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ARTICLE

Challenges in Teaching English Online: A Descriptive Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Online learning platforms have emerged as transformative tools in the realm of education, offering significant benefits to both teaching and learning processes. These platforms allow educators to effectively deliver course content through a range of digital technologies, including computers, tablets, and interactive software. Such integration not only modernizes the instructional approach but also broadens access to educational resources beyond the constraints of physical classrooms. For students, especially those enrolled in traditional face-to-face programs, online learning offers enhanced flexibility—enabling continued engagement with course materials during periods of absence or when in-class comprehension proves challenging. Moreover, online platforms contribute to improved learning outcomes by fostering active student engagement through diverse digital tools such as multimedia resources, interactive assessments, and collaborative online environments. However, despite these advantages, the transition to digital instruction is not without its challenges, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. This study adopts a quantitative research design to explore the specific challenges encountered by EFL teachers in online teaching environments. Data were gathered through a structured survey administered to 56 EFL instructors, who were asked to indicate their level of agreement with six targeted questions relating to obstacles commonly faced in virtual English instruction. Statistical methods were employed to analyze the data, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the findings. Results of the study reveal several significant challenges that hinder the effectiveness of online EFL teaching, including issues related to technological limitations, student participation, and instructional adaptability. These findings underscore the importance of addressing these barriers to optimize both

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teacher performance and student achievement in online language education settings. The study concludes by highlighting the need for targeted professional development and institutional support to better equip teachers for the demands of digital instruction.

Keywords: TEFL; EFL; Online Teaching; Linguistics; Teaching Methods

1. Introduction

Essentially, teaching is a challenging endeavor, as it involves various demands during class instruction, such as expertise, knowledge, and teaching ability. English language instruction requires teachers who are proficient in English and possess the skills necessary for professional teaching. Professionally conducted teaching empowers students to utilize the language and gain insight into the target language. Regarding competency, Richards notes that "proficiency in English language teaching is based on knowledge of subject matter, teaching skills, and the ability to teach in English—a skill often influenced by the teacher's language proficiency," since this competency enables educators to meet the needs of learners in their language acquisition journey [1].

Teaching English as a foreign language (henceforth TEFL) is a complex activity, which requires a high proficiency in using the teaching methods, the communicative competence to, "teach students on how to communicate both in and outside the classroom", the language knowledge, the class management and the students' management as well [1]. The purpose of all these factors is to meet the learners' needs and to control what is going on inside the classroom. TEFL means that the English language is taught in countries where the inhabitants have a mother tongue other than English, for example, in Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and so on. Accordingly, Crystal argues that "English may be taught in countries where it is not the mother tongue nor does it have any special status, as in Japan, Sweden, and most other countries" [2]. Moreover, unlike the mother tongue, the foreign language has different vocabulary, grammatical structures, pronunciation, etc. In this case, a teacher who is conversant in most teaching processes and has the knowledge that enables him/ her to deal with online learning via various learning platforms is needed.

As stated by Surkamp and Viebrock, TEFL poses a significant challenge for educators in the future, as they strive to acquire the essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to teach effectively [3]. This growth will enable them to become professional practitioners who possess a high degree of competence, self-assurance, and adaptability [4]. Teachers who teach English as a foreign language can be prepared to develop different abilities that provide them with the fundamentals of teaching requirements. TEFL can be fulfilled by using different methods, such as the Communicative Approach, which is common now in Iraqi schools [4]. This is in addition to other different methods of teaching, such as The Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct and Indirect methods, etc. In TEFL, all these methods can be applied with the support of technology and the internet. Ultimately, Anastassiou and Andreou propose that the teaching of English should focus on enhancing intercultural competency education through the English language [5].

2. Technology in TEFL

The use of technology and internet in TEFL is very important as it can help and facilitate the teaching and the learning processes, as positive changes occur through integrating technology in these two processes, but it is not enough. Mishra and Koehler contend that proponents of incorporating technology in education frequently anticipate significant transformations in teaching and learning processes [4]. However, simply adding technology to the educational system is insufficient, particularly in today's rapidly evolving educational landscape [4]. For that reason, the teaching-learning process needs to integrate more and more technologies, such as computers, educational games, pictures, digital videos, etc., in TEFL with the support of the internet.

The use of Internet in TEFL is one of the most advanced technologies, in addition to the standard technologies, such as those including the use of books, chalk and blackboard. The Internet access encourages teachers to use computers, because in this way the teaching practices become easier and more beneficial for the students' learning. Moreover, according to Pierson, it helps to incorporate technological devices,

such as computers, into the syllabus, which is becoming an integrated part of an ideal teaching method that "addresses the individual learning needs"[6].

According to Condie et al., educators have successfully incorporated various technologies, including laptops, interactive whiteboards, and the internet[7]. They argue that the amalgamation of hardware, software, and connectivity enables them to create inventive methods for teaching and learning; it has been noticed that the technology and Internet have effective benefits in both teaching and learning English as a foreign language. Additionally, they assume that movable technologies such as laptops are useful for teachers in "management and administration"[7].

So, the use of technology and Internet in TEFL has various benefits in teaching and learning, as they facilitate the teaching and learning processes and help teachers to develop their experience, and to be connected to the outside world. Besides, they make advanced changes in the classroom that grant pupils the opportunity to have different learning abilities that enable them to learn English as a foreign language through online learning.

3. Online Learning

3.1. Definition of Online Learning

The Internet was invented in 1990 by two computer scientists: Tim Berners-Lee from Britain and Robert Cailliau from Belgium[8]. This system is invented to share "ideas and information" all over the world. The educational system uses it to sustain the learning process, but it is different from the classroom environment, because there is a distance between the teacher and learners. Online learning is known as a form of distance education that can be used to study when students cannot attend school for various reasons, as happened during the last period, with COVID-19, which prevented students from attending their lessons in school.

Different perspectives exist regarding the definition of online learning, but we will embrace a few of them. According to Carliner, it pertains to learning and additional supportive resources that can be accessed via a computer[9]. In other words, she offers another definition, in which online learning means the "educational material that is presented on a computer"; Watson et al. defined it as "education in which instruction and content are delivered primarily via the Internet[10]. Online learning represents a type of distance education. In this regard, Cavanaugh et al. describe online learning as a type of distance education whose main distinguishing feature is the separation between teacher and student[11]. Nguyen describes it as a type of distance learning or distance education, which has grown to be the most significant area of distance learning in recent years[12]. Ultimately, Dhull and Arora argue that online education includes various technologies such as the internet, email, chat, newsgroups, and multimedia conferencing that are delivered through computer networks to facilitate learning. It allows learners to progress at their own speed and according to their own schedules, and offers greater accessibility, enabling students to study from any location globally[13].

Thus, according to these definitions, online learning is considered as a distance education that can be done by the student from anywhere in the world, i.e., outside the country, with Internet access. Accordingly, Natrella sustains that online learning is conceivable with the availability of the Internet[14]. Online learning has an importance in language teaching. This will be discussed in the next section.

3.2. Online Learning in Language Teaching

With the rise of the Internet and technology, online education has become significantly important in language instruction. Moreover, students are utilizing online platforms to access information and news and communicate and share ideas and concepts through technology. Online education enables educators to leverage this continuous learning environment by incorporating real-world applications of theory with multimedia, videos, chats, and interactive elements. Educators can effectively utilize the capabilities of everyday technology to integrate educational theories into the classroom.

Online education is a fantastic solution to address the limitations in accessing teaching resources and the time spent monitoring students' progress. The tangible advantages for educators can be evaluated in terms of time savings and a decrease in workload. For instance, utilizing a Learning Management System (LMS) enables teachers to efficiently create assessments by leveraging an existing or continually growing question bank. Additionally, LMS technology facilitates the automatic grading of these assessments. Other practical advantages include the capability to monitor the

submission of online assignments and the potential to modify or rebuild a course structure using new templates [15]. Moreover, Anglia writes about the importance of online learning in language teaching, as it can connect teachers and students internationally and can offer students flexible learning hours, give them the flexibility to learn, and may also increase the ability to retain information [16]. Also, online learning is important for teachers because it helps them to structure their classes to suit the individual learning requirements of each student. Thus, the importance of online learning in language teaching has a prominent role, as it helps teachers to present their classes easily and quickly. In addition, Gautam considers that online learning provides teachers with an effective method to deliver classes to learners via videos, PDFs, and podcasts [17]. Teachers can share all these devices and include them in their lesson plans. Finally, effective language teaching can be done anywhere, but online teaching requires different strategies, skills, and technologies more than in traditional face-to-face classes.

4. Online Learning Platforms

Online learning platforms allow students to communicate and share information with their peers [18]. Additionally, these platforms rely heavily on connection and sharing as a fundamental strategy that should be utilized throughout all phases of online learning environments, whether it involves interactions among students or between students and their instructors (Ibid.). Additionally, Dare has argued that online learning platforms can integrate subjects into more simplified approaches to knowledge, exploiting students for their analytical skills while maintaining that there is no substitute for neoliberal education and a neoliberal work style [19]. In this case, online learning platforms contribute to the improvement of learners' knowledge through the gradual learning practices as well as through the teaching process.

Thus, online learning platforms are extremely dependent on linking and sharing between students themselves or between students and their teacher. Finally, they help in improving learners' knowledge with the aid of continuous practice as well as in improving the teaching system. The online learning platforms include several types, which will be discussed in the following section.

4.1. Types of Online Learning Platforms

Online learning platforms involve several types. We will present the main types considered by Whittemore [20], providing a short explanation for each type:

- **The learning destination site** functions as a collaborative platform that presents courses from various providers. It includes an authoring tool for educators to upload materials and a learning management system (LMS) that allows students to access courses through a link from the site.
- **A traditional learning management system** provides essential features required for developing and hosting an online course. It is beneficial for designing courses, storing them, managing learner profiles, reporting grades and progress, and offering other tools helpful for online education.
- **Open-source learning management systems** deliver the fundamental functionality necessary for developing and hosting online courses, similar to commercial LMS options. Additionally, they are available at no cost and can be tailored to specific needs.
- **Modern learning management solutions** signify a new generation of platforms that emphasize the learner experience and sometimes cater to specific pedagogical approaches that traditional LMS solutions may not adequately support.
- **Learning management ecosystems** integrate various tools and services into a single platform. These ecosystems include course authoring software, assessment tools, adaptive learning engines, eCommerce capabilities, and learning content management solutions, all provided together for the learner.
- **A custom-built learning platform** is created from the ground up, focusing on the needs of the business, learner, and pedagogy. While the costs can be substantial, it delivers exactly what the users require and grants them complete control over their project.

Thus, all these six types of online learning platforms are founded for the benefit of online students' learning, and meanwhile, for the benefit of teachers who teach via the electronic platforms.

4.2. Modes of Online Learning Platforms

The term of *blended learning* is interpreted by Thorne as "an example of how e/ online learning have evolved from its first inception"[21]. It helps to define the components of "e-learning". She (Ibid.) states that *blended learning* is used to help pupils learn, and at the same time, enables learners to help other people. Moreover, its nature "is based on the traditional ways that people have always learnt." Besides, it supports us with the opportunity to explore our learning resources and to find solutions that exploit the advantages of each medium.

In the present day, going to school has become problematic, one day at school and the other days at home. Blended learning is a very important program for the students to learn, because not all the materials can be discussed in the classroom, and the online learning material is a complementary part for the classroom materials. In view of that, Carliner defines blended learning as "a program for education or training in which some parts are available online and the others are presented in a classroom[9]. The program is said to blend online and classroom learning." It combines what is said in the classroom with what is said online. Additionally, *blended learning system* integrates a group of learning environments and methods into the teaching/learning process. In this context, Keengwe and Kidd assert that blended learning encompasses a diverse range of learning settings and methodologies for teaching and learning, including asynchronous learning networks, web-enhanced teaching platforms, and digital online educational tools[22]. The three primary technological elements necessary for a hybrid course consist of: technology infrastructure, instructional technology, and technology in learning[8]. *Blended learning* contributes with effective technologies that serve both the teaching and the learning processes. The notion of *blended learning* has been used and explained in many ways in the context of foreign language teaching (FLT) and beyond[23].

Furthermore, Harmer provides detailed insights into blended learning[24]. He mentions that we can continue performing many activities traditionally done in the classroom, while also having the freedom to extend our learning beyond the physical space without having to leave our seats. In other words, we can integrate both the internal and external learning environments in what is generally known as blended learning. The concept of blending involves teachers and students utilizing an interconnected combination of textbooks, classroom presentations, activities, and digital resources, whether in the form of online content or integrated within applications. In this increasingly prevalent scenario, the work performed in class is bolstered, often prefaced (or flipped), practiced, and reviewed online[24].

Through Harmer's explanations, one can understand that students can learn face-to-face or via online technologies that are available inside the classroom[24]. Moreover, he (Ibid.) offers some examples that prove the advantages of *blended learning*. In the first instance, the instructor utilizes either the textbook or their own resources (along with input from the students); however, they will also (and this is where the blend occurs) guide the students to online resources that offer practice materials tailored for that particular day or week's lessons. In the second scenario, the teacher might encourage the students to watch and/or seek out a video related to a topic they will focus on in a future class. Perhaps, in the third case, the teacher could incorporate YouTube videos during a lesson. Students might be instructed to look up information on their mobile devices during the class or to find additional texts similar to the one the class has been studying. These examples demonstrate that the blended learning format works effectively and is beneficial for students, because they can relearn the online material together with the class material. As Nguyen describes, blended learning integrates in-person classes, online learning, and technology-assisted education, technologies that teachers use in teaching language and that help students to learn the foreign language[12]. He (Ibid.) adds that blended or hybrid learning is a way of combining the human resources and the technology. In other words, this mixture is a combination that uses "digital and online technologies". These two components have the effectiveness in helping pupils to learn. In summary, blended learning has been used in the context of FLT. It is considered as a support to teaching and learning, which encourages the two processes to keep working and support education inside or outside the classroom. In other terms, as stated by Carliner, blended learning combines online and in-person education and structured and unstructured learning into one comprehensive learning program[9]. So, it is very important to motivate students to learn. It resembles to distance learning via online technologies[9].

Distance learning is an educational program which can

be followed also via online. It is also known as e-learning. It has become required nowadays because of the COVID-19 pandemic; when most of the schools have been closed, or even if teachers and students attended the school, they had to respect social distancing. Carliner emphasizes that distance learning encompasses any educational scenario where the instructor and students are not together in time or place (or both). i.e., they have to be not close from each other[9]. Watson et al. describe distance learning as an educational experience where participants are physically separated from one another, such as in correspondence courses, online education, or through videoconferencing[10]. Distance learning is seen as a solution to several educational problems, including crowded schools, a shortage of secondary courses for remedial or accelerated learning, a lack of access to qualified teachers in a local school, and the challenge to accommodate the students who need to learn at a slower or more rapid pace or in a place different from a school classroom[11]. Thus, the main characteristic of distance learning is the "separation of teacher and learner"[10]. It can, especially online, meet the students' needs who cannot participate or choose not to take part in traditional classroom settings. Besides, it serves the pupils who cannot attend the traditional lessons, who are resident far from the school, etc. It encourages the online enhanced learning.

Online enhanced learning means that students use the technology that is based on the web to enhance a traditional face-to-face course[25]. So, online learning cannot be achieved without online technology. Online enhanced learning can help students to have access to courses that they could not share in the classroom. It can also be as a support for teachers who teach via electronic learning platforms to deliver the information to learners in a simple way. However, in spite of the advantages that the online enhanced learning presents, teachers and students encounter a group of disadvantages, for example: the internet access, the computer availability, the suitable time to learn, the way of learning, the method that teachers use it in teaching the language, etc. Moreover, online enhanced learning improves the students' learning outcomes. Nguyen proposes that while not all outcomes are favorable, certain ones enhance the learning experience, as demonstrated by improved test scores, increased student interaction with course material, a better perception of learning and the online format, a heightened sense of community among students, and a decrease in withdrawals or failures[12]. Thus, online enhanced learning is a program that is considered useful for students' learning because, for example, if students cannot attend the classes for some reason, via online courses they can learn the courses they have missed.

The conclusions that we reached so far are that all the modes of online learning platforms, whether blended, distance, or online enhanced learning, serve teaching language. They are helpful for the teaching/learning process, as teachers can deliver the materials to students easily using technologies such as computers and, meanwhile, students can learn also easily in the traditional courses, i.e., face-to-face format, even if they cannot attend them in the school or cannot understand them during the class. Additionally, the modes of online learning platforms improve the students' learning results, making the students engaged with the class material, i.e., keeping them engaged with online learning by using some technologies via the Internet.

Theoretical Frameworks

Incorporating theoretical frameworks such as Differentiated Instruction and Constructivist methods is crucial for successful online language education.

Constructivist Approach: Constructivism suggests that learners actively create knowledge through their experiences and interactions. In the context of online language learning, this means providing authentic and context-rich settings where students participate in meaningful activities. For example, using virtual simulations or group projects can immerse learners in practical language applications, enhancing their understanding and retention. As Can highlights, technologies such as the Internet and virtual learning environments expand the possibilities for language learning, requiring a reevaluation of teaching approaches and methods to encourage learner independence and interactive abilities[26].

Differentiated Instruction: Differentiated Instruction recognizes the varied needs, readiness levels, and learning preferences of students. In the realm of online language education, this approach entails customizing content, processes, and products to suit individual learner profiles. For instance, offering materials in different formats (such as videos, readings, and interactive exercises) and allowing learners to select topics that align with their interests can boost engagement and improve learning results. This method is consistent with

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, highlighting the significance of providing suitable challenges and support to enhance the learning experience [27, 28].

Social Constructivism: Social constructivism highlights the significance of social interactions and cultural environments in the formation of knowledge. In the realm of online language education, utilizing collaborative resources such as discussion boards, peer evaluations, and group assignments can promote the social negotiation of meaning and the development of community. This method not only improves language skills but also cultivates a sense of community and motivation within learners [26].

Multiple Intelligences and Learning Styles: Acknowledging that students exhibit different types of intelligences and preferences in learning, online language instruction can adopt a range of teaching strategies to accommodate these variations. For example, using music, visual resources, narrative techniques, and physical activities can engage various intelligences, thus enhancing the accessibility and effectiveness of learning. Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences underpins this method by recognizing that individuals have distinct forms of intelligence that can be developed through diverse teaching approaches [27, 28].

Implications for Online Language Teaching: By integrating these theoretical perspectives, a more inclusive and effective environment for online language instruction is created. Educators are able to develop courses that are adaptable, tailored, and interactive, fostering active participation and meeting diverse learner requirements. This comprehensive method not only improves language skills but also nurtures critical thinking, teamwork, and skills for lifelong learning [26].

Applying these theories in online language teaching strategies ensures a learner-focused approach that addresses individual differences and facilitates significant learning experiences.

5. Methodology

This research utilizes a descriptive analysis methodology to explore English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' views on online instruction and the elements that might hinder its effectiveness. A quantitative survey-based approach is adopted to collect data, facilitating statistical examination of trends and patterns. The participants in this study are EFL teachers who are presently involved in online teaching. A convenience sampling technique is employed to select participants from a variety of educational institutions. The criteria for inclusion stipulate that participants must possess at least one year of experience in online EFL teaching. A structured questionnaire is created to gather information from the participants. The questionnaire consists of Likert-scale items ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), assessing teachers' views in relation to the six research questions (RQs): Variations in students' subject-matter ability levels, Stability of technical platforms, Constraints of technical platforms, Teachers' lack of technical training, Students' lack of technical training, and Sense of isolation/lack of community.

The questionnaire is subjected to expert validation to guarantee clarity and reliability. It is distributed online using Google Forms or a comparable digital platform. Participants are contacted through email and professional connections, ensuring anonymity and voluntary involvement. Data collection takes place over a span of four weeks.

The gathered responses are analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions. Additionally, inferential statistical methods, such as chi-square tests and independent t-tests, are utilized to examine the hypotheses.

- Null Hypothesis (H0): No significant impediments to online teaching exist based on the six variables.
- Alternative Hypotheses (H1A–H6A): Significant impediments exist based on the six variables.

A p-value of <0.05 is considered statistically significant for hypothesis testing.

The research adheres to ethical research standards by guaranteeing informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and allowing participants to withdraw at any time. No personally identifiable information is gathered. Nonetheless, there are potential limitations such as self-reporting bias in participants' answers, restricted generalizability due to convenience sampling, and technical issues that may limit access to the questionnaire. This approach ensures a thorough and organized method for examining EFL teachers' views on the challenges of online teaching. The study was directed by the following RQs and hypotheses:

RQ1: Do EFL teachers believe that online teaching is impeded by variations in students' subject-matter ability levels?

H1_0: Online teaching is not impeded by variations in students' subject-matter ability levels.

H1_A: Online teaching is impeded by variations in students' subject-matter ability levels.

RQ2: Do EFL teachers believe that online teaching is impeded by the stability of technical platforms?

H2_0: Online teaching is not impeded by the stability of technical platforms.

H2_A: Online teaching is impeded by the stability of technical platforms.

RQ3: Do EFL teachers believe that online teaching is impeded by limited functions on technical platforms?

H3_0: Online teaching is not impeded by limited functions on technical platforms.

H3_A: Online teaching is impeded by limited functions on technical platforms.

RQ4: Do EFL teachers believe that online teaching is impeded by their lack of technical training?

H4_0: Online teaching is not impeded by teachers' lack of technology training.

H4_A: Online teaching is impeded by teachers' lack of technology training.

RQ5: Do EFL teachers believe that online teaching is impeded by students' lack of technical training?

H5_0: Online teaching is not impeded by students' lack of technology training.

H5_A: Online teaching is impeded by students' lack of technology training.

RQ6: Do EFL teachers believe that online teaching is impeded by a sense of isolation/lack of community on online platforms?

H6_0: Online teaching is not impeded by a sense of isolation/lack of community on online platforms.

H6_A: Online teaching is impeded by a sense of isolation/lack of community on online platforms.

6. Data Collection Protocol

Teachers were asked to provide answers to the protocol presented in **Table 1** below. The Likert-style scoring approach was 1 = completely disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, 7 = completely agree.

Table 1. Study Questionnaire.

Question	Select a Score
Do you believe that online teaching is impeded by variations in students' subject-matter ability levels?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Do you believe that online teaching is impeded by the stability of technical platforms?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Do you believe that online teaching is impeded by limited functions on technical platforms?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Do you believe that online teaching is impeded by their own lack of technology training?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Do you believe that online teaching is impeded by students' lack of technology training?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Do you believe that online teaching is impeded by a sense of isolation/lack of community on online platforms?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. Data Analysis

Each RQ was answered by means of a one-sample *t*-test, in which the test value was 4 [14, 29–31]. The null hypotheses for each RQ were one-tailed and designed to be discarded if, at $p < .05$, the calculated mean was > 4. Four was selected as the test value because, in a 7-point Likert-style scoring approach, it represents the neutral value [32]. Therefore, any score higher than the neutral value for any given RQ would mean that teachers agreed that that particular area impeded online teaching (see **Table 1** above for the format of the interview questions).

Before conducting an independent samples *t*-test, the normality of the distribution of each impedance rating for each RQ was tested through the Shapiro-Wilk (1965) test [33]. Non-normality, as indicated by a W statistic with $p < .05$, was taken to support the use of a one-sample Wilcoxon rank-sum test as a non-parametric alternative to the one-sample *t*-test, as recommended [34–37]. All data analyses for the study were performed in Stata/BE 17.0 statistical software. Stata / BE 17.0 statistical software was also utilized for graphic generation. The raw data of the study are presented in **Appendix A Table A1**.

8. *A Priori* Sample Size Calculation

Following Cohen's recommendations for a detectable effect size of 0.5, an Alpha of .05, and a Power of 0.95—and given that the hypotheses were one-tailed—a sample of 45 individuals was recommended by G*Power software (**Figure 1**)[29, 38, 39]. This sample size was exceeded, which was 56 (n = 56). Therefore, the study attained a statistical power > 0.95.

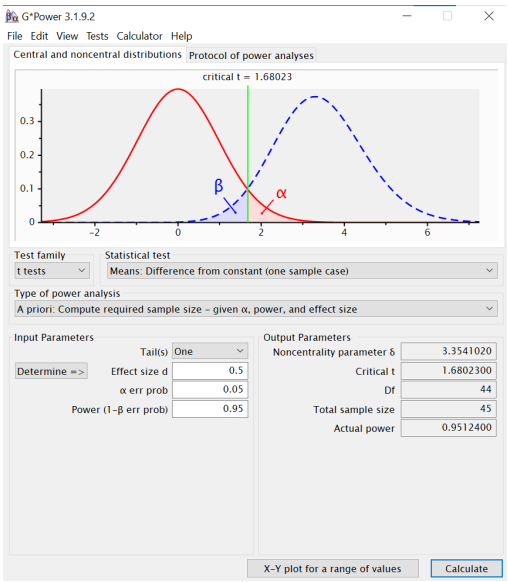

Figure 1. A priori sample size calculation.

Below, the findings of the study have been presented. Each finding is accompanied by descriptive statistics and inferential statistics that are relevant to hypothesis testing. After presenting the mean and standard deviation for each questionnaire item, W statistics for normality and t statistics for hypothesis testing have been presented.

9. Findings

RQ1

RQ1 was as follows: Do EFL teachers believe that online teaching is impeded by variations in students' subject-matter ability levels? The score assigned to RQ1 was 3.71 (SD = 1.29), and the score for RQ1 was normally distributed, W = 0.992, p = 0.970. Therefore, only a one-sample t-test was performed on RQ1. It was found that the score for RQ1 (M = 3.71, SD = 1.29) was not significantly greater than 4, $t(55) = -1.66$, p = 0.949. Consequently, the null hypothesis for RQ1 could not be rejected. **Figure 2** demonstrates that the 95% CI overlapped with the neutral value of 4, providing visual support for the failure to reject the null hypothesis. Thus, teachers did not agree that online teaching was impeded by variations in students' subject-matter ability levels.

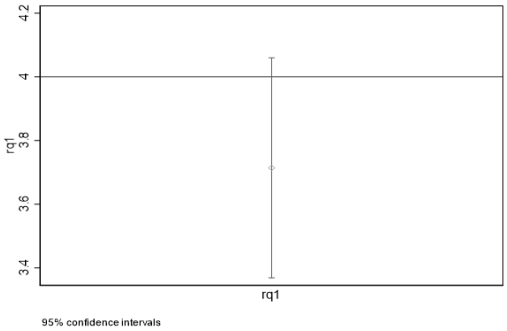

Figure 2. 95% CI plot, RQ1.

RQ2

RQ2 was as follows: Do EFL teachers believe that online teaching is impeded by the stability of technical platforms? The score assigned to RQ2 was 4.05 (SD = 0.94), and the score for RQ2 was normally distributed, W = 0.998, p < .999. Therefore, only a one-sample t-test was performed on RQ2. It was found that the score for RQ2 (M = 4.05, SD = 0.94) was not significantly greater than 4, $t(55)$ = 0.43, p = 0.337. Therefore, the null hypothesis for RQ2 could not be rejected. **Figure 3** demonstrates that the 95% CI overlapped with the neutral value of 4, providing visual support for the failure to reject the null hypothesis. Thus, teachers did not agree that online teaching was impeded by the stability of technical platforms.

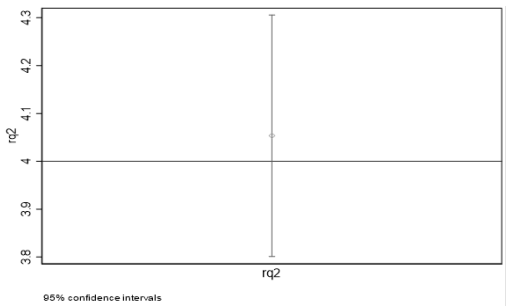

Figure 3. 95% CI plot, RQ2.

RQ3

RQ3 was as follows: Do EFL teachers believe that online teaching is impeded by limited functions on technical platforms? The score assigned to RQ3 was 4.39 (SD = 0.73), and the score for RQ3 was normally distributed, W = 0.984, p = 0.675. Therefore, only a one-sample t-test was

performed on RQ3. It was found that the score for RQ3 (M = 4.39, SD = 0.73) was significantly greater than 4, $t(55)$ = 4.02, p = 0.0001. Therefore, the null hypothesis for RQ3 was rejected. **Figure 4** demonstrates that the 95% *CI* was completely above the neutral value of 4, providing visual support for the rejection of the null hypothesis. Thus, teachers agreed that online teaching is impeded by limited functions on technical platforms.

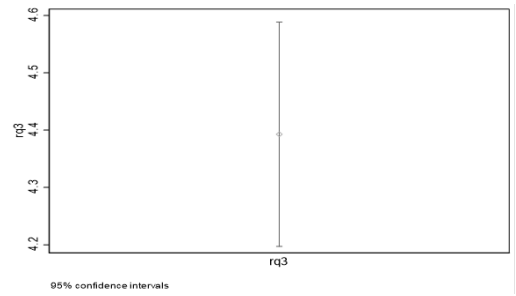

Figure 4. 95% CI plot, RQ3.

RQ4

RQ4 was as follows: Do EFL teachers believe that online teaching is impeded by their lack of technology training? The score assigned to RQ4 was 4.63 (SD = 1.09), and the score for RQ4 was normally distributed, W = 0.991, p = 0.952. Therefore, only a one-sample t-test was performed on RQ4. It was found that the score for RQ4 (M = 4.63, SD = 1.09) was significantly greater than 4, $t(55)$ = 4.30, p < 0.0001. Consequently, the null hypothesis for RQ4 was rejected. **Figure 5** demonstrates that the 95% *CI* was completely above the neutral value of 4, providing visual support for the rejection of the null hypothesis. Thus, teachers agreed that online teaching is impeded by their lack of technical training.

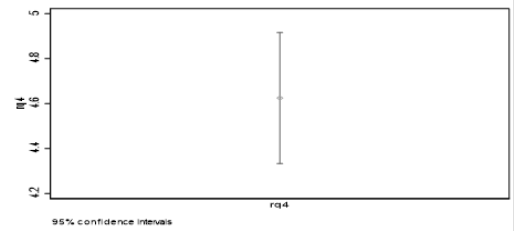

Figure 5. 95% *CI* plot, RQ4.

RQ5

RQ5 was as follows: Do EFL teachers believe that online teaching is impeded by students' lack of technology training? The score assigned to RQ5 was 3.71 (SD = 1.34), and the score for RQ5 was normally distributed, W = 0.995, p = 0.998. Therefore, only a one-sample t-test was performed on RQ5. It was found that the score for RQ5 (M = 3.71, SD = 1.34) was not significantly greater than 4, $t(55)$ = −1.59, p = 0.941. Thus, the null hypothesis for RQ5 could not be rejected. **Figure 6** demonstrates that the 95% *CI* overlapped with the neutral value of 4, providing visual support for the failure to reject the null hypothesis. Thus, teachers did not agree that online teaching was impeded by students' lack of technology training.

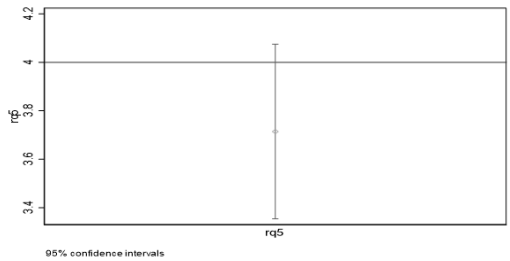

Figure 6. 95% CI plot, RQ5.

RQ6

RQ6 was as follows: Do EFL teachers believe that online teaching is impeded by a sense of isolation/lack of community on online platforms? The score assigned to RQ6 was 5.13 (SD = 0.72), and the score for RQ6 was normally distributed, W = 0.971, p = 0.209. Thus, only a one-sample t-test was performed on RQ6. It was found that the score for RQ6 (M = 5.13, SD = 0.72) was significantly greater than 4, $t(55)$ = 11.77, p < 0.0001. Therefore, the null hypothesis for RQ6 was rejected. **Figure 7** demonstrates that the 95% *CI* was completely above the neutral value of 4, providing visual support for the rejection of the null hypothesis. Thus, teachers agreed that online teaching is impeded by a sense of isolation/lack of community on online platforms.

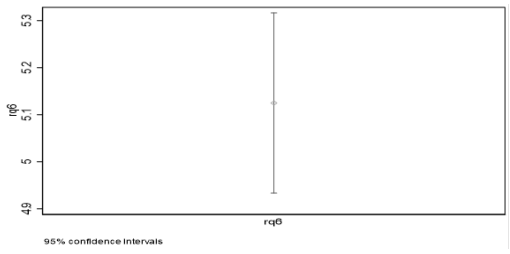

Figure 7. 95% CI plot, RQ6.

Summary of Findings

Figure 8 is a box plot for the distributions of the answers to RQs 1–6.

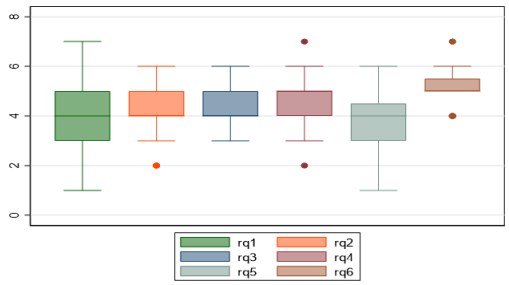

Figure 8. 95% Box plot, RQ1–RQ6.

a Teachers did not agree that online teaching was impeded by variations in students' subject-matter ability levels.

b Teachers did not agree that online teaching was impeded by the stability of technical platforms.

c Teachers agreed that online teaching is impeded by limited functions on technical platforms.

d Teachers agreed that online teaching is impeded by their lack of technical training.

e Teachers did not agree that online teaching was impeded by students' lack of technology training.

f Teachers agreed that online teaching is impeded by a sense of isolation/lack of community on online platforms.

The research findings identified variations in students' ability levels in different subjects. The study suggests that online learning promotes self-paced advancement, alleviating the effects of diverse ability levels, while adaptive learning platforms tailor content to individual needs, lessening the difficulties associated with mixed abilities. The stability of technical platforms demonstrates that contemporary LMSs and cloud-based solutions have enhanced reliability, reducing disruptions, and institutions with robust IT infrastructure experience fewer technical issues during online teaching. However, the study notes that the limited functions of technical platforms indicate that many LMS are lacking in interactive capabilities, which can impede engagement and instructional methods, and the lack of integrated assessment tools may pose challenges for effective online teaching.

The absence of technical training for educators highlights that insufficient preparation undermines teachers' confidence in effectively utilizing online platforms, making professional development essential for effective digital teaching. Additionally, it's important to note that students may lack proper training in technology, but I propose that those who have grown up with digital tools can adjust quickly to new technologies, lessening the demand for structured training, as students frequently acquire digital skills informally through regular usage.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

10.1. Conclusions

Teachers' perception of learning English online across many online learning platforms is lacking despite the benefits that online learning of English as a foreign language provides to online learners, using technologies, especially in a time of Covid-19 pandemic, which forced the education system to experiment with online learning. The question is: Why is the teacher's perception of online learning this way? The answer is that teachers face different difficulties with online EFL learning platforms. Prominent among them are: decline of internet networks, unavailability of computers, inadequate learning techniques, students not attending properly, low interaction between teacher and students, etc. All these difficulties make teachers see learning English online through various online learning platforms from a perspective that lacks many features that provide the student with an integrated study atmosphere. Finally, the purpose of online learning is the learning process, not the teaching process.

In this regard, based on the results of a questionnaire from 56 participants, online EFL teachers were asked to express their degree of agreement with the six questions, the following findings were obtained. First, it was found that teachers did not agree that online teaching was impeded by variations in students' subject-matter ability levels. Second, it was found that teachers did not agree that online teaching was impeded by the stability of technical platforms. Third, it was found that teachers agreed that online teaching is impeded by limited functions on technical platforms. Fourth, it was found that teachers agreed that online teaching is impeded by their lack of technical training. Fifth, it was found that teachers did not agree that online teaching was impeded by students' lack of technology training. Sixth, it was found that teachers agreed that online teaching is impeded by a sense of isolation/lack of community on online platforms.

Therefore, teachers isolated several pertinent difficulties that need to be addressed to improve the experiences and outcomes associated with TEFL online.

10.2. Recommendations for EFL Teachers Implementing Online Learning

To effectively implement online learning, EFL teachers can consider the following recommendations

- Employ teaching methods that cater to the diverse needs of students.
- Utilize appropriate tools for presenting lessons.
- Assess students' proficiency levels to tailor the content accordingly.
- Choose an optimal time for classes to maximize student participation.
- Be mindful of the volume of material to ensure it is manageable.
- Select teaching methods that promote sustained learning engagement.
- Reward students who actively contribute to the lesson.
- Consider the difficulty level of questions to ensure they're suitable for all students.
- Manage test durations effectively to accommodate students' needs.
- Monitor student attendance to ensure full participation.
- Observe students' interactions with both the class and peers.
- Focus on core topics to maximize time efficiency during lessons.
- Adopt strategies that facilitate the learning process.
- Choose suitable online learning platforms that align with educational goals.

Author Contributions

D.A.A. conceptualized and planned the study. A.H.T. and A.A.A. gathered the data, examined the results, and created the figures. All the authors wrote the manuscript and contributed to revisions, as well as reviewed and approved the final version.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent prior to their involvement. Measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of all data collected. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Data Availability Statement

Teachers were asked to respond to the protocol, and their responses determined the availability of data.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The authors hold no financial interests or personal connections that might be seen as affecting the research presented in this paper. Furthermore, no academic entities with an interest in the results have funded this study.

Appendix A

Table A1. Raw Data of Study.

Teacher	rq1	rq2	rq3	rq4	rq5	rq6
1	6	5	3	5	4	5
2	5	4	3	5	5	5
3	4	4	4	5	4	6

Table A1. *Cont.*

Teacher	rq1	rq2	rq3	rq4	rq5	rq6
4	2	4	5	5	3	5
5	3	3	5	4	4	6
6	5	4	3	5	4	4
7	3	3	6	3	2	4
8	4	4	5	4	2	4
9	1	5	4	5	4	4
10	2	4	4	5	2	5
11	5	3	4	6	3	5
12	5	4	5	4	5	7
13	3	5	5	5	4	6
14	5	4	3	4	6	6
15	3	2	5	4	5	5
16	5	3	5	5	5	5
17	3	5	4	5	3	5
18	1	5	5	4	3	4
19	1	2	5	3	4	5
20	3	4	5	6	2	5
21	3	4	4	5	2	4
22	7	4	4	4	4	5
23	3	5	4	3	6	5
24	3	4	5	7	2	5
25	4	4	5	3	4	4
26	5	4	3	5	4	5
27	5	3	5	6	1	5
28	4	4	5	6	4	6
29	6	4	4	6	3	6
30	3	3	4	5	5	5
31	4	3	5	5	5	5
32	2	6	4	6	4	5
33	3	4	4	2	4	6
34	4	6	4	4	4	7
35	4	4	3	4	1	5
36	5	3	5	6	6	5
37	3	4	5	6	4	5
38	4	5	5	3	5	5
39	3	5	4	5	4	5
40	5	4	4	4	6	6
41	4	4	4	5	4	5
42	5	3	4	4	2	5
43	4	4	5	3	4	4
44	3	5	4	4	4	6
45	4	6	6	4	6	5
46	3	4	5	4	5	5
47	3	4	5	6	4	4
48	2	4	4	6	1	6
49	3	2	5	3	3	6
50	4	4	5	4	2	5
51	3	5	4	5	3	5
52	3	3	5	4	2	5
53	5	4	4	6	4	5
54	4	6	4	3	3	5
55	6	4	4	6	6	5
56	3	5	4	5	3	6

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