makes the lesson more interesting and appealing. Different interactive media can not only boost memorization but also increase the level of motivation of the learners (Clark & Barbour, 2023). Whereas forums and chat rooms facilitate communication between students and enable them to stay updated about the content.

Chudak (2003) mentions that among other positive aspects of using interactive materials is the inability of the students to check the solution of the task before finishing it. It means that there is no danger that the students will copy the answers before solving the task which develops their independence and makes them work harder on a given task. The only help that students usually have are tips and comments that appear as their work progresses. What is more, many programs provide immediate feedback on the work which allows students to review the task after finishing it so that they have the opportunity to see their errors and reanalyze the answers. This in turn

results in a faster learning process and the ability to work on subsequent tasks. The next advantage is the customization of the lessons. Many online learning platforms offer a variety of courses and modules that personalize the learning experience and help the students focus on their goals. Online courses usually have something to offer to everyone, starting from children or teenagers to adults or language experts (Chudak, 2003). Last but not least, Piskurich (2006) states that online education can be cheaper than traditional education because the students can save on costs such as transportation, textbooks, or materials. On the other hand, he believes that sometimes it can be a complex and overpriced matter if the school does not already have it. When implementing e-learning, it is crucial for educational institutions to take into account factors such as software and network expenses or teacher training costs.

3.2 Challenges of online learning

Although there are many benefits of online learning, there are also some challenges to consider. Success in the online learning classroom mainly depends on efficient time management, self-discipline, and active involvement in the lesson. To increase the benefits of online education, it is vital to collaborate with classmates and teachers, maintain discipline, and keep the level of motivation. If the students do not follow these rules, they can fail in the process of acquisition of knowledge.

As reported by Anggrawan & Jihadil (2018), online learning cannot replicate the authentic interactions between students and teachers and it can sometimes decrease possibilities for social interaction, subsequently leading to the feeling of isolation. For this reason, online lessons should be carefully managed. Some of the important elements to take into consideration include a good quality of network and reliable educational product. Technical issues such as internet connection problems can be frustrating and impede the learning process, which is why it is the first matter to check before an online lesson. Piskurich (2006) claims that the learning programs fully conducted online require more devotion from the teachers because the materials have to be accurate and carefully thought out so that every individual student will be able to understand and explore them on their own. Furthermore, because of its specific nature, the aims of the online lesson should be more precise than those of the usual face-to-face lesson.

Other challenges in an online environment can include a rapid decline of interest of the students, the performance of more than one task simultaneously during group work, or chat discussions, greater effort from the site of the teacher as it is necessary to monitor chat and group discussions or notice boards even after the lesson, and efficient time management. Online courses are usually calculated in hours so they have to be designed and guided well in order to achieve specific goals. Piskurich (2006) highlights that it should be attentively assessed how much time the activities will take place and how much time the instructor is needed. One of the problems for students can be also the balance between online learning and other responsibilities. They might find it difficult to find time or motivation to learn, especially younger students may be easily distracted from studying.

According to Basar et al. (2021) the effectiveness of online learning also heavily depends on students' digital skills and their capacity to access the technology and means required for online learning. Not all of the students know how to use online learning platforms, access course materials, or operate the internet properly. Some of them may encounter problems with navigating popular internet tools such as cameras, microphones, chat boxes, or the option of screen sharing and may need technical support which is usually limited. In addition, due to the high costs, a certain amount of students might not even have fair resources like adequate internet or good quality computers, making their learning process more complicated. Ultimately, communication between the student and the teacher in online settings may be more challenging as it is usually carried out via emails or forums and can involve longer response time.

3.3 The role of the teacher

Similarly to learning and teaching in a traditional setting, online learning and teaching involve assessing students' needs, creating content, planning learning activities, and evaluating the learner's progress (Anderson, 2008). One of the persons who is responsible for promoting successful learning and offering assistance to students is a teacher. Undoubtedly, it is essential that teachers are well-educated in online tutoring and act as facilitators, motivators and navigators of learning.

As expressed by Arbaugh (2007) one of the most widely used models of online learning and practice is the theoretical model of Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000). They perceive the online environment as a collectivity possessing three crucial elements: social presence, cognitive presence and teaching presence. The only way for the learning outcomes to be profound and significant is to meet all these requirements to a sufficient degree and the role of the teacher in meeting them is indispensable (Anderson, 2008). Firstly, social presence is associated with providing a friendly, secure, supportive and conducive learning environment for the students. The teachers should make sure that students are heard and that their contributions are valued. They should verify if all of the students are unconcerned about expressing their own opinions or presenting themselves. Moreover, they should contribute to open communication and encourage collaboration between the students as lack of social interaction can prevent them from exploring their differences, demonstrating their objections, sharing their opinions, or approving support in the future. Secondly, cognitive presence is mainly based on the ability of students to reflect on something and express their understanding. In order to cultivate cognitive presence, the teachers should form the structure of the course content well so that critical thinking skills are developed. They should create connections between ideas, stimulate students' curiosity and challenge them to note relations between different concepts or existing knowledge. Additionally, they should focus on group composition and fostering interactions between the students (Anderson, 2008, Arbaugh, 2007). Finally, teaching presence is defined as planning, guiding, and facilitating cognitive social processes with the aim of achieving significant and educationally valuable learning results (Garrison et al., 2000). Teachers should offer regular and varied forms of assessment, and address the needs and goals of each individual student. Furthermore, they should offer notes, commentaries, or personal thoughts and employ suitable constructive feedback based on the student's overall performance. The teacher's job also includes creating learning activities that promote independent study and community building.

Taking into consideration everything stated above, cognitive presence is viewed as one of the most difficult to develop in an online classroom and it does not exist without social presence which is essential to the growth of cognitive presence. Whereas, teaching presence is necessary to establish social presence, meaning that all of these components influence each other and all of them must be fulfilled in order to create proper learning results (Arbaugh, 2007). Besides that, teachers should promote

diversity and inclusivity in an online classroom. They should be aware that the class can consist of introverted and extroverted students or can be accessible for students with learning disabilities such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, or autism. In this case, the teacher's responsibility is to recognize the different learning styles of students, identify their weaknesses, and assist in working on them but also encourage less active or shy participants to speak and take part in the discourse. The learning process should be personalized as much as possible and the learning objectives should be clear for every participant of the course. Teachers should also possess both theoretical and practical knowledge of online teaching and know how to use various online tools. They ought to take care of their professional development and stay updated about the recent teaching techniques and newest technologies by taking part in various trainings and webinars which can expand their knowledge.

Psoinos (2021) describes teachers as edutrainers, meaning that the teacher is both an educator and an entertainer. In his opinion, teachers must work harder to capture and maintain students' interest in online lessons, mainly because children associate computers with various games, colorful images, or animated characters. For this reason, they are frequently expected to be more theatrical and provide entertainment for the students. He also considers teachers as a source of inspiration and authority for the students. Sometimes the teachers can be co-learners, especially in the online language learning classroom which is highly interactive. This implies that the teachers can learn some new skills from their younger students who can frequently be more advanced in computer technology. The teachers should not be ashamed of this, as it can result in new knowledge and collective benefits for both the students and instructors. Among other necessary skills of online teachers, the author lists multitasking, appropriate time management, flexibility, and patience.

3.4 Online assessment: Assessing students online

Maintaining academic integrity and creating effective online assessments can be much more difficult than designing onsite assessments. As reported by many educators, one of the most common problems that appear during online assessments is cheating, or false attendance in an exam, therefore the teachers have a great

responsibility to make sure that the students do not use online resources during exams or someone else does not take the test for them (Psoinos, 2021). Some other factors that should be taken into account in an online assessment are technical issues and plagiarism (Gillett-Swan, 2017).

According to Psoinos (2021), there are a couple of types of assessments that can be beneficial in the online classroom: formative, ipsative, and criterion-referenced. The aim of formative assessment is to provide continuous feedback. This means that the students have a chance to express their own observations concerning the lesson. They can ask open-ended questions about the topics covered in the lesson, share their reflections, or delve into other queries. Participating in an open discussion should take place every day, after each lesson so that the assessment occurs during the learning stage. This kind of evaluation can be helpful for teachers to determine areas for improvement and understand the needs of their students. It gives the proof that students are present and engaged in the learning process and it increases their sense of co-responsibility which may result in a higher level of interest and motivation. Another potential type of evaluation is ipsative assessment which can be particularly successful in counteracting the issues of cheating and impersonation. The goal of the ipsative assessment is to evaluate students by comparing their initial performance to their current performance. It is based on the student's personal progress and development of skills. The process of evaluation is repeated until the end of the course and it allows teachers to obtain the real image of the students in their class. It permits to look back at students' individual growth and measure their level of achievement of knowledge. Thanks to the ipsative assessment students are able to maintain academic integrity and create a distinct identity through their unique language production style. Criterion-referenced assessment refers to the process wherein teachers evaluate students on a given task using predetermined criteria. This form of assessment can be peculiarly relevant when it comes to various presentations and projects both collective and individual. Standards are a clear and defined level of performance that can be reached and it is crucial that students are aware of them beforehand so they can fulfill them. Criterion-referenced assessment is considered as one of the most popular school assessments and the majority of tests are written by teachers according to this criteria. In addition to all the types of assessments stated above, Psoinos (2021) clearly highlights that the summative assessment which occurs at the end of the course should not be recommended in online settings since it can be prone to cheating.

Robles & Braathen (2002) claim that online courses should include a significant amount of self-assessment. They emphasize that self-evaluation is a substantial part of the learning process and students should always have a chance to pursue it. Only in this way, they can assess whether they are meeting the necessary learning goals and identify their strengths and weaknesses. If students decide that their progress is insufficient they can decide to retake the course and work on the areas that seek improvement. One of the ways to self-assess is taking an online test. Tests administered online provide students with quick feedback and the possibility to review the results. Before the real exam begins, students are frequently able to take a pre-self-exam in order to revise and check their level of understanding and knowledge. After reviewing the results, they can retake the test and verify how much they remembered. Such tests give teachers the opportunity to measure students' progress and establish learning objectives when the student completes the final exam.

Another effective strategy is peer assessment where students reflect on another student's work and assess their skills. This can be done through group presentations or different types of group work which are also good occasions for the teacher to evaluate student's work. Other assessment techniques include evaluating the completeness of student work, analyzing and observing students' discussions and chat room communications, checking if deadlines are being met, verifying if students are active on the Moodle page, or using a rubric of learning outcomes (Psoinos, 2021). It is also worth noting that the teachers can employ plagiarism-checking software which can control how much of the student's work is plagiarized. What is more, during the online written tests the teacher can order students to turn on the camera to avoid false attendance or minimize the risk of cheating.

To sum up, measuring all of the intended goals and results will require more than one kind of assessment thereby teachers should increase the number of assessment tools they employ during the online course in order to obtain an effective evaluation.

4. Students' engagement and motivation

Even though there is no evidence of media influencing learning, they may boost motivation levels due to the novelty effect. However, this effect can fade as students become accustomed to the new medium, which is why teachers should continuously use various strategies to keep students engaged in an online lesson (Clark, 1983). Keeping students motivated in an online setting can be challenging. When it comes to synchronous online lessons, some of the students may encounter anxiety, they can be afraid to show themselves by turning on the camera or to contribute to the lesson and speak openly. A large number of students do not like to expose themselves and they can withdraw from the lesson and just stay silent. In asynchronous classes, such situations do not take place as the learners usually work on their own and they can decide when to study. Nevertheless, it can be even more difficult to motivate them due to the fact that they are not controlled during the lesson. In the case of synchronous learners, it is important to say that teachers should verify if the classroom dynamics is respected, meaning that participation, integration, and inclusion should be accomplished from the start of the course. While in the case of asynchronous learners, the teachers should track them carefully by checking the completion of the tasks, or modules, encouraging them to log in regularly, and sending their reflections about the learning process (Psoinos, 2021).

Regardless of the type of online lessons, there are some common strategies that can help teachers engage students and motivate them to develop their language skills. In the beginning, it is essential to find a comprehensive answer to why the students chose to study the language. It is possible to give them some ideas such as I want to go on holiday or travel to another country, I want to visit my family abroad, I want to go to school or university in another country, I want to sing songs, read books or watch films in English. There are plenty of reasons that the teacher can suggest. Next, the instructor should ask how long the students have been learning English and how often they use it. He or she should investigate the students' future goals, plans, and ambitions and recommend a suitable course for them. At the same time, the students should specify what they expect from the lesson and what they want to focus on. In turn, the teacher should give them some tips but also choices during the lesson and provide the tools to reach their goals (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009).

According to Taran (2005), it is essential to create materials that draw and keep the students' attention. If the level of attention is kept, the students are more likely to learn and their motivation is growing. Some of the techniques that can capture students' attention are using interactive media, using manding stimuli or particular phrases during the lesson, providing students with anecdotes, biographies, or statistics, implementing variability and humour, asking thought-provoking or problem-solving questions, offering breaks and energizers and employing storytelling. One of the most important factors of motivation is using interactive resources which can help students to engage in dialogue and actively participate in the virtual classroom. Generally, it is said that students pay closer attention when they participate in interactive activities, games, or simulations. The teacher can also implement short videos, interesting articles, or online dictionaries. Using manding stimuli is another way to get students' attention. Mands are utterances that have a high likelihood of behavioral consequences. The aim of the mand is to communicate the need and obtain the result. Manding stimuli that can be used during the lesson include the statements such as "now listen to", "note that", "please write down that", "now look at the", "remember that", "it is crucial to say that". Other words, or phrases that can draw students' attention are "new", "finally", and "can't wait to" (Taran, 2005). When concluding a lesson or module include a phrase that can pique students' interest and encourage them to return to the course for example "Why should you be eager to read the next lesson? Because it reveals guidelines on how you can develop a magnetic personality and gain personal charm that attracts friends and ensures professional success." (Taran, 2005, p.2). The next technique that can help to keep students' attention is presenting shocking information, statistics, or scientific facts such as drug abuse, rate of deaths caused by smoking, world starvation, or unemployment rate but also bringing up the topics from the world, showing biographies of well-known people, or providing the students with the concrete type of information. Evidently, this technique should be applied to older students only.

Students are more likely to pay attention to items that are changing which is why another useful technique is implementing variability. It is said that variety promotes motivation by drawing students' focus back to the stimuli's original source. The aspects that can be changed during the lesson are for instance tone (the teacher can change it from formal to informal), movement (from text to graphics or videos), instructional format (from presentation to a game), or channel of instruction (from the

visual to auditory), (Taran, 2005). The teacher can also utilize humour since it can improve students' emotional state and keep the level of attention high. Humour can include telling funny stories, anecdotes, or jokes, using puns, or showing funny educational images, or memes. Next, the teacher can ask thought-provoking or problem-solving questions that challenge the students to come up with an answer and stimulate their brains. Besides, it is important to encourage students to take regular pauses and provide them with energizing tasks to complete which can revitalize and extend their attention span. An example of such an activity can be doing a crossword puzzle. Last but not least, the teacher can use storytelling techniques, meaning sharing different stories that can be based on personal experiences, or made up. Some of them can also include theatrical effects. Such stories are known to activate students' visual and auditory senses and raise their motivation level (Taran, 2005).

Another technique that can create a long-term effect on engagement and motivation is gamification. Gamification is described as the process of enhancing learning with game elements such as levels, badges, points, leaderboards, and awards (Alsawaier, 2018). Gamification adds the element of enjoyment that contributes to changing students' perspectives on education. The element of fun and play can facilitate learning and positively impact the learner's motivation. What makes a gamified setting enjoyable for the majority of students is conquering obstacles, utilizing critical thinking skills, and resolving problems. Thanks to winning a game or finishing a level they develop their sense of accomplishment and exploration and release certain types of emotions. In addition, making own choices, competing, and collaborating with others fulfill the self-determination theory (SDT) which is one of the main factors in gaining motivation and achieving success. All in all, gamification can be a great tool to increase productivity, engage students in the lesson, and make learning more fun. However, when creating a gamified course, it is essential to make sure that the challenge is appropriate for the students' level because too difficult tasks can have the opposite effect and discourage the learning process (Alsawaier, 2018). Sample platforms that use gamification features include Kahoot and Quizlet. The platforms will be evaluated in detail in the section on "Tools and resources used to teach English online".

4.1 The Keller ARCS Model

The Keller ARCS Model is a motivational approach created to stimulate and keep students' attention. The acronym stands for attention (A), relevance (R), confidence (C) and satisfaction (S) which are four components that are crucial in promoting motivation during the learning process. According to Nehme (2010), the model can be applied in an online setting without much effort. Firstly, to keep students' attention it is important to incorporate various online activities that challenge students and stimulate their curiosity. The instructor can ensure novelty and the element of attraction. Secondly, to implement relevance it is necessary to create the materials that develop students' interests. For instance, from time to time, the teacher can apply content that is related to students' hobbies or dream professions thus stressing the importance of learning for accomplishing their future objectives. Thirdly, confidence can be acquired through praising and motivating students to make personal efforts. The teacher can supply students with self-tests that provide immediate feedback and allow them to retake the tests as much as they want. Moreover, it is proved that sending emails to the students individually may boost their confidence and motivation. Personal emails with tips from teachers to students express their concerns and assist in the learning process (Kift & Field, 2009, as cited in Nehme, 2010, p. 236). Finally, the last element which is satisfaction takes place when the learning process is enjoyable or fulfilling. To increase learning satisfaction, the teacher can give constructive feedback and positive reinforcement and use interactive exercises that can be amusing for students.

Among other useful motivational strategies, Nehme (2010) lists explaining the goals of each online activity. In the beginning, the teacher can specify the learning aims of the task and then clarify why is it important or interesting to do it. Before the given task, it is also possible to give students some practice with introductory exercises that can help them to become more self-assured. Additionally, the teacher can offer guidance regarding the amount of time needed to finish the task. In the end, it is critical that students comprehend the general organization and structure of the classroom. To realize this, the teacher can discuss the growing popularity of learning online and the advantages it offers to students. In conclusion, motivation is a crucial component of online learning since it can help students accomplish their objectives, overcome challenges, and affect their overall learning experience.

5. Teaching a Language Online

5.1 Reading skills

For the majority of students, reading is the most crucial ability to develop in order to assure academic success. As indicated by Anderson (2003), English language learners who have greater reading abilities typically advance more quickly in other language learning domains. Teaching reading skills online is an active process that requires a good methodological approach. Among the things that should be taken into account when teaching reading skills are enhancing reading comprehension, teaching new vocabulary and expressions, and developing the student's capacity to apply their skills outside of the classroom (Anderson, 2003).

According to Psoinos (2021), strategies that are worth considering in teaching reading skills online are prioritizing the warm-up or so-called preparation exercises that help learners comprehend the text better and activate prior knowledge, adding visual stimulus aids such as images to support the engagement of the students, using the drawing tool to highlight keywords, new vocabulary or phrases, and discussing and analysing the text with students (they can start with more general information and move to a more specific one). Besides, the teacher should focus on interpreting the title of the text with the students and teach them how to identify the main idea or understand the author's purpose. If it is too difficult, the students can begin by providing some key points about the text. Moreover, multiple-choice quizzes and activities that require filling in the gaps are good practices for reading comprehension. The teacher can also ask the students to summarize the text or implement storytelling exercises. To avoid misinterpretations, it can be useful to invite students to use online dictionaries, it can not only strengthen their understanding but also increase their self-confidence. Lastly, the teacher can recommend reading some authentic materials like articles, or e-books after the lesson to enrich students' vocabulary (Psoinos, 2021).

5.2 Speaking skills and pronunciation

Speaking clearly and confidently is the most fundamental feature of effective communication in any language. Thanks to speaking abilities people are capable of expressing their thoughts, ideas, or feelings which is why teaching speaking skills is

such an important process (Psoinos, 2021). A proficient speaker uses adequate vocabulary and grammar, as well as appropriate social and cultural etiquette. What is more, such individual possess proper pronunciation and intonation (Mounika & Thamarana, 2018). As claimed by Mounika & Thamarana (2018), there are some crucial aspects that need to be included while teaching speaking skills online. In the beginning, it is significant to observe the learners' fluency and comprehension rather than concentrating on the correct structure. It is better when the students are initially making mistakes but they are not afraid to speak. Students should always feel comfortable during the conversation, it is highly probable that subsequently with time they will enrich their vocabulary, improve grammar structure and start speaking without making big errors. The teacher should also consider the fact that the students will participate in speaking activities more efficiently if they work in pairs or small groups. Next, before any speaking activity the teacher should drill vocabulary connected to the topic otherwise the student who lacks sufficient vocabulary will be unable to articulate the information necessary for the speech. What is more, teachers ought to provide techniques for starting, carrying on, and concluding conversations and ensure that the students can communicate in both official and casual settings.

When it comes to teaching pronunciation, there are many interesting activities to implement. One of the popular activities is to drill the sound or word together with the teacher, meaning that the teacher pronounces a sound or a word and the students repeat it many times and possibly in different ways. The teacher can order students to record themselves and then compare it with the actual pronunciation of a native speaker. Moreover, it is possible to show phonetic symbols and charts and practice chants, songs, and tongue twisters in the classroom. After the lesson, the teacher can instruct the students to stand in front of the mirror and imitate different sounds watching their mouth and tongue movements. This activity can help them to notice some mispronunciations (Mounika & Thamarana, 2018).

Some other examples of activities that can be useful when teaching speaking skills include describing a picture, reciting dialogues, conducting interviews and debates, role-playing, and information-gap activities. Most importantly, activities should be created in such a way that imitates real-life situations and encourages communication. Psoinos (2021) also highlights that the teacher should share slides, photos, or visual aids to stimulate language production and improve students' understanding. Another profitable practice is to use resources such as videos and

podcasts and introduce students to a range of dialects and speaking styles. Lastly, the teacher can promote language exchanges between the students so that they can practice speaking outside of the classroom. Unfortunately teaching pronunciation and speaking skills is frequently neglected and not sufficient emphasis is placed on learning these skills (Mounika & Thamarana, 2018). For this reason, online teachers should be careful when designing a lesson and take into account increasing the frequency of conversations when planning a lesson.

5.3 Listening skills

Listening is a foundation and a key to successful communication. Learning a language is a process that begins with listening. From the moment of birth, a newborn can hear different voices and sounds and differentiate between them (Kamalitdinovna, 2021). Young children can acquire a language just by listening to it which emphasizes the significance of listening skills in our lives. Unfortunately, Kamalitdinovna (2021) claims that many learners experience difficulties doing listening tasks in a foreign language. In her article, she provides some strategies that can make listening activities easier for students. Firstly, it is crucial that the teacher speaks as naturally as possible and at a slow pace. A language can be made easier to understand by employing shorter sentences, simplifying terminology, and pausing more frequently. What is more, during listening to the recording the teacher can stop the audio at a given moment or play it several times for the students. Secondly, the teacher can include pre and post-listening activities. In the pre-listening stage, the teacher can make some predictions about the content or introduce important terms. Whereas, in the post-listening stage it is profitable to encourage students to share their opinions and thoughts and discuss the general content of the recording.

One of the best ways to develop your students' listening skills is to share podcasts with them. It is a perfect method to introduce students to real-world communication and authentic dialogues and expressions. There is a wide choice of topics so every student can find something interesting (Kamalitdinovna, 2021). As a teacher, we can order students to read the summary of the podcast and identify the three topics that the speakers are covering. Then they can listen and check if what they thought was correct. The next strategy is to select ten words that the speakers will

utilize in the recording and play bingo with the students. The teacher can also ask students to make some predictions about the content of the podcast, for instance, they can listen for some minutes and then guess what they will hear. After listening to the whole podcast the students can make a summary. It is worth remembering that the students should listen to one recording even a couple of times as every time they can grasp more information and boost their self-assurance. Additionally, as homework, the teacher can instruct the students to listen to a podcast of their choice at home. Then, at the beginning of the next lesson, the students can discuss the podcasts they listened to, explain their choice, and express the level of difficulty of the podcast. The teacher can also carry on the same task with YouTube videos, radio extracts, or other types of audio. Finally, building a stimulating online learning environment and combining a variety of interactive activities such as true or false statements, multiple choice quizzes, or fill-in-the-gap tasks is indispensable when teaching listening skills online (Kamalitdinovna, 2021).

5.4 Writing skills and spelling

Writing is an important communication tool in many areas of everyday life. It fosters creative thinking in students and helps them to expand their vocabulary (Dwiyanti & Suwastini, 2021). Writing in a foreign language is widely employed in workplaces, or at universities therefore it is indispensable to start teaching writing from an early age so that students do not have problems communicating with peers, professors, or employers in the future (Walsh, 2010, as cited in Klimova, 2014, p. 147). Since writing requires at first practice of the other three language skills it has a special place in language instruction (Klimova, 2014).

There exist a couple of methods that teachers may find useful when teaching writing online. First, the teacher can emphasize brainstorming, drafting and all the pre-writing stages and show some typical phrases and constructions that can be applied to the students' works (Jong & Tan, 2021). Next, it is crucial to introduce students to different types of assignments and vary them, it is possible to include written productions such as emails, articles, essays, or blog posts. A good practice is to show their characteristic features and demonstrate the differences between them, for instance, formality or informality (Francis et al., 2019). An interesting online writing

tool to implement can be also Padlet, a type of journal or bulletin board where students can write short texts, upload images and express their thoughts, it promotes not only creativity but also engagement among students (Jong & Tan, 2021, Sangeetha, 2016). Music and lyrics can be another valuable instrument to teach writing skills for example, the students can listen to the song for some minutes and then analyze and describe their feelings and thoughts (Psoinos, 2021).

Overall, the writing process involves using correct grammar, punctuation, spelling and vocabulary thus is important to provide a good base for the students. The teacher should focus on teaching the proper structure and division of paragraphs as well as provide some grammar and punctuation exercises before writing. The teacher should also concentrate on developing critical thinking skills as they are one of the most helpful abilities during the writing process (Francis, 2019, Psoinos, 2021). In regard to spelling, the teacher can apply various interactive exercises and games that allow students to practice spelling words in English, an examples of such games can be hangman, spelling bee, crossword, or word search. Moreover, when the students make common mistakes or are uncertain about the spelling of a given word, the teacher can instruct them to use online dictionaries (Psoinos, 2021).

5.5 Grammar

Grammar is considered as a base for the language. As mentioned before without mastering grammar writing does not exist. Teaching grammar in a virtual setting can be a challenging task for the teachers however, with an appropriate approach it can bring sufficient results. Krajka (2021) describes some techniques that may be useful in teaching grammar online and were used by teachers during COVID-19. It turns out that the majority of teachers employed actions such as displaying the page of the book on the shared screen so that every student can see the grammar rules well, showing YouTube videos with grammar explanations, providing interactive quizzes, games, and tests to complete, using visual aids and presentations to support understanding, working in groups on a grammar task, for instance correcting each other's mistakes and using chat for additional explanations. Additionally, it is essential to demonstrate real-life examples of grammar rules and show how some structures can be used in everyday situations.

Yolageldili & Arikan (2011) find games particularly effective when teaching grammar online. They highlight that games present grammar rules and forms in a conversational manner and they give students the chance to drill and practice them. Similarly, McCallum (1980) claims that games draw students' attention to particular grammar patterns, foster an atmosphere of healthy rivalry and ensure the use of natural language in a stress-free setting. They can serve as a lesson enrichment, review, or consolidation of the material.

6. Tools and resources used to teach English online

The COVID-19 pandemic was a critical moment for the development of digital tools and platforms as they became highly employed by teachers all over the world. Since that time online learning platforms and interactive resources have become commonly used as teaching tools and their use continues to this day (Dash et al., 2022, Jong & Tan, 2021). According to Jong & Tan (2021), the majority of interactive resources have been indicated as effective and have shown good results on student's learning. Sala-Suszyńska (2017) also claims that digital assets play a key role in education as they engage the audience and stimulate several senses by combining visuals and sounds. They make learning a foreign language enjoyable and easier. She also highlights that thanks to applying various interactive exercises, graphics, and animations a class can be made very appealing and effective for students. Similarly, Oliwa (n.d.) believes that a wide selection of available applications and resources allows for flexibility and adaptation to the individual needs of learners. Materials are available not only on computers but also on mobile devices hence the learning process is really easy and accessible. Some of the tools and resources are used to develop certain skills while others are meant to conduct the lesson and provide communication between students and teacher. The most popular tools will be presented and described in this section.

6.1 Zoom

Zoom is a well-known platform used for online classes, meetings and webinars. Many people choose it as their preferred tool for video conferences because of its capabilities (Dash et al., 2022). The positive aspects of the platform include meetings that can be started with only one click thanks to the user-friendly and intuitive interface, the installation process which is quick and simple, and the accessibility, as it can be downloaded on computers, tablets and smartphones, and accessed through either an application which can be easily found in the Play Store, or a web. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that with a free subscription, Zoom enables the user to host an event with 100 active participants and 1000 viewers. After the meeting, it is also possible to view the details of the session such as the number of attendees, or the length of the meeting. Interestingly, with the Pro edition of Zoom up to 500 or even 1000 people can join and actively participate in the session. What is more, the pro user is able to create a distinctive meeting identity that can be used for the particular group meeting regularly, record a meeting for those unable to attend, control other participants for instance, mute or unmute them, or permit them to use the whiteboard tool, create chat rooms where people can text in groups, or individually, possess the ability to connect to calendar applications such as Outlook and Google Calendar and finally broadcast the content on social media and YouTube (Dash et al., 2022).

Among other options available on the platform, Palupi & Rahajro (2020) list the use of breakout rooms, whiteboard and share screening which allows users to display a presentation, documents, or any other materials. As an advantage, they also point out the possibility of saving the quota of the Internet and accessibility for almost every operational system. On the other hand, there are also some negative aspects of the platform for instance, if the user has a free account, the meeting will be automatically finished after 40 minutes. Unfortunately, only the Pro version of Zoom allows for unlimited multi-hour access. The users may also experience certain degrees of lag especially, when it comes to the audio, or problems with synchronizing between devices (Dash et al., 2022). Last but not least, Palupi & Rahajro (2020) claim that Zoom can be easily hacked. The platform was the most frequently used tool during the pandemic and it is becoming more and more popular tool which results in privacy and security problems. The experts claim that the default settings are insufficiently secure

and can be a target for hackers which is why the users should be careful when using it (Dash et al., 2022, Palupi & Rahajro, 2020). Despite existing issues, Zoom has still many users thanks to its useful features, high video and audio quality, affordability and availability.

6.2 Google Meet

Google Meet is another popular video conferencing platform. In contrast to Zoom, it can be accessed through Chrome, iOS, and Android only and it can host a maximum of 250 interactive participants. The interface is simple and readable which makes a meeting easy to begin, even for beginners. Although Google Meet is not as advanced as other platforms and it has fewer features to offer, it ensures the most useful ones such as screen sharing, or presenting, chat and messaging, scheduling the meeting through the Google Calendar and recording the meetings to Google Drive. There are also buttons to turn on and off the camera and audio and it is possible to control who is in the meeting or to create chat rooms to carry out the discussion (Dash et al., 2022). In addition, there is the option of conducting the poll during the meeting and the option of live streaming, however, the last one is extra paid because it requires the enterprise plan. Generally, Google provides three plans: basic, business and enterprise plans. The enterprise plan is a full version that allows the users to utilize other various programs including a slide presentation, cloud search, spreadsheet, docs, etc. There also exists a mobile version of Google Meet which is considered a bit better than the computer one but it is still devoid of features such as white board which makes it more difficult in case of teaching online (Dash et al., 2022). The biggest benefit of the platform is integration with other Google Workspace applications such as Gmail, Calendar, and Drive which facilitates scheduling and joining the meetings (Oliwa, n.d.). All, in all Google Meet is reliable and easy to use, it offers not only security but also customer care and additional Google Drive storage (Dash et al., 2022).

6.3 Google Classroom

Google Classroom is a platform designed to support the teaching and learning process. Similarly to Google Meets, it integrates with other Google Apps such as Drive, Docs, Forms, Sheets and it can be accessed through smartphones and tablets too. The platform offers calendar, content-sharing tools, group projects, testing and assessment tools, communication channels and cloud file storage space (Oliwa, n.d.). It is simple and accessible for everyone and it is mainly used for creating a class and distributing videos, photos, or documents. Google Classroom not only fosters communication and collaboration in a virtual space but also allows the teacher to manage and organize the classes well (Dash et al., 2022). Among others, the platform has functions to accept and make assignments, send a link to students to make them join certain activities, give an announcement which is later sent to the student, send comments or private messages, view and download the materials and assess work. The given assignment may contain instructions, grading guidelines, deadlines, and various attachments. The teacher can also view the history of assignments' completion and therefore monitor students' progress and provide personalized feedback (Dash et al., 2022, Palupi & Rahajro, 2020). When it comes to the assessment, it can take the form of digital annotations, video/audio comments, rubric-based grading, or automated quiz comments (Oliwa, n.d.). Interestingly, the notification system on the platform works really fast as the account is linked to the user's email (Palupi & Rahajro, 2020).

The biggest disadvantage is that the platform lacks the possibility to connect virtually so the students can communicate with the teacher through messages only. What is more, sharing and accessing files and documents requires logging in and out of multiple accounts which may be annoying. Lastly, the collaboration between students may be more challenging as the students can share their work only if they are owners of the document, otherwise, it is impossible (Dash et al., 2022). Palupi & Rahajro (2020), suggest that combining Google Classroom and Zoom can be the best solution for online education thus Zoom can be used for virtual communication and Google Classroom as an instrument to gather assignments. According to Oliwa (n.d.), the platform can be also beneficial to use in both synchronous and asynchronous modes.

Taking everything into account, despite the impossibility of direct virtual communication with the teacher, the platform is becoming more and more popular due

to its availability, accessibility, ease of use and integration with Google applications (Oliwa, n.d.)

6.4 Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is a collaboration platform developed by Microsoft that allows users to text and video conference (Dash et al., 2022). The service combines functionality with other Microsoft products, such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SharePoint, and One Note. It is also integrated with different third-party applications. (Oliwa, n.d.). The platform can be used for a single individual, or group, or for the organisation of big meetings with up to 10,000 participants. However, the users should be aware that with the free account, only 299 people can be invited. The other basic functionalities of the platform remain available to the users with a free account. The main features include file and screen sharing, the possibility to adjust the virtual background, chatting, live captions and creating different channels (Dash et al., 2022). Moreover, the video can be recorded which can be useful for online lessons as they can be recorded and even posted for students to facilitate their learning process (Oliwa, n.d.). One of the drawbacks of the platform is that the interface may be more difficult to operate and therefore confusing for some students. Furthermore, the platform permits non-group members to join the meeting anonymously and communicate via voice or chat, which may lead to issues such as strangers intruding into the lesson. As claimed by Dash et al. (2022) Microsoft Teams is not as heavily used as other conferencing platforms and probably the people who will use it the most will be those who invested in Microsoft Workplace and bought the premium version.

6.5 Quizlet

Quizlet is an interactive mobile and website application which aids users in studying vocabulary. According to Sala-Suszyńska (2017), it is a leading educational application using flashcards, which makes learning foreign languages more efficient. It is also the easiest way for students to master the material. Quizlet enables students to create their own flashcards or use the ready ones, prepared by the teachers or other

users. Typically, on one side of the virtual flashcard, there is the target word and on the other the definition, or translation of the word. Additionally, there is a function that permits the student to listen to the pronunciation of the word (Wright, 2016). The virtual flashcards often include colorful pictures which support the acquisition and consolidation of vocabulary.

Quizlet is considered a useful application to revise the material but also to test students' knowledge (Sala-Suszyńska, 2017). It is divided into seven study modes: learn, flashcards, write, spell, test, match, and gravity (Sanosi, 2018). In the learning mode, the student can master the vocabulary thanks to multiple-choice and writing questions. Some of the questions can be simple while others can be more challenging. The flashcards mode is based on the idea that the target words are displayed on the digital flashcards which can be turned in order to reveal the definitions, translations, or images that clarify the meaning of the word. It does not focus on anything particular other than memorization. In the writing mode, students are required to write the definition or translation of the word revealed. If they make a mistake they have to try to write it again which can be a good approach to practice spelling in a foreign language. Then, the spell mode demands the students to listen to the audio, guess and write the word they heard. If they type the word incorrectly, the proper answer will appear on the screen letter by letter. The fifth one, test mode consists of a test with different types of questions that check the student's knowledge. The questions are formed on the basis of what the students have studied previously in the vocabulary set and they include tasks such as true or false, multiple choice, or matching. After finishing the test, the students have the opportunity to review their scores as well as the right solutions. Next, the match mode is a type of educational game where students have to match the phrases to their definitions or images. There is only one difficulty, the students should match the phrases as fast as they can to gain a good score. Later, they can see their score and their ranking in relation to other learners which creates a feeling of positive competition and motivation. The last mode is gravity, in this mode definitions in the form of asteroids scroll vertically down the screen and the user must enter a term that matches the definition before it reaches the bottom of the screen. The advantage of this game is that the difficulty levels can be selected (Sala-Suszyńska, 2017, Sanosi, 2018, Wright, 2016). In addition, there is also the option of Quizlet Live which connects a group of students to participate in the collaborative exercise. In other words, the students are divided into groups, and each of them uses the telephone to

respond to the questions. The team that finishes the game first wins. Such an activity can enhance collaboration between students and liven the lesson (Sanosi, 2018).

All in all, Quizlet is easy to use and employs gamification elements that can enhance student's motivation. It offers several features, the majority of which are free and it allows for the student's autonomous learning as all the modes offer feedback and error correction (Sanosi, 2018). It is also possible to say that Quizlet is a perfect example of an online application that may facilitate learning within and outside the classroom and make vocabulary learning more entertaining. As claimed by Sanosi (2018), many language researchers consider Quizlet as a great learning tool that has a significant effect on the student's vocabulary acquisition. It is not only beneficial for students but also for teachers because it allows them to create various sets that can be used as a revision of the discussed topic. The teachers can also have access to the results of their students, which makes assessing the level of knowledge and progress of the class easier (Sala-Suszyńska, 2017).

6.6 Padlet

Padlet is a worth-emphasizing application that can be used as a type of internet whiteboard for free. The application can be compared to an online creative notepad or diary where the users can post images, videos, documents and texts. Padlet is very easy to use, after entering the application, the user has to log in and then it is possible to start creating a board immediately. It is an extremely helpful online resource that encourages students to be creative and collaborative (Sala-Suszyńska, 2017, Sangeetha, 2016).

There are a couple of ways in which Padlet can be implemented in the online classroom. Firstly, it can be used as a place for discussion, a message board, or a place to provide feedback or post assignments for students. Secondly, teachers can use it to summarize material from the lesson and deliver it in an aesthetically appealing way with different types of pictures, or graphs. Thirdly, the teachers can create questions in Padlet and assign the students to complete them in order to assess how well they understood the material. Next, it can be employed as a space for students to collect and share their ideas, or post anonymous comments or queries about the lesson. Another interesting way of implementing the application is practicing the students' writing

skills. The teachers can order the students to describe their thoughts and to keep a type of journal, or blog. It can diversify the learning process and encourage students to develop their skills. The teachers can also share a certain issue with the students and instruct them to express their sentiments about it. This is an excellent starting point for guidance on how to compose persuasive or opinion essays. Moreover, Padlet can be a great mode to discuss the articles or texts the students have read in class and to exchange their ideas about the topic. At last, the application can be applied to conduct a survey, or a project summary (Jong & Tang, 2021, Sala-Suszyńska, 2017, Sangeetha, 2016).

As claimed by Sangeetha (2016) and Jong & Tang (2021), Padlet outperforms other online tools for collaboration such as blogs, wiki, and Google Drive and it is considered an adequate tool for language evaluation and learning. It has been given a lot of praise by many researchers which makes more and more educators interested in it.

6.7 Wordwall

Wordwall is an online website which aims to help teachers to create interesting interactive materials that can develop students' skills. It is also a useful tool to asses students' progress. Wordwall offers three plans: basic, standard and pro. The basic plan is for free and it allows teachers to use 18 types of interactive activities created by other teachers and to create up to 5 activities themselves (Paksi et al., 2023). Wordwall provides various templates that are easy to modify and can enrich online classes. The templates are helpful for generating online assessments and contain different types of tasks such as multiple choice quizzes, true or false, group sorting, matching pairs, missing words, word searches, crosswords, hangmen, anagrams, and arcade games such as labyrinth and plane (Oliwa, n.d., Pradini & Adnyayanti, 2022). The biggest advantage of Wordwall is the possibility of creating the content and sharing it in many diverse ways, for instance, the contents of one template can be transferred to another one by changing the format. The resources are open to use and edit by others which helps teachers to adjust the material to the type of classes and personal teaching styles (Oliwa, n.d.). Another benefit is that the students can play the games as many times as they want and check the answers and their scores instantly after finishing the activity.

They are also given instructions before the activity starts which allows them to study independently without a teacher (Mazelin et al., 2022).

As stated by many authors, Wordwall is an excellent resource for teaching vocabulary in the ESL classroom since it can boost students' motivation to learn new words and elevate their vocabulary acquisition. What is more, it can also significantly improve students' motivation levels in other areas of the language (Mazelin et al., 2022, Paksi et al., 2023, Pradini & Adnyayanti, 2022). Mazelin et al. (2022), also highlight the importance of the website in the revision of various grammar or vocabulary concepts while at the same time sustaining students' interest in the lesson and increasing their level of engagement.

All in all, Wordwall enables teachers to create a fun, web-based language learning environment that can increase student involvement and interaction and ensure both repetition of the current information as well as summarizing their achievements (Oliwa, n.d.).

6.8 Liveworksheets

Liveworksheets is an online, educational platform that enables teachers to convert traditional worksheets in the form of pdf or jpg into interactive worksheets that can be used online. On the website, teachers can also find many interesting materials and worksheets created by other users which can be helpful in case of lack of time for the preparation of the lesson. Liveworksheets was particularly popular during the pandemic and has been considered a potent communication tool between teachers and students. At present, it is still utilized by many instructors teaching English online as it is an innovative way to create learning activities (Prabjandee, 2023). The platform provides captivating digital resources that can diversify and enrich the lessons. The digital worksheets can incorporate not only hyperlinks but also audio, and video which are a great stimulus for students to learn (Santoso, 2023). The major benefit of the platform is that the teachers can reduce the time spent evaluating or providing feedback to the students. Liveworksheets enables teachers to get the completed worksheets from the students electronically and for the students to self-correct themselves as they can get instant feedback after finishing the worksheet. Thanks to the website teachers can quickly review students' performance, identify their areas of

weaknesses and subsequently adapt pedagogical approaches to the students' errors (Prabjandee, 2023, Santoso, 2023).

It is worth emphasizing that using Liveworksheets can significantly lessen the amount of work teachers have to do when creating assignments because it offers a variety of worksheets created by other teachers. What is more, due to the diversity of activities, interactive worksheets can help students practice vocabulary and grammar as well as other language skills such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading (Prabjandee, 2023). The types of tasks available on the website include multiple choice questions, fill in the blanks, listen and choose the correct answer, tick the correct answer, match, drag and drop, wordsearch, crossword, jigsaw puzzles, or even pronunciation/speaking tasks. Such entertaining activities can be prepared rapidly and easily by the teacher and help motivate students to learn a language (Prabjandee, 2023, Santoso, 2023). Another unique quality of Liveworksheets is the ability to grade students' pronunciation automatically. First, the students record their pronunciation by clicking on the microphone, and then the system marks the recording. The teacher can choose to test students in as many as 12 accents which include British, American, Australian, Canadian, Indian, or even Nigerian or South African and check the students' pronunciation without even listening. The teachers also have an option to organize and save their worksheets in the workbooks. The worksheets in the workbooks can be later relocated and updated. With the free plan, the teachers are able to create 30 private worksheets, 10 workbooks, download worksheets, or have the worksheets' answers unlimited. The only disadvantage is that if they want to make more than 30 worksheets they have to share them with the other users on the website (Prabjandee, 2023). Additionally, with the free plan, they will be made to watch advertisements from time to time.

According to Prabjandee (2023), Liveworksheets can be used for the purpose of systematizing or consolidating knowledge but also for presenting new content or controlling students' progress. It offers an individualized learning experience, makes the lesson more dynamic and enjoyable, and enables students to do one task multiple times. Furthermore, provided that the student has a link to a given activity they can access the platform easily without having to log in to the system and begin working on the activities right away. In compliance with the research carried out by Santoso (2023), students' perceptions about the platform are very good. Most of the

respondents of his study claimed that Liveworksheets helped them to understand English material better and increased their language skills acquisition.

Considering everything, this website can be a great language-learning tool in an online classroom. The function of automatic grading saves the teacher's time and helps to manage the classes well. Besides, designing a lesson is simple and does not require a lot of time. It is also an excellent instrument for formative assessment as the students are allowed to verify their weaknesses instantly after completing and submitting the task and are able to make appropriate adjustments to their learning process. Immediate feedback can motivate them to study which in turn results in making ongoing progress (Prabjandee, 2023, Santoso 2023).

6.9 Kahoot

Kahoot is an online game-based learning platform used as a tool for knowledge review or a fun break during the lesson. It allows its users to design, play and share quizzes and surveys in a format of a game as well as to collaborate and compete with the other users (Basuki & Hidayati, 2019, Wang & Tahir, 2020). The students can take quizzes on any web-enabled device such as smartphones, tablets, or computers without the need to log in, they just need to enter a game PIN and start the quiz. The process of accessing the quizzes for the students is very quick and simple. On the other hand, generating quizzes takes more time and teachers are required to possess a Kahoot account (Dellos, 2015). The quizzes are usually in the form of multiple choice questions and comprise of 2 to 4 answers to choose from. The response time depends on the teacher who can set it according to the students' level or difficulty of the questions. The questions can also incorporate images, films and music which can serve as an aid for the students. Kahoot has two game modes: player versus player and team versus team. Additionally, teachers can choose to host a live, in which every student responds to the questions at the same time and competes for the highest score (Dellos, 2015, Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2022).

As claimed by Wang & Tahir (2020), there are 70 million users on Kahoot, making it one of the most popular game-educational platforms in the world. Thanks to its gamified approach to learning, Kahoot encourages collaboration, active

participation, and knowledge retention. The gameshow atmosphere is enhanced by the vivid colours, soundtrack, clock and leaderboard which motivates the students to learn a language. Kahoot can be used to teach not only vocabulary but also grammar, or even phonology (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2022). There are a couple of activities that the teachers can successfully employ in an online English lesson with the use of Kahoot, for instance, ice-breaking or warming up questions, true or false, anonymous voting, odd-one-out, spelling, fill in the gap, matching pictures to the words, or matching the opposites together. Kahoot can be also particularly useful for teaching phrasal verbs, collocations, prepositions, pronouns, or different tenses. It can be used as a form of revision or presentation of new content in a fun and easy way. When it comes to reading and listening exercises, the platform can be used to check understanding of the given text or recording and provide the students with comprehension questions. Nonetheless, with the free version only closed-response questions such as true or false, or yes or no questions are available (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2022). Using Kahoot can be also beneficial for developing oral skills and helping students to get a deeper level of understanding, for example during the game the teacher can ask some additional questions such as: Why do you think this answer is correct? Thereby, it is possible to make room for a discussion, identify learning gaps, or make the necessary adjustments to the teaching and learning process (Dellos, 2015). Interestingly, Kohnke & Moorhouse (2022) discovered that using the same Kahoot quiz more than once is not considered a mistake but an effective practice that can reinforce students'knowledge, meaning that teachers can employ identical quizzes over and over again. Kahoot is also surprisingly easy to use for students which is why they can create their quizzes, provide peer feedback for their classmates, and practice their knowledge at the same time. Moreover, it is important to say that teachers have the ability to save students' responses and scores on the platform which can help them to assess the level of the student and review their strengths and weaknesses.

The majority of students perceive Kahoot as a great educational tool. According to the research conducted by Basuki & Hidayati (2019), most of students feel positive when playing Kahoot and look forward to playing it during the lesson. They claim that the platform is exciting, interesting, and motivating to learn. They especially like the competition and collaboration element. Many of them also admit that they listen to the lesson more carefully or prepare better at home to win the Kahoot session. Similarly,

the study of Dellos (2015) shows only positive results and opinions from students. The students he was teaching to, enjoyed the quizzes on Kahoot and were engaged and motivated during the learning process. The author encourages other teachers to try Kahoot as it is a great tool for both students and teachers.

Lastly, Kohnke & Moorhouse (2022) and Wang & Tahir (2020) highlight that Kahoot provides an enjoyable and secure educational environment online. The quizzes are anonymous so they do not cause classroom anxiety in students. The platform creates an energetic atmosphere and can be used to awaken students' attention during the lesson as well as to interest them in the study content.

6.10 Quizziz

Similar to Kahoot, Quizziz is a learning game platform that offers teachers and students quizzes and lessons online. In the lesson mode, apart from creating the quiz, the teachers are also able to include some short presentation slides and assign homework for the students. The platform aims to gather students and make them collaborate or compete with each other. The person or group who receives the highest score during the quiz wins. The teachers have the possibility to create a quiz on its own or select a ready one, made by other users which can lessen their amount of work. Students can join it thanks to the code distributed by the teacher (Degirmenci, 2021). Usually, the students can work at their own pace and finish the quiz whenever they want. At the end of the quiz, they can also check the correct responses. Quizziz offers three different kinds of questions open-ended, closed such as multiple choice, and fill in the gap. According to many researchers, Quizziz has been among the most popular Internet language learning instruments used in the last few years (Degirmenci, 2021). The platform has a significant effect on the students' performance as they appear to be more interested and actively participate in the lessons. Furthermore, using the quizzes during the lesson is proven to have a positive impact on the students' language skills acquisition, motivation, and learning effort even after the lesson (Basuki & Hidyati, 2019, Degirmenci, 2021).

As mentioned in the previous section, Basuki & Hidayati (2019) researched the impact of Kahoot on students' language learning and their perceptions about it. In their

study, they also compared the efficacy of Quizziz and Kahoot. The results of the study demonstrated that in comparison to Kahoot, Quizizz is more effective at stimulating students' interest and eagerness to learn. The authors claim that it is a superior tool for English learning and students prefer it over Kahoot. In the opinion of the students, Quizziz is better than Kahoot because it includes entertaining memes and humorous graphics after every question, it is more appealing, it increases their focus and self-confidence, it enables them to finish the quiz more independently and on their own pace (they have more time to finish it) and finally, it is easier to use. Also, Lim & Yunus (2021) agree that the interface of the platform is very intuitive and easy to follow. The quizzes can be duplicated and shared at a given time and the general features of the platform are extremely practical to use. What is more, the authors underline the fact that the majority of the teachers view Quizziz positively based on its efficacy, viability, user-friendliness, and ability to motivate students.

Degirmenci (2021) states that the platform can be also very useful in terms of formative assessment since teachers can track students' progress easily while the students can identify their strengths and weaknesses during the feedback process. Additionally, she declares that Quizziz is an effective tool in reducing test anxiety. It makes the students feel more confident and motivated to perform well which is why it can be also implemented during an examination online to decrease their stress.

6.11 YouTube

YouTube is a video-sharing platform that permits its users to watch, upload, and share various types of videos. It is one of the most popular websites which can be also used for educational reasons. According to Oliveira & Viggiano (as cited in De Azevedo Fay & Matias, 2019, p.2), 65% of users visit the website with the intention of learning something new. Moreover, educational content is viewed far more frequently than general content because as much as 500 million times daily. Due to the increasing number of visitors, Google introduced YouTube EDU which is a dedicated educational portal including different types of videos and lectures for both the students and teachers. The website can be beneficial inside and outside the

classroom and includes trustworthy sources covering a variety of academic topics. YouTube EDU can be a better version to implement during the online lesson as the content is controlled by the administration whereas on the normal version of YouTube, anyone can post a recording which can result in posting videos with the wrong explanations or insufficient details (De Azevedo Fay & Matias, 2019). Many authors agree that YouTube is a useful resource for teaching foreign languages. Watching YouTube videos can help students develop their listening, oral, reading, and even writing skills. The platform can be used to expand students' vocabulary and teach them about the culture and traditions related to English-speaking countries as well as to explain various grammatical concepts. The biggest benefit of the platform is that it exposes students to real and authentic language. It contains various TV programmes, news, political speeches, podcasts, and vlogs from everyday life that are appealing and inspire students to acquire the language in a natural way (de Azevedo Fay & Matias, 2019, Simanjuntak et al., 2021, Syafiq et al., 2021, Watkins & Wilkins, 2011).

YouTube was considered a successful and motivating tool for learning English, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Simanjuntak et al. (2021) declare that many students agreed that they could understand English speech better thanks to YouTube videos and they were more focused during the lesson as the videos grabbed their attention and made the lesson more engaging and interesting. Moreover, the videos helped them to understand the lesson better and inspired them to engage and learn more. The videos were also easily accessible and useful for learning the correct pronunciation because they allowed students to watch and listen to the materials created by native speakers of the language. Lastly, they accelerated the completion of the assignments and projects.

Watkins & Wilkins (2011) list a few activities that can be implemented in the online English lesson with the use of YouTube videos. Firstly, to develop listening and speaking skills the teacher can employ the activity called conversation analysis. The aim of the task is to determine the correct conversational strategies and phrases but also conversational issues, or phrases that are incorrect and should be avoided in the discourse. During the task, students watch videos selected by the teacher and rate which one is an example of successful communication and which one is not. Thanks to this activity, they can learn some specific phrases and expressions and develop

their listening comprehension as well as critical thinking skills. Additionally, after watching the videos the teacher can ask some extra questions and expand the discussion about the given video. The task can be also transformed into a presentation or project where students show their ideas to their classmates. The next activity would be roleplaying and acting out dialogues from the movie extract. During the activity, the students select one scene from the movie of their choice (it can be also a movie trailer) and act it out. This task includes the element of drama and can improve students' creativity and speech. The students can work in groups or individually, depending on the type of scene. Such activity focuses on the correct pronunciation, intonation, and stress pattern and can significantly improve students' oral skills. Finally, a very interesting activity is watching vlogs, meaning short journals from someone's everyday life, and recording own vlogs. The students can compare their everyday routine with the one of a well-known person and speak about their habits. After recording the video, they can review and analyze their speech and express their reflections. Later, they can watch and listen to their classmates' vlogs and share their views about it, they can even put comments under the video. The security and safety on YouTube are not a problem since the videos can be private and made visible only to the chosen audience. In the end, the teacher can assess students based on their range of vocabulary, grammar structures, and pronunciation. To develop listening and speaking skills even more, the teacher can create comprehension questions to various videos and make the students answer them. It is also a good idea to have debates about different recordings and order students to share their opinions about diverse topics.

When it comes to teaching reading and writing skills, the teacher can instruct students to watch videos and write short notes or summaries about them. The notes should include the most important points and details. After that, the students can compare notes with their peers and read the transcript of the video to contrast their statements. They can also write a brief essay about the topic mentioned in the film. A good idea is to watch TED Talks which are short podcasts, around 20 minutes long, available on YouTube. TED Talks videos are reliable and include transcripts that can be consulted on the official website. The TED Talk website will be described in detail in another section of this work.

Another proposal is to select a video on how to write a paragraph, an email, an essay, or another type of written assignment and to make students write their own step-by-step guide on how to do it. During this activity, the teacher can put the subtitles on to make them understand the speech clearly. The level of the video should be also adapted to students' ages and levels.

Teaching new vocabulary and cultural concepts can be done by exposing students to a variety of English accents for instance, the teacher can instruct students to compare videos about significant world events and identify the similarities and differences between them. The best option is to compare British and American varieties, focusing on the vocabulary choice and pronunciation factor however it is also beneficial to expose students to other accents such as Australian, or New Zealand. Sometimes the students can be shocked when they come across English outside the classroom, in another country. To avoid such situations it is crucial to make them aware that people from other countries can speak in different ways and introduce them to numerous dialects. Likewise, the teacher can show the class typical British, American, or Australian television programmes and present some typical slang or vocabulary for these countries. Later, the students can do an activity such as matching the words to the definitions, or multiple choice quizzes in order to check their understanding of the new words.

Finally, YouTube can be used to teach grammar because it has a lot of videos with grammar explanations. Most of the videos appear in the form of presentations, first, there are the rules, and then questions or short quizzes checking understanding of the topic. To enhance understanding of the rules, the teacher can choose a video that is half spoken in the native language of the students and half in English (de Azevedo Fay & Matias, 2019). One of the channels that can be interesting to introduce students to different grammatical structures is BBC Learning English. The uploaded videos are short (usually around 5 minutes) and entertaining, they are often in the form of a gameshow which keeps the attention of the learners. In the videos, the crucial differences between the two grammar concepts are shown, including some examples and short tasks at the end. There also exist channels showing videos consisting of short dialogues or conversations between two or more people and demonstrating the features of a given grammar structure. Such strategies for learning

grammar are definitely more entertaining than learning it traditionally (de Azevedo Fay & Matias, 2019).

6.12 YouGlish

YouGlish is an online YouTube-based website created to help users with English pronunciation. It allows one to look for a word or phrase and to check how is it spoken by native speakers. The website simply displays videos such as celebrity talks, interviews, seminars, conferences, documentaries, etc. showing how the given word can be pronounced and used in a real-life context (Kartal & Korucu-Kis, 2020). The users are able to check the pronunciation in 3 different accents: American, British, and Australian. What is more, the website provides subtitles under the videos which makes them easier to understand (de Azevedo Fay & Matias, 2019, Kartal & Korucu-Kis, 2020). According to Kamalitdinovna (2021), YouGlish is very facile to use and it is becoming more and more popular every day. She also highlights that it is a priceless tool in teaching pronunciation and vocabulary online. Korucu-Kis (2020) also discovered that YouGlish helped students learn and better recall often mispronounced terms. Similarly, Sardegna & Jarosz (2022) asserted that the website can make students phonetically aware and help them acquire correct intonation and stress patterns. As stated by Karatay (2017) it is worth signing up on the platform because there are some special benefits for the signed-up users. In other words, once a week or once a month they can get an e-mail with the video or word of the day. The users have the option to play the video without any limits as well as to check the definition, synonym, or usage of the word of the day and consult available translations of the word which include 52 languages. Another privilege is the possibility of saving videos for later use and watching them from the "My Content" section at any time. Among general advantages of the platform, the author lists the encouragement of independent learning (the students are able to study at their own speed, even after the lesson), rich base of materials that are free to use, real-world scenarios, and authentic situations that illustrate vocabulary concepts, and finally emphasis on the appropriate stress pattern, rhythm, intonation, and word linking. In the online English lesson, YouGlish can be particularly useful during the pre-learning

vocabulary stage. First, the teacher can show various videos to the students and then repeat the new words together, preferably in different voices, or ways in order to memorize them better. The students can also try to build sentences with the given words to practice more (Sardegna & Jarosz, 2022).

6.13 TED Talks

TED is a non-profit organization that travels around the world and holds conferences and meetings in different countries. The acronym TED stands for "Technology, Entertainment, and Design". The purpose of the organization is to record presentations about various inspirational topics and make them accessible to other people. Most of the TED sessions are available to watch on the official TED website (Baeva, 2017, Fitria, 2022, Yue & Song, 2020). The usual duration of a session is a minimum of 5 minutes and a maximum of 18 minutes. Such duration has been determined to be efficient in clarifying the theme, offering more thorough and pertinent information, and maintaining the audience's interest (Fitria, 2022). The main slogan of the organization is "Ideas that are worth spreading". The topics of the speeches cover practically every subject, beginning from personal development, science, technology, and health to education, psychology, and culture. It is said that in the last few years, the popularity of TED presentations has grown and the website has expanded into a worldwide forum where knowledge and ideas come together. The platform is still growing and it is possible to see people such as Bill Gates, Elon Musk, or David Cameron performing for TED presentations (Baeva, 2017, Yue & Song, 2020). As declared by Fitria (2022), TED Talks can be an excellent teaching and learning tool. The students can learn how to make powerful and effective talks and develop their listening, speaking, and even writing skills. When it comes to speaking and listening, the students have a chance to listen to famous speakers from all over the world and notice the appropriate structure of a well-made presentation. Thanks to the professional background of presenters, the students can also gain a new range of vocabulary and improve their general comprehension as well as pronunciation skills. In order to prepare students for better in-class analysis and to help them become more comfortable with the language and subject matter, the teacher can allow them to watch a selection of TED Talks outside of the classroom.

With regard to writing, students can follow the transcripts when watching videos which allows them to take a look at the correct grammar patterns and helps them become more creative and motivated. Additionally, the author claims that TED Talks videos are interesting and catch students' attention so that they do not feel bored. Besides, the videos have the power to uplift and provide fundamental life lessons for learners.

Baeva (2017) states that there are several advantages of adopting TED talks as a language learning material. Firstly, most speeches have subtitles in over 40 languages, which is a huge benefit for students who want to improve their listening comprehension skills. Secondly, every TED video can be downloaded for offline viewing at a later time. Thanks to this feature, the teachers can play the recording even without an internet connection which facilitates their work. Additionally, there is a mobile application that can be operated on any type of telephone so the students can access materials everywhere and at any time they want. Thirdly, the website is user-friendly, classification into hashtags, subjects and keywords makes it simple to navigate or find a given presentation. Considering the fact that both non-native and native English speakers deliver presentations, it is a great opportunity for the students to gain awareness of various English dialects and accents. Furthermore, they can see that even if someone is not a native speaker of a language, he can still communicate proficiently with ease and success. Such an example is motivating and encouraging to learn. Ultimately, the videos often include visual aids like tables, charts, graphs, and pictures so it is easier for the students to understand the content presented. The presentations also cover a wide range of topics, making them ideal for teaching English to students from all backgrounds and skill levels.

Baeva (2017) also suggests a couple of activities that can be implemented in the online classroom with the use of TED Talks, focusing mainly on developing listening skills. For instance, in the pre-listening stage, the teacher can encourage students to guess the main idea of a speech based on its title, come up with a list of important terms related to the subject, gather data about the subject or speaker, and share their overall ideas. The teacher can also show the keywords presented in the video to increase their understanding. During the listening stage, the teacher can order students to look for specific information, write down new vocabulary, verify if their assumptions and speculations were correct, and answer the questions based on their general comprehension. While, in the post-listening stage, the students can

compare their responses and talk about the details of the video. Lastly, as an assignment, the teacher can make students write a summary, essay, or critical review regarding the subject covered in the class. They can also find another video with a related topic and compare both of them.

6.14 Prezi

Prezi is an internet platform that allows its users to make cloud-based presentations. It is a great device for teachers to create interesting materials and it is regarded as a potent tool for educational purposes affecting students' motivation to learn (Santiana & Fatimah, 2017a, Santiana & Fatimah, 2017b). There exist two versions of Prezi, the desktop and the online one. They can be used either online or offline. In the desktop version, it is possible to access, generate, and save the presentation offline, whereas the online version requires an internet connection to create and access materials. What is interesting, Prezi employs the zooming in and out effect which means that it reveals only the specific objects that can be seen one at a time on the screen. Thanks to this feature the website reduces the risk of distractions for the students (Listiyanto & Fauzi, 2016, Yusny & Kumita, 2016). According to Yusny & Kumita (2016), Prezi presentations are seen as more innovative and original than traditional PowerPoint presentations. Its rich graphics and visual effects make it a great instrument to enrich the lesson but also to attract students' attention.

One of the numerous benefits of using Prezi is that the teachers can incorporate texts, videos, or pictures into slides for free (Santiana & Fatimah, 2017b). What is more, the platform is very easy to use and its interface supports the creativity of the designer and speeds up the process of creating presentations (Yusny & Kumita, 2016). In the beginning, the users are also provided with an online guide and videos on how to create presentations and use the application which makes the initiation stage easier (Chicioreanu & Oproiu, 2012). Chicioreanu & Oproiu (2012) claim that Prezi simplifies the process of teaching and learning and gives instructors the opportunity to deliver course material in a completely new way by utilizing animations, sounds, videos, tables, or various graphics. Besides, it makes the presentations more lively and allows the teachers to draw or highlight the text. Among other advantages of the platform Santiana & Fatimah (2017a), list

strengthened teachers' confidence and reduced teaching anxiety, facilitation of students' brainstorming, greater students' curiosity, and improvement of classroom atmosphere.

Listiyanto & Fauzi (2016) examined the influence of Prezi on the vocabulary acquisition of students and their opinions about this tool. It turns out that the students reported that Prezi presentations made learning vocabulary easier and more engaging for them, as well as boosted their imagination and creativity. They also found Prezi more motivating than normal presentations and claimed that it helped them retain new words better. In turn, Yusny & Kumita (2016) investigated the impact of Prezi on the students' grammar acquisition. The research showed that Prezi presentations were well-received by the students and assisted them in improving their grammar skills. The majority of the students agreed that the presentations facilitated their understanding of the material and aroused their interest in the lesson. Moreover, thanks to Prezi they were able to comprehend conditional statements and their proper form because the content was given in a more ordered manner. Last but not least, the test results of the students who obtained grammar instructions using Prezi were better than those who received grammar instructions in a different way. Overall, both of the studies illustrated that Prezi can be a beneficial tool in developing foreign language skills in an online classroom.

Chapter II

Methods and techniques that can be used to teach online

1. **Introduction**

   Methods and approaches in the field of language teaching have always been equally praised and criticized by scientists. Some claimed that there is no one best way to teach foreign languages while others acknowledged that specific strategies need to be applied in order to provide a meaningful learning experience. Nevertheless, with time passing certain approaches started to be appreciated and employed heavily in the field of teaching foreign languages (Psoinos, 2021). When it comes to teaching a foreign language online, many researchers agree that it requires dynamic strategies that go beyond traditional teaching techniques. To create effective and interesting online lessons teachers need to employ not only a variety of digital tools and platforms but also a number of strategies and approaches. Regardless of whether the lesson is conducted in groups or individually, there exist some common methods that can be applied in an online classroom. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the range of techniques and approaches that can be effective in teaching a foreign language in a virtual setting. In this chapter, the key characteristics and benefits of the methods will be described and illustrated within the context of online learning.

2. **Total Physical Response (TPR)**

   Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method developed in the 1960s by Professor of Psychology James Asher of San Jose State University in California. The method is widely employed in both onsite classrooms and online classrooms. The basis of the TPR method is the idea that children acquire language by both "speaking", which is information output, and "listening", which is information input. The process can be compared to acquiring the first language. Another name for TPR is also "the comprehension method" (Liu, 2021). Similarly, Psoinos (2021) depicts TPR as a method that relies on native language acquisition and is constructed on the use of orders. He explains that during the first stages of life, children listen and

respond with movement. He compares the situation to a foreign language classroom where the teacher gives explicit instructions and the students respond with specific actions. The instructions usually include a given topic that will be covered in class and students are supposed to comprehend the topic by watching the teacher's actions only. The TPR method can be implemented at different levels and for different age groups such as young learners, adolescents, or even young adults. At lower levels, the students can be asked to listen and react to actions while at the more advanced levels, they can be expected to speak, read, listen, or do an activity.

TPR methodology promotes role-playing, miming, and drilling and it is said to make the classroom more engaging. Because meaning is connected to physical movement it is much easier for the students to understand a new word or vocabulary presented in that way. The method is also extremely simple and it incorporates elements of game movements which can help students feel less stressed during the lesson. It can improve students' moods and help them to learn more effectively and become more motivated to complete their assignments (Dewi & Fatmawati, 2022). As claimed by Husanović (2022), the main goal of the TPR is to provide a secure, stress-free learning environment and acquire the language in a natural and spontaneous way. Ibrohim et.al (2019) state that TPR can be particularly useful in boosting vocabulary learning, developing oral and listening skills and reducing the stress of learning a foreign language as it helps students recall information more frequently once they have learned it. Likewise, Widodo (2015) indicates that TPR can be used to teach and practice vocabulary connected with actions, particularly verbs, grammar (present, past, future, continuous tenses), classroom language, imperatives, instructions, storytelling, and narrative language.

The most popular TPR activities for young learners include imperative drills, craft activities such as painting, making puppets, origami, or play doughs, role plays, singing songs or reciting nursery rhymes, dancing, and playing games such as Charades and Simon Says (Shin, 2007). According to Shin (2007), it is advisable that the teacher establish a routine when beginning the lesson, for instance singing a song, telling a short story, repeating a chant, or giving commands such as: "Sit down!", "Stand up!", "Open your books". Moreover, it is beneficial to move from one activity to the other every 10 or 15 minutes and mix loud and quiet tasks, or different skills like listening, reading, writing, and speaking together in order to keep students' interest and extend their attention span. The teacher can also use various stories,

preferably the ones that students are acquainted with or they can connect with their mother tongue. The helpful aids that can be used in a TPR lesson include flashcards, videos, realia, posters, and games.

Psoinos (2021) demonstrates an example of an online class with the use of TPR. The primary focus of the lesson is teaching nouns and verbs connected to cooking. Firstly, using the camera and microphone, the teacher shows the students items and ingredients for a given recipe. Then, the teacher presents the process of preparing a dish using various gestures and realia. The teacher repeats the process until the students remember the new vocabulary. After that, the students demonstrate the actions themselves, show and describe the products chosen by the teacher, and answer the questions. The teacher can also check students' understanding by giving directions without visual aids or gestures. At the end, the teacher can present the vocabulary on the whiteboard and ask students to write their own recipes at home and present the preparation of a dish at the beginning of the next lesson.

Widodo (2015) provides another example of a lesson with the use of TPR. The lesson aims to teach colours to younger students. In the beginning, with the use of a camera, the teacher shows different colours of crayons to students and repeats the names of them. The students imitate the teacher repeating the word and showing their crayons. Later they reply to the commands given by the teacher: "Show me a red, blue, green crayon, etc." When implementing the TPR method, the teacher should remember that comprehension must be formed through body movement and it is more important than speaking because listening time helps learners get prepared to talk. The teacher should also try to not use the native language but focus on using gestures and the imperative in the foreign language. In case students do not understand a given word, it is possible to write it down on the whiteboard. Additionally, the author highlights that TPR should not be employed for too long because the students can get tired.

As reported by Liu (2021), TPR has been indicated as a practical and efficient approach to teaching foreign languages and it can be also beneficial in the online classroom. Psoinos (2021) believes that TPR can result in creative and fulfilling online courses that actively involve students rather than just keeping them still. It allows teachers to integrate everyday objects from real life into the virtual classroom and helps students to focus. Miming and using realia brings diversity into the classroom and makes the lesson more interesting. Furthermore, such an approach works well for

kinaesthetic learners, or students with ADHD who need to move during the lesson. Widodo (2015) also mentions some of the advantages of the TPR method. Among others, he declares that TPR is effective in different-sized and mixed-ability classrooms, it creates an intriguing and memorable experience for the students, it incorporates learning from both the left and right hemispheres, and finally, it does not require a lot of preparation from the site of the teacher.

Lastly, in accordance with the research conducted by Dewi & Fatmawati (2022), the students' perceptions towards TPR implementation in the online classroom are positive. The majority of the students claim that this method help them to learn vocabulary and improve their English skills in a fun way.

3. Digital storytelling

Digital storytelling is telling stories with the use of diverse technological tools such as audio, videos, music and images. Similarly to traditional storytelling, digital storytelling has a certain theme and point of view. The stories are usually short and concern personal experiences, historical events, or provide information on a given topic (Robin, 2006). The technique of storytelling has been used in education for many years, especially in the case of language teaching. According to Atta-Alla (2021), it can be used for different reasons, learning levels, and ages. Many teachers are using stories to help students become more proficient in listening, reading, speaking, and writing and to develop their cultural awareness. Storytelling promotes collaboration and support in the classroom, cultivates diversity, and helps to comprehend various cultural differences between students. In addition, it can develop students' creativity and raise their motivation to learn a language. Through careful book selection and language modification, the teacher can tailor the story to the interests, needs, and competencies of the students and explain new vocabulary through various multimedia such as pictures and videos (Atta-Alla, 2012). Robin (2006) states that digital stories can help to understand an abstract concept more easily and foster discussion among students. It assists with strengthening communication skills, it teaches students how to structure their thoughts, formulate opinions, make successful presentations, and create narratives. It can also expand problem-solving skills.

As claimed by Pop (2012) a great idea is to make stories around digital images for instance, the teacher can share the screen and show students some impressive and shocking or funny pictures. The student's task is to explain how they found themselves in this situation. To put it differently, the students play the role of the person in the picture and retell the story in their own way describing the background, plot, and various personalities. In such a way, they can learn new information easier and faster. Moreover, to make it more engaging for the students, the teacher can add an element of competition by instructing each student to share their story and rank the best one at the end. Another strategy is to make stories around movies. At the end of the lesson, the teacher can show students a couple of short videos and give them an assignment to choose one that affected them the most. In the beginning of the next lesson, each of the students describes their chosen video, summarizes it, covering the most important information about characters, plot, and actors, and justifies their choice. A very creative task that can help students practice grammar structures is also to retell one of their dreams and find a picture or song that can possibly depict it. Lastly, as a warm-up activity, at the beginning of every class, the teacher can tell students a joke or anecdote and ask them if they want to share a short story too.

In compliance with a study carried out by Pop (2012) digital storytelling technique increased students' attention, interest, and productivity in learning English. It turned out that thanks to the use of the digital storytelling approach the students were able to produce much more spoken and written English and their language acquisition was accelerated. It also made students feel more equal and allowed everyone to express themselves, even students who were shy and afraid of public speaking became more confident and were able to give a presentation without hesitancy. Another study conducted by Ahmad & Yamat (2020) which aimed to compare conventional and digital storytelling strategies in the English language classroom, demonstrated that students learn better when using the digital storytelling method. The results also showed that most of the students preferred digital storytelling to conventional storytelling which highlights the superiority of technology over traditional teaching methods. From the study, it was possible to notice that the use of digital tools encourages students to participate actively in class and stay focused during the lesson. The study also proved that watching videos and using various multimedia during the lesson has a profound effect on students as well as teachers and that the teachers can make use of digital tools to design more engaging and interesting

English online lessons. Furthermore, digital storytelling can be adjusted to the different needs and learning styles of the students. It can be particularly helpful for individuals with musical, verbal-linguistic, and visual-spatial learning intelligence. Firstly, musical intelligence allows students to make connections between sounds and emotions so that they are more equipped to understand the stories being told. Secondly, verbal-linguistic intelligence helps students grasp the meaning behind the stories thanks to the written or spoken language in the videos. Thirdly, visual-spatial intelligence enables students to comprehend and visualize the tales thanks to various graphics (Gardner, 2010, as cited in Ahmad & Yamat, 2020).

According to Hronová (2011), digital storytelling can play an essential role in English language instruction. Because every narrative is unique and represents our individual thoughts and emotions, the students are able to discover themselves better and become acquainted with their classmates and the world. Additionally, it can increase students' and teachers' technological knowledge and develop their computer skills. Finally, by using storytelling techniques teachers may create a stress-free atmosphere in the classroom.

4. Mind mapping

Mind mapping, also known as a map of thoughts is a graphical method for illustrating the relationships between various concepts or chunks of information. The goal of this technique is to write down all the information and create a web of connections that are linked by curved lines (Al Shdaifat et al., 2019). The inventor of this method is Tony Buzan who claims that mind maps can be successfully used to take various notes that previously took up hundreds of pages in textbooks, so it is a faster way of noting information (Gajewska, 2007). Gajewska (2007) declares that mind maps are intended to facilitate the process of remembering information or searching for associations between concepts. Creating maps allows students to not only develop visual-spatial intelligence but also memory, imagination, and logical thinking. Mind mapping is commonly used to take notes, brainstorm, plan a presentation, or project, and prepare an essay (Al Shdaifat et al., 2019). Mind maps have a radiant structure which, according to Buzan (2006), reflects the structure of the

human brain and a way of thinking based on associations. What is more, this technique stimulates both hemispheres of the brain: the right one, responsible for imagination, perception, and colours, and the left one, responsible for languages. Mind maps can be an effective tool in foreign language teaching and learning although there are some crucial rules to follow when creating them. Firstly, the teacher should always start with an image, or slogan defining the topic of the note in the middle of the page. Secondly, the teacher should use many pictures and symbols to express concepts and put only one word or graphic per line. Next, it is important to remember that the lines drawn should be the same length as the words or graphics. Ultimately, it is beneficial to use as many colours as possible to make the mind map attractive for the students (Gajewska, 2007).

There exist many ways of using mind maps in online foreign language teaching. Among others, they can be used as an element supporting the acquisition of vocabulary, and grammar structures and making the work with text more appealing (Łyp-Bielecka, 2009). Mind maps can be used to consolidate or learn new vocabulary as they assist with ordering, grouping, and classifying word chains. Students can be handed a full mind map as a summary of the lesson or for the upcoming test. Mind maps can be also placed in the presentation slides to help students recognize the keywords and crucial terms. Another idea is that during an online lesson, the teacher can display a keyword on the whiteboard and ask students to list the connections to the topic. In this way, the students can participate in the discussion and become involved in the lesson. Moreover, it allows them to understand all the components in detail and how they relate to one another (Edwards & Cooper, 2010). Next, mind maps can facilitate learning of stylistics and words belonging to the same semantic field for instance, we can teach students what phrases are appropriate for a private or official conversation separately. Another possibility of using mind maps in the classroom is teaching grammar. They can be particularly useful for the representation of grammar concepts that are difficult to explain to students due to the lack of reference in the native language. Grammar rules presented in the form of a map are more visually attractive for students and therefore easier to memorize than standard ones. Even complex grammatical structures can be understood clearly with the use of arrows and graphics. Furthermore, mind maps can be systematically expanded with new principles and rules thus making the teacher's work easier. Besides, mind maps can be used to facilitate work with the text during the lesson. They can be a great instrument

to create drafts of the oral presentation, they enable students to identify the main idea of the text and determine what information is relevant in it. They can be also used for summaries or written productions (Gajewska, 2007, Łyp-Bielecka, 2009). Bukhari (2016) asserts that mind maps are an effective tool in the pre-writing stage. They can be utilized to brainstorm ideas, organize thoughts before writing, and make a solid outline. The ideas generated in this manner are usually much more cohesive without redundant clusters or repeated proposals.

To sum up, the mind-mapping technique can be successfully implemented in the online language classroom as it changes boring information into interesting and memorable one, enhancing students' engagement, attention, and interest in the lesson. It can be used not only for preparation and revision of the lesson but also for the update of the material or as a way of note-taking for the students. It fosters creative thinking and generating ideas and it helps to absorb more knowledge. Visual aids such as images help to recall vocabulary better and classify the information accordingly (Buran & Filyukov, 2015, Edwards & Cooper, 2010).

5. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a method of generating ideas, promoting creativity, and free flowing of thoughts. It is also a technique for solving an issue or discussing a problem by combining all the ideas that are shared among the participants of the discourse (Rizi et al., 2013). The concept of brainstorming was popularized by Osborn (1953) in his book, in which he claimed that brainstorming helps people think differently and deviate from conventional reasoning (Abd Karim et al., 2016). At present, brainstorming is a popular tool used in foreign language classrooms that can be connected with mind mapping to gather students' ideas. There are five steps for implementing brainstorming in the lesson. The first step is establishing the rules, for instance, the teacher can write the rules on the whiteboard and make the students aware of what are they going to do. The second step is determining the issue or topic. The choice of a topic for brainstorming is one of the most crucial parts. It should be interesting and different from the themes that are usually discussed during the lesson. On the other hand, the students should be a little bit familiar with the topic, it cannot

be something entirely new that they have never discussed or learned before. Furthermore, the topics with few specified solutions for the issues are inappropriate too. As a starting point, it is advised to start the brainstorming session by providing the students with a brief yet engaging introduction to the subject and by asking them stimulative and provocative questions. The third step is to put ideas into words. There are various methods to do this. Generally, one person shares their idea and then waits for someone else to do the same, creating a cycle of ideas being shared. The fourth step is suggesting areas for improvement. The teacher asks students to eliminate ideas that are redundant, similar, or unsuitable but at the same time is attentive to not discourage students and their extraordinary or creative ideas just because they do not fit the patterns. The final step is reviewing and evaluating ideas gathered by students. (Hryrfrosh & Sadeghi, 2010, as cited in Rizi et al., 2013).

As declared by Virdaus (2019), the brainstorming technique promotes innovativity and spontaneity, it also develops creativity and problem-solving skills. Brainstorming can be particularly useful when teaching writing in English, it can inspire students to collaborate, think critically, solve problems, and complete assigned tasks. According to the research conducted by the author, the students who used the brainstorming technique before writing an essay had better ideas and developed their writing topic more. Moreover, their motivation to write was higher and they were not bored during the writing lesson. Abd Karim et al. (2016) also considered the brainstorming technique as an excellent tool for assisting students in overcoming the difficulty of writing. From the research, it turned out that thanks to the brainstorming technique students were prepared for various stages of writing and they did not struggle with generating ideas for their papers. In other words, it was easier for them to construct written production and express their opinions. Additionally, the author highlights that brainstorming is one of the best methods to solve issues and it works even better when combined with mind maps.

6. **Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) relates to integrated subject and language education, based on the simultaneous transfer of the content in the field

of subjects and elements of a foreign language. In other words, it is a dual-focused teaching and learning strategy that permits students to develop their language skills and knowledge of another subject at the same time. The term CLIL was coined in 1994 with the main purpose of increasing multilingualism and improving the methodology of language learning and teaching. The four components of CLIL include content, communication, cognition, and culture (Coyle et al., 2010). It means that this approach focuses on the material that is integrally linked with communication, culture, and cognition, giving each of them equal significance. The main feature of the CLIL approach is understanding and processing the content as opposed to passive remembering and repetition of the information. At the same time, classrooms are regarded as cultures where students interact in groups to acquire knowledge (Hemmi & Banegas, 2021). According to Marsh et al. (2015), the benefits of CLIL may be noticed in terms of cultural awareness, language competence, and increased motivation. They point out that the CLIL method fosters multilingual interests and attitudes in students and spreads self-confidence towards themselves as language learners. Moreover, it promotes cognitive flexibility and provides authentic use of language. Bentley (2010) states that CLIL enhances learners to develop their cognitive or thinking skills which challenges them. Whereas, Hemmi & Banegas (2021) indicate it as a stimulating method of learning that enables students to acquire information within a specific learning context. Additionally, Mehisto et al. (2008) claim that CLIL is an effective approach to learning due to its greater exposure to a foreign language. It promotes a more naturalistic learning environment because it imitates the conditions that infants experience while acquiring their first language.

Psoinos (2021) presents an example of how to implement CLIL into an online English language lesson. The aim of the lesson is to incorporate elements of American history to boost students' schematic knowledge. Firstly, as a warm up the teacher can ask basic questions about what the students know about America and show them the map of the USA to provide some visual help. Using visuals can guarantee learners' interest and help them produce vocabulary relevant to the subject. Next, the teacher can present some keywords connected to the topic and apply a short reading comprehension task for instance, choose a given text about America, and order students to find relevant information in it. The information can concern various names, dates, and locations and can be written down in the form of a table. After that, students can watch a video demonstrating certain American historical figures and write their

observations and comments. Then, they can be divided into breakout rooms, select one historical figure of their choice, search for more details about it, and present it to the class. The last activity can be particularly beneficial to strengthen students' oral skills. From the point of view of Psoinos (2021), CLIL can be a useful device in an online language classroom because it allows students to develop their language skills and gain authentic knowledge from other educational fields at the same time. In this manner, they can enrich their range of vocabulary and nurture their cultural awareness. CLIL also offers a more meaningful and captivating learning experience. The materials used in the lesson are valuable in content which increases learners' motivation and adds interest to the lesson. Because in this approach language is seen as a channel of communication, students can improve their oral production and become fluent and accurate users of language in a short period of time. CLIL methodology combines elements of other approaches, techniques, and learning theories. It can be particularly similar to the CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) methodology which will be evaluated in the next section.

7. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) also called the communicative approach is a method of teaching languages that places emphasis on communication as the primary objective of language acquisition. Instead of memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary, the students are encouraged to produce meaningful conversations and use the target language successfully in everyday contexts (Brandl, 2008). As indicated by Psoinos (2021), in the CLT approach language is seen as a competency, and elements such as grammar and pronunciation are peripheral and used to achieve communicative aims only. In this type of classroom activities such as pair, or group works, simulations and roleplays should be promoted and authentic materials should be used in the lesson. What is more, it is suggested to avoid using the native language or correcting the students too openly because mistakes are viewed as a necessary part of the learning process. Preferably, to achieve the communicative goals the teacher should provide an information gap so that the students are forced to interact and complete the task in the target language. Similarly, Brandl (2008) highlights the importance of using rich and authentic input in the CLT classroom such as video,

audio, radio, television, photographs, telephone conversations, and text messages. He recommends using all the materials that can reflect real-life situations and maximize the use of the target language. It is also crucial to remember that the input needs to be comprehensible, meaning that the material being provided needs to be directly related to the learner's prior knowledge. Although the main purpose of the CLT approach is to develop speaking skills, we should keep in mind that other skills need to be taught too. Thamarana (2015) claims that grammar structures can be taught but less strictly and with the use of fun, innovative methods. Also, reading and writing skills can be practiced in order to favour students' self-confidence (Celce-Murcia, 1991, as cited in Thamarana, 2015). The advantages of the CLT approach include a strong emphasis on genuine communication, allowing students to develop their oral skills, promotion of collaboration and teamwork between students, improvement of cultural understanding, and increased motivation and engagement (Richards, 2005).

Richards (2005) provides some examples of the activities that can be implemented in the CLT classroom and accomplished both onsite and online. The aim of the first activity is to perform a role play where the students are required to act out the roles assigned to them. The roles include the drivers, witnesses, and police. The students' task is to pretend that they participated in an accident between a car and a bus. It is important to say that the dialogue between students should be completely invented by them. When it comes to this type of activity, the possibilities of inventing roles are endless and can include other personages such as waiters and customers in the restaurant, receptionists and hotel guests, sellers and customers in the shop, etc. Another option is that a student and the teacher simulate a conversation where one person returns an object to the shop and the other is a shop assistant. The rest of the class makes observations and later on, reproduces their own dialogue in pairs. To include an element of grammar learning and enhance the communicative approach at the same time, the students can solve activities such as fill-in-the-gaps together, deciding which grammatical form is correct. They can also discuss their answers with other groups and later read them aloud. A different activity proposed by Richards (2005) is an information gap activity, also called a jigsaw activity. The purpose of this activity is to get the missing information and fit it together. The teacher shows a video of three speakers discussing their views about a particular topic. The students are split up into three groups, each of the groups writes down information about a different speaker. Then the students are divided into breakout rooms and try to get as much

information about other speakers as possible. They ask questions and try to recreate the dialogue from the video, the activity takes the form of an interview.

Psoinos (2021) also portrays sample activities that can be realized online with a focus on communicative skills. The exercises are designed rather for older students possessing an intermediate level of English. First, after an introduction to the topic of the lesson, students discuss quotes about the arts. They indicate whether they agree or disagree with a given quote and explain why. This stage is intended to grab learners' attention and boost their prior knowledge. Further on, the students are divided into two groups, one of the groups reads the text and the other watches a video provided with a link. Both the text and video concern Leonardo da Vinci. The students' work is to fill in the table with information about his life. Later, the students from the groups mix and exchange obtained data, asking each other questions. Following the statement of the author, the CLT approach can be easily incorporated into an online environment with the use of interactivity and information gap activities. It not only enables students and teachers to participate in meaningful conversations and communication modes but also provides the chance to use various online tools.

8. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is an approach that aims to enhance language functionality by fulfilling activities and tasks rather than studying grammatical forms. It means that the process of teaching, learning, and assessment is performed only through the completion of tasks (Baralt &Morcillo Gomez, 2017). Psoinos (2021) defines TBLT as a subset of the CLT method because similarly like in a CLT classroom the students have to perform various tasks that revolve around the need to communicate. What is more, the matter of correcting students is the same, meaning that corrections are not desired and are interpreted as an intrusion to the completion of the task. To be considered a task, an activity must comply with four requirements: it must include an information gap to make it genuine and authentic, have a focus on meaning, demand from students relying on their own linguistic and non-linguistic resources, and possess an outcome (Ellis, 2009).

Some advantages of the TBLT method include fostering students' motivation and autonomy, increasing their determination to finish a task, and encouraging communication and collaboration among students. It is said that relying on a specific task from the start until the end of the lesson can prolong students' attention span and eliminate the number of distractions which is why TBLT can be an effective instrument in an online foreign language classroom. It can be also easily supported by diverse technologies available (Psoinos, 2021).

Guo & Möllering (2016) provide an example of an online task-based activity. It is a jigsaw task including roleplaying. Learners are divided into a doctor, a teacher, and an ill student and given the manual including symptoms, diagnosis, and recommendations to follow. The student chooses one symptom and has a conversation with a doctor who is making a consultation and determining the appropriate treatment depending on the symptoms mentioned. Later on, the young patient has to call to school and inform the teacher about the sickness. The teacher makes some suggestions and gives advice and the conversation ends. This type of task gives students autonomy over their choices and encourages them to pay attention to the discourse and communicate successfully. According to Psoinos (2021), mind mapping and brainstorming are two primary techniques used in TBL classrooms. Preferably, they should be used at the beginning of the lesson as a warm-up for instance, the teacher presents a controversial topic to debate to arouse curiosity and provoke students' responses and then encourages students to brainstorm ideas about the topic. In the meantime, the teacher creates a mind map reflecting those ideas. Brainstorming technique can be also used in the subsequent phase to invent and generate new vocabulary.

Chapter III

Students' Perceptions about learning English online- research description

1. Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to research the strategies, approaches, and digital tools that can be effectively implemented in online EFL classrooms. The aim of this chapter is to describe the research study. The main research area discussed in this chapter is students' perceptions about learning English online. The purpose of the research study is to measure students' satisfaction with their online language learning experience in terms of language acquisition, enjoyment, and motivation factors and to find out which methods and resources they consider interesting or effective. To investigate this, the questionnaire was distributed among a group of students who have learned English either privately or through an educational platform online.

As discussed in the theoretical chapter learning English online can be a convenient and effective way to improve language skills. It is not only more flexible and cost-effective but also easier to access. There are a lot of benefits of online learning but also some challenges that have to be considered by both students and teachers. From the literature, it is known that there exist a number of approaches, techniques, and digital tools that can be implemented to provide appropriate assessment and learning conditions for online students as well as ensure an engaging and motivating environment. This research study examines whether students are satisfied with their English lessons online and how studying online impacts their language acquisition and motivation to study the language. It also investigates which online resources, activities and strategies are interesting or helpful for students.

This chapter describes the research design, participants and methods of the study. The chapter also outlines the procedure of collecting the data and delineates what data collection instruments were used to collect the data for the thesis. Furthermore, it discusses the results obtained from the study and attempts at their interpretation and evaluation. The chapter concludes with some implications and further suggestions.

2. Research design

The goal of this research study is to check to what extent students are satisfied with their online language learning experience in terms of motivation, enjoyment, and language acquisition and to determine which methods and digital tools they find interesting or practical. To explore this, the questionnaire was distributed among the students who have learned English either privately or through an educational platform online. Then the results of the questionnaire were analyzed. The presented study is an example of quantitative research presenting a survey with numerical and statistical data. The research study addresses the following research questions: To what extent are students satisfied with their online English learning experience compared to traditional English learning experience, considering language acquisition, enjoyment, and motivation as key factors? What teaching methods, approaches and digital tools are perceived by students as interesting and effective in the context of online language learning, and how do these methods and tools contribute to their satisfaction? It is hypothesised that the majority of students are satisfied with their overall online language learning experience, their motivation during the lesson is high and their language skills have improved after taking English classes online.

2.1 Participants

The total number of participants who took part in the research study was 15. Among the participants, there were 13 females and only 2 males, constituting 87% of women and 13% of men as illustrated in Figure1.
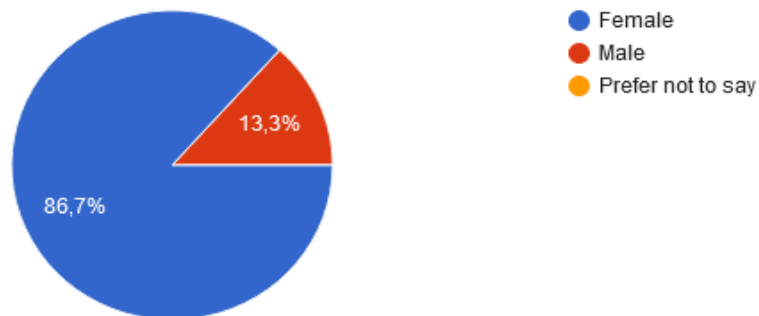
Figure1. Gender of the participants

The participants of the study were aged from 10-19, however, the age category was divided into 3 groups. As can be seen in Figure2, the most numerous group was participants aged 16-19, representing 47% of the respondents. The second largest group was participants aged 13-16, representing 33% of the respondents, while the least numerous group was the youngest participants aged 10-13, representing 20% of the respondents.
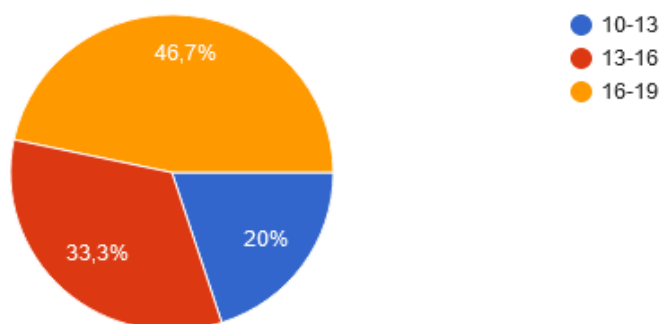

Figure2. Age of the participants

When it comes to the level of school. The majority of participants because as many as 60% were in high school, whereas the other 40% of the participants were in primary school. All of the participants of the study were students who had learned English online either through an educational platform or privately. The results show that 67% of students learned English online through an educational platform and 33% of the students learned English online having private lessons.

Figure3 demonstrates, how participants rate their English skills on a scale from 1 to 5, where number 1 corresponds to very bad and number 5 corresponds to very good. The percentage of the participants who rate their English skills as 5 is the highest and it amounts to 40%. Additionally, 33% of the participants rate their skills as 4, equal to good and only 27% of the participants assess their language skills as 3, equal to quite good. As indicated in Figure3, none of the respondents rated their English skills as 1 or 2, meaning bad or very bad.
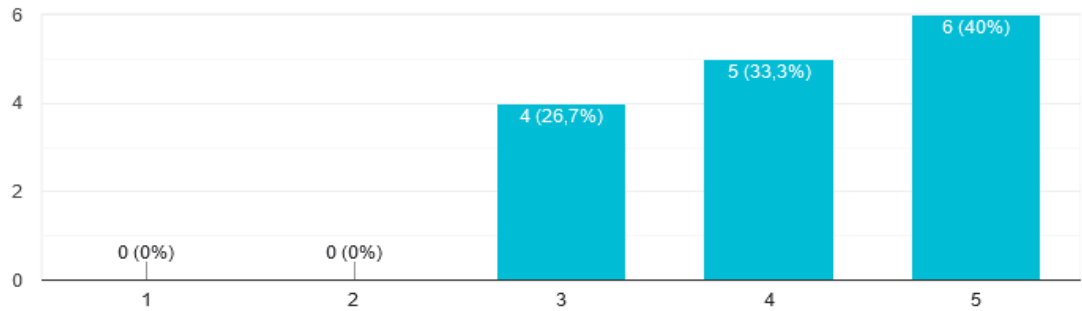
Figure3. Assessment of the participants' language skills

Figure4 shows the frequency with which the participants learn English at home. When asked how much time they spend learning English at home after the lesson, most of the respondents because almost 67% answered 1 hour a week. Also, 20% of the respondents study 1 hour a day after a lesson online, and as much as 13% of the respondents one hour a month.
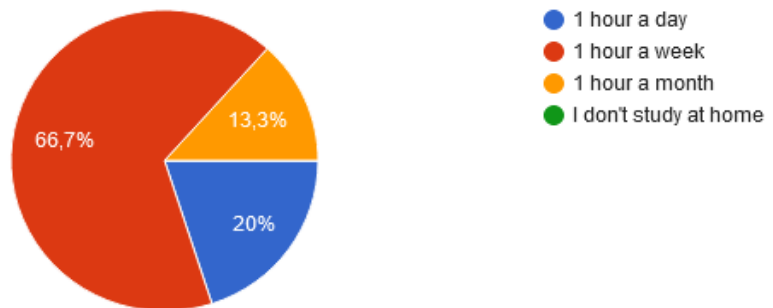

Figure4. The frequency with which the participants learn English at home

To conduct the research, the questionnaire was distributed among the students I teach on the online platform as well as privately, hence the participants were from diverse backgrounds and of different ages.

2.2 Procedure

2.2.1 Data collection instruments

The data for this research was collected using the questionnaire which concerns students' perceptions about learning English online. The questionnaire was administered in the period from the 8th of January to the 15th of January and it was addressed to students who had learned English online either privately or through an educational platform. Firstly, on the basis of theoretical chapters and my knowledge of online teaching, the questions for the questionnaire were formulated. Then the questionnaire was pre-tested by 2 people and distributed to the students. The survey was prepared with the help of the Google Forms platform which enables respondents to send their answers electronically. The respondents were students from the age of 10-19. The questionnaire consisted mostly of closed-ended questions and only one open-ended question. The number of questions was 25, five of them were created using the Likert scale, also referred to as a satisfaction scale. The first six questions were designed to discover general facts about the surveyed students. They cover information such as gender, age, level of the school, the form of online lessons they take part in, their own assessment of English skills, and time devoted to learning English at home. The questions from 7 to 10 concern students' preferences and satisfaction with learning English online. The questions from 11 to 17 deal with the digital tools, methods, and activities implemented in online classrooms. Among others, students are asked about the effectiveness and interestingness of various instruments used in the online lessons but also about their preferences regarding the form of the lesson or type of activities. Finally, questions from 18 to 25 concern students' motivation and engagement, language acquisition, and skills development in the online environment. They also allow students to express their own opinions about the effectiveness of online learning and their satisfaction with it. The aim of the questionnaire was to determine whether students are satisfied with their language learning experience online considering language acquisition, enjoyment, and motivation as key factors, and to find out which methods and digital tools they consider interesting or effective in the context of online learning. The questionnaire that was used to conduct this research can be found in the Appendices.

2.2.2 Data

The data analyzed in this thesis include responses to the questionnaire provided by the participants of the study. The questionnaire aimed to find the answers to the research questions. The first research question is related to the satisfaction of the students with their online English learning experience in terms of language acquisition, enjoyment, and motivation. To address this issue students' answers to questions from 7 to 10 and from 18 to 25 were analyzed. These questions helped to investigate whether students prefer online or traditional language learning and if they are eager to participate in the lessons online. What is more, they examined if students are motivated during the lesson and whether their English skills have improved after the lessons online. The second research question is associated with teaching methods, techniques, and digital resources that can be interesting and effective for students and can possibly increase their satisfaction levels. To approach this issue, students' answers to questions from 11 to 17 were interpreted. These questions researched which digital tools, teaching methods, and forms of activities students prefer or find engaging or helpful.

2.2.3 Mode of analysis

The main goal of the analysis is to find out students' perceptions of learning English online, check their level of satisfaction in terms of language acquisition, enjoyment, and motivation factors, and indicate which methods and resources they consider interesting or effective in the context of online learning. The first step of the analysis was to conduct the survey and obtain the data from the respondents. The second step was to analyse and evaluate the obtained data. Most of the data was converted into percentages and participants' responses to one of the open-ended questions were studied. Further on, based on the received data charts and figures presenting crucial facts were created. The analysis was focused on comparing students' opinions about learning English online and finding some common and contradictory views. All the data was summarized and general implications were

drawn. Additionally, some limitations of the study and further suggestions were presented. The detailed analysis of this study will be illustrated in the next section.

3. Results

The goal of the analysis presented in this section is to discover students' perceptions and level of satisfaction with their online English learning experience, focusing on language acquisition, enjoyment, and motivation as key factors and specify what teaching methods and digital tools can be interesting and effective for them. In order to make a precise analysis, research questions were formulated. The first research question raises the issue of satisfaction of the students with their online English learning experience in terms of language acquisition, enjoyment, and motivation. The second research question is associated with the effectiveness and interestingness of various digital tools, methods, and approaches used in the online classroom. To answer research questions, the survey was conducted among students who had learned English online either privately or through an educational platform.

The analysis shows that the level of students' satisfaction with online learning is high. The majority of the students participate in the English online lessons eagerly. As can be seen in Figure5, 7 out of the 15 students claimed that they definitely like to attend English lessons online, and 6 of them claimed that they rather like to attend English lessons online. Only 2 out of the 15 students declared that they rather not participate in the English online lessons eagerly.
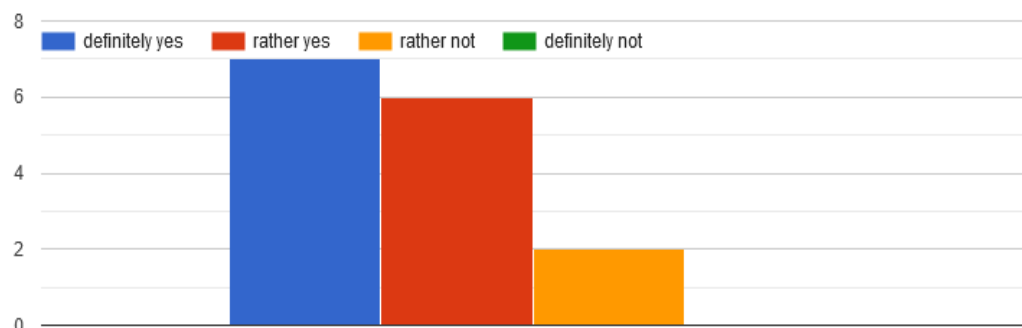

Figure5. The willingness of the participants to attend English online lessons

When it comes to students' preferences, 80% of the participants declared that they prefer online lessons over traditional lessons and not more than 20% of the participants chose traditional lessons. The correlation between the two choices of the students is presented in Figure6.
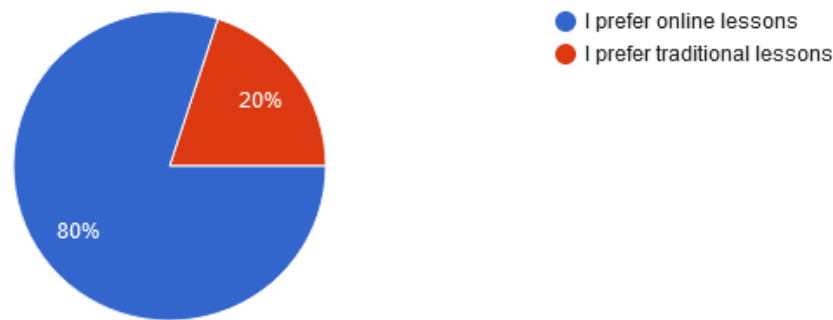

Figure6. The participants' preferences

The research shows that an equal number of the participants- 43%, selected online lessons for several reasons, they are more flexible, diverse, interesting, and engaging. As many as 29% of the participants selected online lessons because they are more personalized. Whereas, the same percentage of 21% of the participants chose online lessons due to their cost-effectiveness and ease of access. The least participants- 7% picked out online lessons because as they claim, online courses can help them to focus more than traditional lessons at school. Regarding the issue of technical problems and challenges during online lessons, the findings suggest that 80% of the participants indicated that usually there are no problems during an online lesson. Exclusively, 20% of the participants stated that they encountered problems with poor Internet connection.

Another issue researched is the digital tools and platforms frequently used by the participants of the study. As demonstrated in Figure7, one of the most popular tools is YouTube, used by 73% of the participants. Next, an equal percentage of the participants- 53% use Wordwall, Liveworksheets, and Kahoot. Frequently utilized tools are also Google Meet- 47%, Zoom, Google Classroom, and Quizlet- 40%. A bit less popular tools incorporate Microsoft Teams, Quizziz, and TED Talks- 33% whereas the least used digital tools include Padlet, Prezi, and Skype- 20%. What is

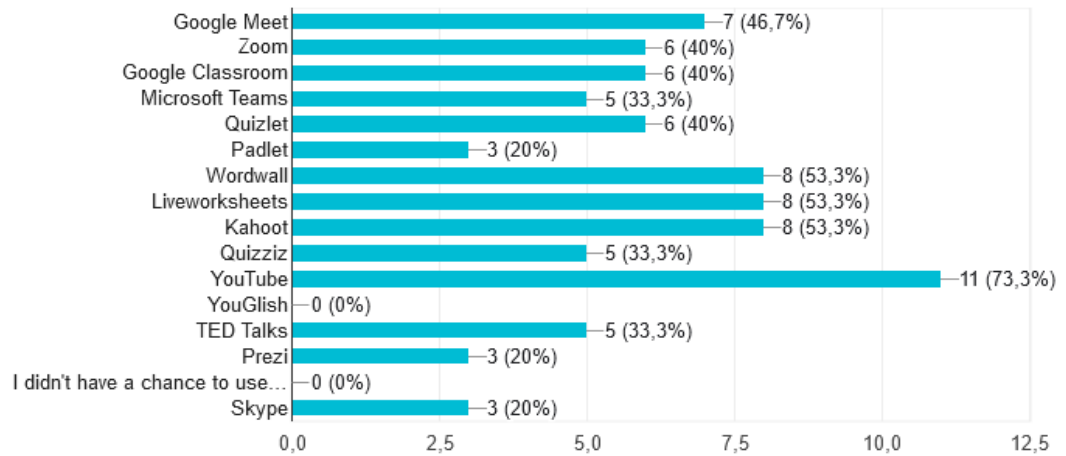more, none of the participants declared that they ever had an opportunity to use YouGlish.

Figure7. Digital tools and platforms used by the participants

The next issue is the interestingness of the tools mentioned above. From the Figure8, it is possible to notice that Wordwall and YouTube were found the most interesting by the participants of the study. Also, 33% of the participants claimed that Kahoot is an interesting educational tool and 27% of them admitted that Quizlet, Liveworksheets and TED Talks are interesting too. Among other interesting tools, 20% of the students mentioned Quizziz and 7% of them mentioned Microsoft Teams.
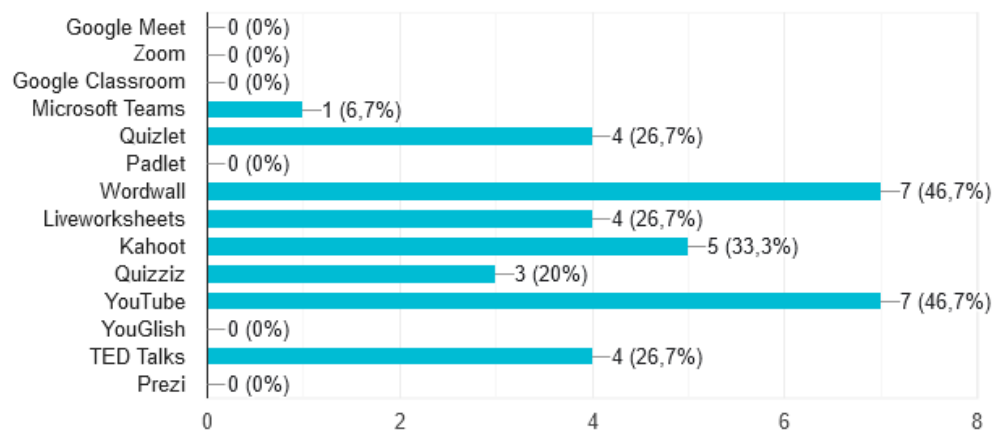
Figure8. The interestingness of the digital tools and platforms

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When asked for the reason why these tools are interesting, the majority of the students indicated that YouTube allows them to watch various videos such as daily vlogs, interviews, documentaries and learn new expressions and vocabulary at the same time. Furthermore, many of the participants claimed that it provides them with authentic examples of native speakers using English in real-life situations and permits them to learn various English accents and slang. Interestingly, one of the participants stated that she does not know anyone who does not like YouTube as it is a great device to improve English in your areas of interest and expand general knowledge. Regarding Wordwall, Kahoot and Quizziz, most of the students asserted that they like to use these resources during English online lessons because they enjoy playing quizzes and games. Some of them also believe that such activities encourage them to learn and develop their language skills but also give them the possibility to study other school subjects by solving quick quizzes, riddles, or puzzles. When it comes to Quizlet and Liveworksheets, the participants agreed that these platforms contain engaging and useful materials that allow them to learn new vocabulary, grammar structures and practice their overall English skills. Moreover, they particularly enjoy using these tools in terms of revision as it is a fun way to go over some concepts. Numerous students also mentioned that TED Talks are attractive resources because they cover diverse topics hence everyone can find something for themselves. Additionally, students think that TED Talks are inspiring and motivating to study and they can teach you elements of an effective presentation. Lastly, the participants considered Microsoft Teams as an interesting tool because it is an easily accessible platform for communication.

Concerning the effectiveness of digital platforms and tools, Figure9 illustrates that YouTube, Wordwall and Liveworksheets were considered the most helpful when learning English online with 40% of the participants voting for them. The second useful tool is Quizlet with 27% of the participants choosing it and the last most effective tools include Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, TED Talks and Skype with 7% of participants selecting them.
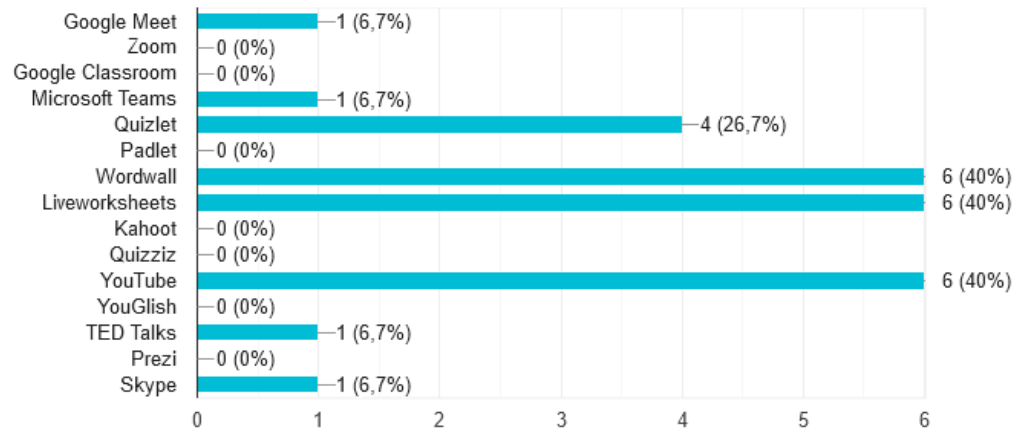
Figure9. The effectiveness of the digital tools and platforms

Next, the effectiveness of online teaching methods has been investigated. As can be seen in Figure10, the most effective technique according to the respondents is learning through conversations and roleplays, also called the Communicative Approach or Task-Based Learning. 27% of the respondents perceive brainstorming as a potent tool and as many as 20% of the respondents assessed learning through movement (TPR) and mind maps as effective techniques. The least effective methods according to the respondents are learning other subjects in English (CLIL) and storytelling.
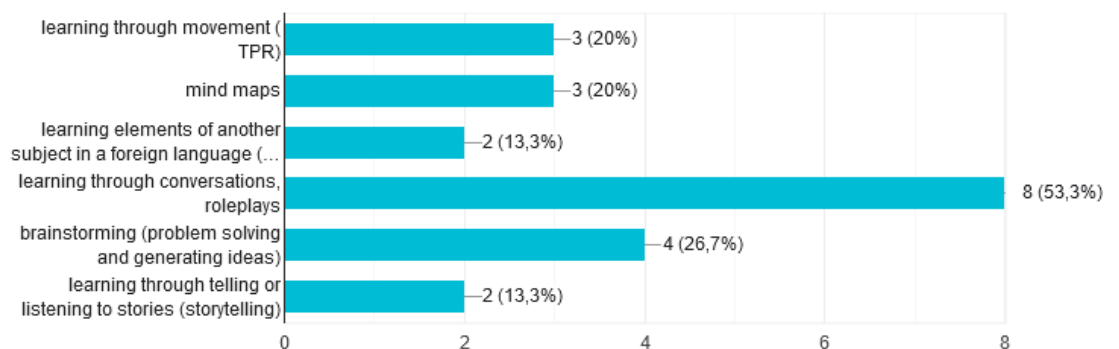

Figure10. The effectiveness of online teaching methods

An interesting issue is what form of online lessons students prefer. The research suggests that the majority of students prefer to study individually and the least of them like studying in big groups. As demonstrated in Figure11, 60% of the participants of the study have chosen individual classes, 27% of the participants have

chosen classes in pairs or small groups and only 13% of the participants selected classes in big groups.
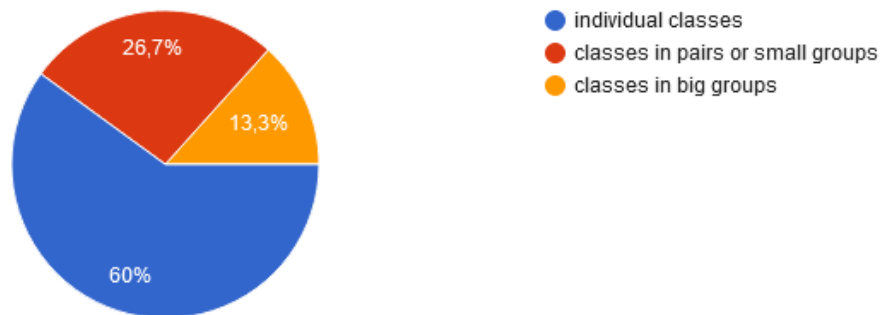

Figure11. The participants' preferences regarding the form of online lessons

Apart from the students' preferences about the form of the lessons online, the study examines what types of activities students prefer in their English courses online. It turns out that students in particular like interactive exercises, games, and videos. Figure12 reveals that 60% of the respondents have chosen interactive exercises and games and 53% of the respondents have selected watching videos as their favourite online activity. The next preferred activities are conversations with 47% of the respondents and listening songs with 40% of the respondents. The least favourite online activity following the opinions of the respondents is listening to podcasts or audio recordings.
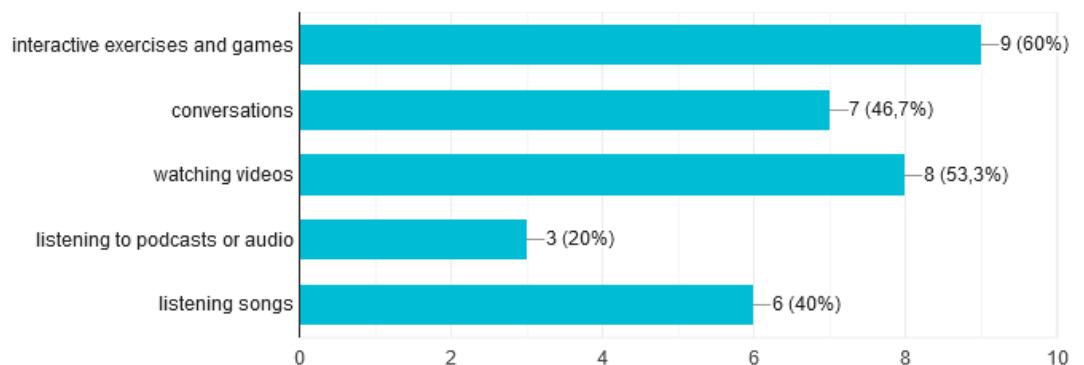

Figure12. The participants' preferences regarding activities online

Figure13 represents students' levels of motivation and engagement during online lessons. As can be seen in Figure13, when asked if they feel motivated and engaged during online lessons, a great number of the students answered definitely yes. Also, 5 out of the 15 students answered rather yes and only 2 out of them rather not.
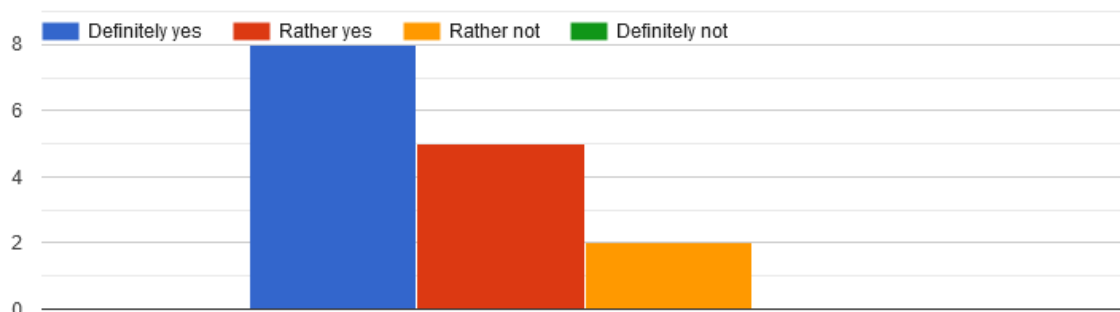

Figure13. The participants' motivation and engagement during online lessons

When it comes to the areas of English that students find the most challenging to learn, in the first position there is grammar. As shown in Figure14, almost all of the participants because as many as 73% mentioned that grammar is the most difficult to learn. Further on, 33% of the participants chose conversations, and 20% of them writing. The research suggests that reading and listening are the least difficult skills to learn for the participants.
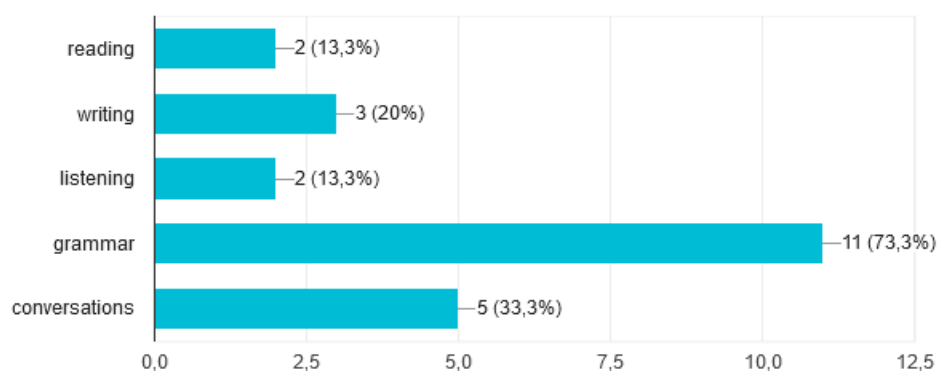

Figure14. The participants' difficulties in English

With respect to skills improvement after taking English lessons online, all of the participants of the study agreed that their linguistic abilities ameliorated thanks to the online English classes. As indicated in Figure15, the grammar skills of the participants have improved the most. Besides, the speaking skills improved significantly too, as claimed by 40% of the participants. Other skills that got better after taking classes online were listening and reading as declared by 27% of the participants. Ultimately, the research shows that the skill that seems to be enhanced the least after English online lessons is writing.
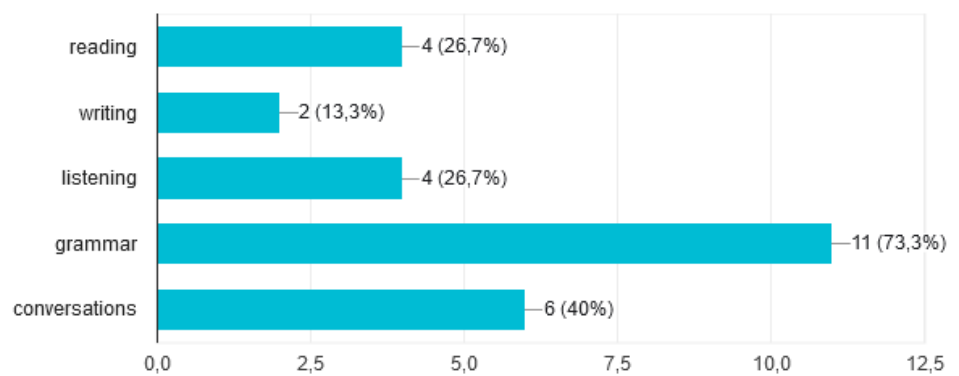

Figure15. The participants' skills improvement

Another issue analysed is whether students gained new knowledge after taking classes online. The analysis exposes that yes, as presented in Figure16, 10 out of 15 respondents answered that they definitely learned something new after online English classes and 5 of them stated that rather yes.
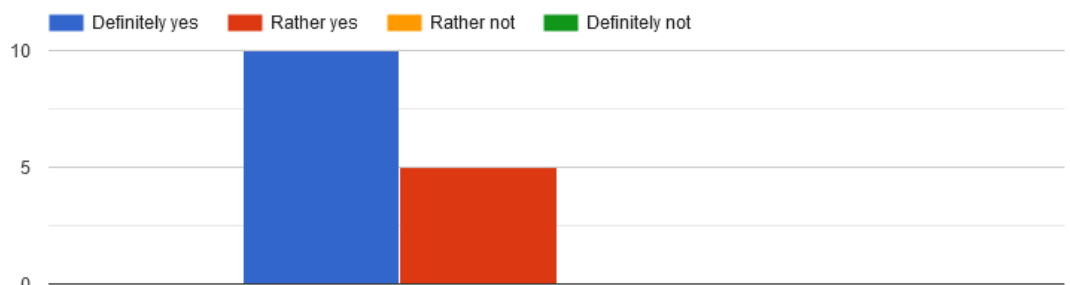

Figure16. The participants' acquisition of the new knowledge

The analysis also indicates that most of the students rate their progress as big after studying English online. Figure17 shows how participants rate their progress in English on a scale from 1 to 5, where number 1 corresponds to very small progress and number 5 corresponds to very big progress. The percentage of the participants who rate their progress as very big is the highest and it amounts to 53%. Additionally, 33% of the participants rate their progress as 4, meaning big and only 7% of the participants rate their progress as 3, equal to average, or 2, equal to small.
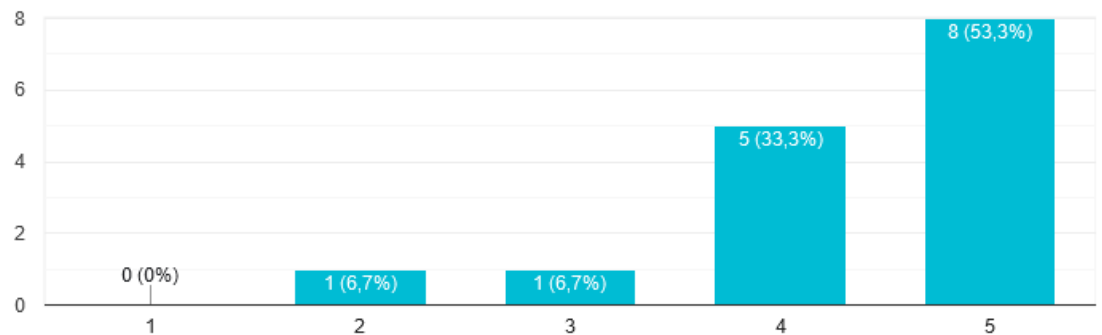
Figure17. Progress of the participants after taking English online classes

One of the controversial issues that was researched was the opinions of the participants about the effectiveness of learning English online. As can be seen in Figure18, nearly all of the participants of the study affirmed that learning English online is effective. However, 13% of them are not sure if it is practical or not.

Figure18. The participants' opinions about the effectiveness of online lessons

The last issue researched is students' overall satisfaction with their language learning experience online. When asked if they are satisfied that they are studying English online, as many as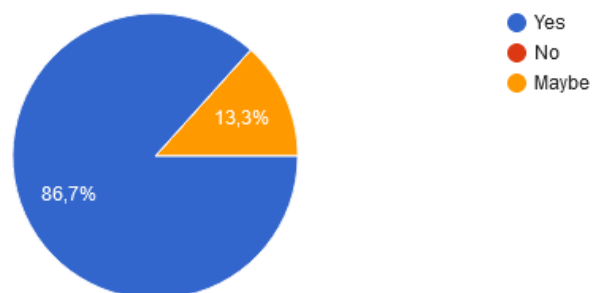 80% of the participants responded that yes, and only 13% of the participants replied maybe. Moreover, 7% of the participants claimed that they are more than satisfied to study English online.

All in all, the results show that the vast majority of students are satisfied with their online language learning experience, their motivation during the lesson is high and their language skills have improved after taking English classes online which confirms the research hypothesis put forward in this thesis.

4. Discussion

The findings support the hypothesis presented in this thesis since they demonstrate that most of the students participating in this study are content with their English lessons online. They are also highly motivated during the course and their language skills have improved. The research shows that the majority of the students participate in English online lessons eagerly and only a small percentage of them do not. Perhaps, some of the students may face distractions at home or have technical problems such as poor internet connection. Another reason for their unwillingness to participate in the lesson online can be difficulty with understanding the content of the course.

A bigger part of the participants reported that they prefer taking classes online rather than in person, this is mainly due to their flexibility and interestingness but also because the materials are more appealing and personalized. Probably, the students who have chosen traditional lessons over online lessons may encounter problems with concentration at home or miss the social components of a conventional classroom. They can feel socially isolated which decreases their interest in participating in the lesson online. When it comes to the challenges during online lessons, most of the participants asserted that usually there are no problems, only a small proportion of them stated that they encountered problems with poor Internet connection. It can be caused by their device limitations, router issues, or subscribing to inadequate, low-

quality internet service plans. Low-speed internet services can lead to weak connectivity, particularly when several devices are connected at once.

The analysis indicates that the most frequently used digital tool is YouTube. It may be because it provides students with various videos about different topics of their interests. It is also an engaging and dynamic tool that allows students to experience authentic language and study at their own pace. The next popular tools include Wordwall, Liveworksheets and Kahoot. The potential reason for this can be their interactivity. Each of these platforms consists of fun games, quizzes, puzzles, or digital worksheets that encourage students to learn and permit them to actively engage in the lesson. What is more, they are easy to use and access for both students and teachers. Other popular tools are also Google Meet, Zoom, Google Classroom and Quizlet. Possibly, the first platforms mentioned allow for easy communication with the teacher and possess good cooperation features such as screen sharing, chat, breakout rooms, or real-time collaboration on documents. In contrast, Quizlet supports learning a language through various study modes such as flashcards, quizzes and games. It also incorporates interactive elements that contribute to increased motivation and engagement of the students. The least used or not used at all tools involve Padlet, Prezi, and YouGlish. This can be because these resources are not as popular as the others and some of the students may never have heard of them.

Regarding the interestingness of the described digital tools, the research suggests that the most interesting tools according to the respondents are YouTube and Wordwall. As has already been stated, both of these tools have rich interactive materials that make the lesson more engaging and dynamic for the students which can be the reason for choosing them. An interesting tool for the respondents is also Kahoot, the reason for it is that most of them enjoy playing games and solving interactive quizzes. Additionally, they like the element of the competition.

In relation to the effectiveness of the digital tools, the study presents that the participants consider YouTube, Wordwall and Liveworksheets as the most helpful. Perhaps, it is because all of these tools can help to improve various areas of English such as listening, reading, grammar, writing, or even speaking and make learning a language more enjoyable through the use of interactive resources. These platforms also include a lot of study materials that are easily accessible to everyone. Another practical device according to the participants is Quizlet. Probably, many of them have chosen it because it can be a powerful tool for learning and memorizing new

vocabulary. It can be also useful in terms of revising previous concepts and definitions.

Apart from the effectiveness of digital tools, the effectiveness of teaching methods has been investigated. It turns out that the major part of the participants consider learning through conversations and roleplays as the most effective. It is possibly because they teach how to use the language in different real-life situations. Thanks to the conversations and roleplays, students can practice the use of authentic language but also gain useful language skills that can be applied in diverse contexts. Furthermore, frequent communication and interaction can help students to develop oral proficiency in a foreign language. The least participants chose storytelling and CLIL methods as effective ones, which may be caused by the rare use of these methods online hence not everyone is aware of their practicality.

As revealed by the study, a great part of students prefer individual classes and only a small part of them classes in pairs or groups. Perhaps, individual online classes allow for more customized learning as the teacher can tailor the teaching techniques to fit the student's learning preferences, needs, and objectives as well as adapt the pace of teaching.

Based on the results from the question about students' preferences regarding activities online, it is clear that students' favourite activities are interactive games, exercises and watching videos. The potential reason for this is that they make learning more exciting and enjoyable for instance, games incorporate elements of competition or rewards making students highly motivated and engaged in the learning process whereas interactive exercises can stimulate problem-solving and critical-thinking skills and make students focused on the task. Also, videos can capture students' attention during the lesson because they are often visually appealing and interesting for them. Additionally, in the high position, there are conversations. Probably, many of the students enjoy and appreciate interacting with the teacher or their classmates and they like to share their opinions and ideas with others. Moreover, the most common goal for students is usually developing their communication skills which is why they may want to converse with others as much as possible. The research demonstrates that the least amount of students chose listening to podcasts or audios as their preferred activity. It may be because students' interests do not align with the topic of the recording, or the language implemented is too difficult for them. Besides,

some of the students can have shorter attention spans and they might not enjoy listening to long episodes of the podcasts.

With respect to the students' motivation and engagement during online lessons, the research confirms that nearly all of the students are motivated and engaged during the lesson. Online lessons often include the use of various multimedia and interactive resources which can make the language experience more attractive, it is also more flexible and personalized which in turn can lead to students' increased motivation. Only 2 out of the 15 students claimed that they are rather not motivated during lessons online. It is possible that it is difficult for them to remain motivated and attentive in the virtual environment because it lacks the physical presence element. As a result, some of the students may feel isolated and prefer to participate in the traditional lessons with real interaction.

The findings suggest that the most difficult area of English according to the respondents is grammar. Almost all of the participants of this study declared that they have problems with learning grammar. Grammar can be challenging because it involves using various, complex rules which might be difficult to understand and apply. Frequently, learners have to deal with language irregularities or exceptions which makes it even more difficult. Also, conversations seem to be a challenging aspect for the students. It is most likely that the students have not mastered their listening and speaking skills enough and they cannot express themselves or comprehend others. To interact effectively, they should first learn appropriate vocabulary and grammar structures and then they will be ready to develop their communication skills.

Although students seemed to struggle with grammar and conversations in particular, the results show that after taking English classes online all of the participants have improved their skills in these areas. Some of the students affirmed also that they developed their reading and listening skills. This relationship demonstrates that online lessons can strengthen students' language acquisition. What is more, the research illustrates that the large part of students agree that they gained new knowledge after online classes and they rate their progress in English as big or very big. Probably, it is due to the fact that online learning is more personalized, interactive and diverse. When asked about the effectiveness of learning English online, the vast majority of the participants agreed that learning English online is effective and stated that they are satisfied with their overall virtual learning experience. Only a

small percentage of the participants were not sure whether studying English online is beneficial or whether they are pleased with it. The research indicates that with the aid of various approaches, techniques and digital tools implemented, learning English online can be a valuable and successful way to develop language skills.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to check to what extent students are satisfied with their online language learning experience in terms of motivation, enjoyment, and language acquisition and to determine which methods and digital tools implemented in an online EFL classroom they find interesting or effective. The results showed that the majority of students are satisfied with their online language learning experience, they are highly motivated, engaged, and focused during the lesson and they made significant development in their language skills since starting English classes online. Moreover, most of the students enjoy lessons online more than traditional lessons because they are more flexible, diversified, engaging, and interactive. The research revealed that the most interesting digital tools for the participants are YouTube, Wordwall and Kahoot while the most effective ones are YouTube, Liveworksheets and Wordwall. When it comes to teaching methods and types of online activities, the research demonstrated that the most effective teaching method for the participants is learning through conversations and roleplays and their preferred online activities include interactive exercises and games, watching videos and conversations. According to the theoretical chapters and the results of the study, it can be stated that most of the digital tools and teaching methods described in this thesis can be effectively implemented in the online EFL classroom.

Overall, the outcomes of the study confirmed the expectations. The results of the questionnaire are satisfying although they cannot be acknowledged fully and accepted as conclusive. Measuring students' satisfaction is challenging and it may not accurately reflect the complexity of the learning experience. Students' satisfaction may vary depending on different factors such as language level or type of the course hence their opinions cannot fully indicate the effectiveness of given methods or tools. What is more, the sample was too small. Owing to the fact that the participants of the study consisted only of students who have learned English online, it was difficult to

get many answers. Unfortunately, not many students were interested in completing the survey and those who completed it mostly came from Poland. Therefore if this study was to be replicated I would make some suggestions such as increasing the number of participants or addressing research questions in different settings or cultures. A questionnaire is one of the easiest and fastest ways to collect data but it has its own limitations for instance, the respondents may have different interpretations of the questions or they may misunderstand the meaning of the questions which can lead to inaccurate results. Certainly, further research in this area should be done, possibly on a different control group or in another zone.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The questionnaire

Students' perceptions about learning English online

Dear respondents,

I am a student of English Language and Literature at the University of Padova. As a part of my Master's thesis, I am conducting a survey among students about their views and opinions on learning English online.

The following survey is anonymous and it is addressed to students who have learned English online. The results of the survey will be used for research purposes only.

Thank you in advance for your time and answers.

julia.dziewulska@studenti.unipd.it Cambia account

Non condiviso

* Indica una domanda obbligatoria

1. Gender *

○ Female

○ Male

○ Prefer not to say

2. Age *

○ 10-13

○ 13-16

○ 16-19

○ Altro: _____

3. Level of school *

○ primary school

○ high school

4. How do you learn English online? *

○ I have private lessons

○ I learn through an educational platform

○ Altro: _____

5. How do you rate your English skills? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
very bad	○	○	○	○	○	very good

6. How much time do you spend learning English at home after the lesson? *

○ 1 hour a day

○ 1 hour a week

○ 1 hour a month

○ I don't study at home

○ Altro: _____

7. Do you participate in the English online lessons eagerly?

	definitely yes	rather yes	rather not	definitely not
.	○	○	○	○

8. Do you prefer learning English online or traditional lessons at school? *

○ I prefer online lessons

○ I prefer traditional lessons

9. If you have chosen lessons online, why do you prefer them?

☐ they are more flexible

☐ they are easy to access

☐ they are more personalized

☐ they are diverse and interesting

☐ they are more engaging

☐ they are more cost-effective

☐ Altro:

10. Are there any technical problems or difficulties during online lessons? *

☐ poor Internet connection

☐ poor visibility of the teacher

☐ poor audio quality

☐ usually there are no problems

☐ Altro: _____

11. Which of these digital tools or platforms have you had the opportunity to use? *

☐ Google Meet

☐ Zoom

☐ Google Classroom

☐ Microsoft Teams

☐ Quizlet

☐ Padlet

☐ Wordwall

☐ Liveworksheets

☐ Kahoot

☐ Quizziz

☐ YouTube

☐ YouGlish

☐ TED Talks

☐ Prezi

☐ I didn't have a chance to use any of these tools

☐ Altro: _____

12. Which of the following tools do you find most interesting? *

- ☐ Google Meet
- ☐ Zoom
- ☐ Google Classroom
- ☐ Microsoft Teams
- ☐ Quizlet
- ☐ Padlet
- ☐ Wordwall
- ☐ Liveworksheets
- ☐ Kahoot
- ☐ Quizziz
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ YouGlish
- ☐ TED Talks
- ☐ Prezi
- ☐ Altro: _____

13. Why are the tools listed above interesting?

La tua risposta

14. What platforms and tools help you learn English online the most? *

☐ Google Meet

☐ Zoom

☐ Google Classroom

☐ Microsoft Teams

☐ Quizlet

☐ Padlet

☐ Wordwall

☐ Liveworksheets

☐ Kahoot

☐ Quizziz

☐ YouTube

☐ YouGlish

☐ TED Talks

☐ Prezi

☐ Altro: _____

15. What online teaching methods are the most effective for you? *

☐ learning through movement (TPR)

☐ mind maps

☐ learning elements of another subject in a foreign language (for example learning biology, history in English)

☐ learning through conversations, roleplays

☐ brainstorming (problem solving and generating ideas)

☐ learning through telling or listening to stories (storytelling)

16. What form of online lessons do you prefer? *

○ individual classes

○ classes in pairs or small groups

○ classes in big groups

17. What types of activities do you prefer when learning online? *

☐ interactive exercises and games

☐ conversations

☐ watching videos

☐ listening to podcasts or audio

☐ listening songs

☐ Altro: _____

18. Do you feel motivated and engaged during online lessons?

	Definitely yes	Rather yes	Rather not	Definitely not
.	○	○	○	○

19. What do you find most difficult when learning English? *

- [ ] reading

- [ ] writing

- [ ] listening

- [ ] grammar

- [ ] conversations

20. Have any of these skills improved after taking online English classes? *

- ( ) Yes

- ( ) No

- ( ) Altro: _____

21. If yes, which ones? *

- [ ] reading

- [ ] writing

- [ ] listening

- [ ] grammar

- [ ] conversations

22. Do you feel like you learned something new after online classes?

	Definitely yes	Rather yes	Rather not	Definitely not
.	○	○	○	○

23. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your progress in learning English since *
you started online classes?

	1	2	3	4	5	
very small progress	○	○	○	○	○	very big progress

24. Do you think that learning English online is effective? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

○ Altro: _____

25. Are you satisfied that you are studying English online? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

○ Altro: _____