

Research paper

## Virtual vs. Face-to-Face: Investigating English Teachers' Preferences and Motivations for Classroom Formats

Maryam Hamzehloo<sup>1\*</sup>, Mahdi Hamzehloo<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of TEFL and English Literature, Tehran Payame Noor University, Iran

<sup>2</sup>Department of IT Engineering, Mehrabborz University, Tehran, Iran

### Citation

Hamzehloo, M., & Hamzehloo, M. (2023). Virtual vs. face-to-face: Investigating English teachers' preferences and motivations for classroom formats. *Journal of new advances in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 5(2), 1317-1336.



10.22034/Jeltal.2023.5.2.4

### Received

2023-07-30

### Revised

2023-10-29

### Accepted

2023-11-23

### Keywords:

English language teaching, classroom preferences, online instruction, In-person learning, motivations

### Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted traditional education, leading to a shift toward online teaching. As educators adapted, new challenges and preferences emerged, influencing the future of English language instruction. This study explores the factors shaping English language teachers' preferences for online or in-person teaching formats in the post-pandemic era. Using a survey of 53 English teachers, data was gathered on their experiences, motivations, and teaching practices through multiple-choice, Likert scale, and open-response questions. The survey was disseminated through educational networks, with responses analyzed using SPSS software to identify trends and correlations. Results indicate that while half of the respondents still teach in person, 87.5% enjoy teaching online, citing flexibility, innovative tools, and audience reach as key benefits. However, some teachers face technical challenges and issues with assessing student performance. The findings suggest that teachers value both formats—online for personalized instruction and in-person for student engagement and personal interaction. This study concludes that combining online and in-person formats may provide the most effective teaching strategy. Institutions are encouraged to offer hybrid options to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. Future research should focus on long-term impacts of hybrid models on both teacher satisfaction and student performance. Ethical considerations were upheld throughout the study, ensuring participant confidentiality and informed consent.

\*Corresponding Author: Maryam Hamzehloo

Address: Department of TEFL and English Literature, Tehran Payame Noor University, Iran

Tel: 00989108510210

E-mail: mh\_mm\_438@yahoo.com

## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted educational systems worldwide, leading to the rapid shift from traditional classroom settings to online learning platforms. This sudden transition challenged teachers to adapt quickly to new teaching environments, tools, and methodologies. As restrictions eased, institutions began to reopen, and teachers were given the option to continue online teaching or return to in-person classrooms. This shift has sparked discussions about the effectiveness, practicality, and future of these two teaching formats.

Teachers' preferences between online and in-person formats are shaped by multiple factors, including convenience, engagement with students, and access to resources. Online teaching offers flexibility and a broader range of tools, yet it also presents challenges such as managing student participation and technical difficulties. On the other hand, in-person classes promote face-to-face interaction, fostering stronger rapport with students, but may lack the flexibility found in online instruction.

Understanding teachers' preferences is crucial as educational institutions aim to adopt sustainable teaching practices post-pandemic. Exploring teachers' motivations for choosing one format over the other will provide insights into designing effective hybrid models that balance the advantages of both approaches. This study, therefore, investigates the factors influencing teachers' decisions to teach online or in person, focusing on their experiences, challenges, and motivations in both settings.

1. What are the primary factors influencing English language teachers' preferences for online versus in-person teaching formats in the post-pandemic era?
2. How do English language teachers perceive the effectiveness of online and in-person teaching in terms of student engagement and learning outcomes?
3. What are the perceived benefits and challenges of online English language instruction from the perspective of teachers?

## Main Research Objectives

1. To identify and analyze the key factors influencing English language teachers' preferences for online versus in-person teaching formats.
2. To evaluate English language teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of online and in-person teaching in terms of student engagement and learning outcomes.
3. To explore the benefits and challenges associated with online English language instruction from the teachers' perspective.

## Statement of the Problem

The global outbreak of COVID-19 led schools around the world to quickly switch from in-person to online learning, greatly affecting how teaching and learning are conducted. While a few educators easily transitioned to teaching online, many encountered various obstacles. English language teachers' preferences and motivations for teaching online versus in-person formats are not well understood. This lack of understanding is preventing the creation of

successful teaching methods and policies that support teachers and improve educational results. This research seeks to tackle this problem by examining what English language teachers prefer and what motivates them, offering valuable information to improve strategies and policies in a post-pandemic educational environment.

### **Importance of the Study**

This research is vital as it explores English language instructors' choices and reasons for teaching online or in person, a subject that has become more important because of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education. The study offers important insights to help policymakers, educational institutions, and teachers improve teaching practices in the post-pandemic period by understanding these preferences. The results can guide the creation of training programs, teaching methods, and technological resources to enhance effective instruction across different platforms. Furthermore, this study guarantees the participation of teachers in conversations regarding the future of education, which adds value to the larger area of educational technology and teaching methods.

### **Literature Review**

The shift from in-person to online teaching formats has been widely studied, with scholars exploring its impact on both educators and learners. Drawing on constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of active engagement and meaningful interaction in the learning process, researchers argue that both online and in-person classrooms offer unique affordances. Online learning environments encourage self-directed learning and flexibility, while in-person classes facilitate immediate feedback and stronger interpersonal connections. Furthermore, Self-Determination Theory suggests that teachers' choices regarding instructional formats are driven by intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These theoretical perspectives provide a useful lens for examining teachers' preferences and motivations in selecting online or in-person teaching formats, as explored in this study.

Studies have shown that students often feel they learn more effectively through in-person interactions compared to online settings. This preference is partly due to the reduced anxiety levels that many students experience in face-to-face environments. For instance, Martinsen and Thompson (2024) found that students reported higher levels of learning and lower levels of anxiety during in-person interactions. However, these students also acknowledged that certain online services could enhance their language learning in ways similar to in-person interactions. Each setting—online or in-person—offers distinct advantages and disadvantages concerning practicality and learning outcomes.

Another critical aspect of this debate is the impact on academic performance. Research by Kemp and Grieve (2014) suggests that online and face-to-face activities can lead to similar levels of academic performance. Their study concluded that while students prefer to complete written activities online due to the flexibility it offers, they find in-person discussions more engaging and beneficial. This dual preference highlights the potential for hybrid course

structures, where online learning is utilized for individual tasks and face-to-face interactions are reserved for group discussions. By structuring classes in this manner, course developers can harness the benefits of both formats, ensuring that students receive a well-rounded educational experience.

### **Advantages of Online English Language Instruction**

The rise in popularity of online English language teaching is growing because of its numerous advantages, appealing to both teachers and students. A major benefit of a flexible schedule is the ability of teachers and students to efficiently manage their time. This flexibility enables reaching a variety of students, including those who are remote or unable to attend classes in person. Moreover, online platforms allow teachers to integrate diverse multimedia resources into their teaching, enhancing the learning experience and catering to various learning preferences.

According to Hamzehloo and Hamzehloo (2021), online instruction facilitates the improvement of English language skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking more efficiently through the use of technology. This technological integration not only enhances communication and globalization but also boosts the overall quality of teaching and education. The individualized learning paths offered by online platforms allow educators to address the specific needs of each student, fostering a more personalized and effective learning environment. A study by Riaz et al. (2023) found that a significant 72% of students preferred to continue with online education even after the pandemic. This preference stemmed from the comfort, alertness, satisfaction, and improved exam performance linked to online learning. The flexibility and convenience of virtual classes were highlighted as key factors that enhanced the learning experience for many learners.

E-learning is not only an effective way to transfer knowledge but also provides significant benefits for both students and teachers. As noted by Hamzehloo and Hamzehloo (2022), online education offers flexibility and comfort, making the educational environment more conducive to learning. This mode of instruction simplifies interaction and helps in developing students' skills by offering a more adaptable and accessible learning experience.

Furthermore, students have reported favorable outcomes regarding their practical language competency and the enhancement of their language skills in real-world situations. Wahid et al. (2023) found that most students found it easier to stay motivated and disciplined when using online tools, which significantly impacted their motivation and overall learning experience.

The positive effects of online learning are not limited to young learners. Shirvan (2021) highlighted that adult learners, particularly non-native English speakers, also benefit from the learner-centered approach that online education facilitates. This approach helps in addressing the specific needs of adult learners, making the learning process more effective and engaging.

Ropa and Malahova (2023) suggested that synchronous online live classes, when supplemented with continuous support from teaching personnel, regular offline meetings, and access to specially designed online resources, can facilitate the continuous and steady development of all language skills. This blended approach ensures that students receive comprehensive support, combining the best elements of both online and in-person learning.

Interestingly, foreign language enjoyment (FLE) has been found to thrive under both in-person and emergency remote teaching (ERT) conditions. Resnik et al. (2023) discovered that while FLE in in-person classes is linked to rich social interactions, it is also fostered in remote settings through the convenience and comfort of learning from home and increased learner autonomy. Despite physical isolation, students managed to establish strong social connections in ERT classes, showing that FLE can flourish in various circumstances as long as there are stimulating interactions and supportive teachers.

Distance teaching has also provided educators with the opportunity to experiment with alternative teaching methods, tools, and assessments. Alolaywi (2021) reported that teachers felt relieved from some of the burdens associated with in-person teaching, allowing them to focus more on their core teaching roles. However, it was noted that despite these benefits, e-teaching cannot easily replace traditional education entirely.

Effective online tools can replicate key components of content delivery, activities, assessments, and virtual proctored exams. Chen et al. (2022) found that while instructors and students appreciated the benefits of online learning, they did not wish for in-person learning to disappear entirely. Rather than that, they suggested a versatile method that mixes face-to-face, virtual, and self-paced course formats based on individual choices.

Moreover, Gorman and Staley (2018) found that online instruction could be more effective than in-person teaching for improving performance on specific tasks, such as literature review assignments, and was preferred by on-campus students for learning information literacy skills. This preference underscores the potential of online learning to cater to the diverse needs of students in various educational contexts.

### **Challenges and Limitations of Online English Language Instruction**

Even though online English language instruction has many benefits, it also faces various obstacles that may impede its success. A key concern is technical problems, like inconsistent internet connectivity, that can interfere with the learning experience for students and teachers alike. Moreover, the absence of in-person communication can hinder the formation of robust teacher-student connections and create challenges in sustaining student attention and handling classroom dynamics efficiently. A study conducted by Hatmanto and Purwanti (2019) uncovered that instructors and students within English education departments encounter different obstacles when it comes to online instruction. These obstacles involve cognitive and metacognitive challenges, along with problems linked to learning styles and preferences. These difficulties can hinder students in adjusting to online learning and reaching their maximum

capabilities. Nishimwe (2022) highlighted that online learning often lacks the engagement and social interaction found in traditional classrooms, leading to disruptions and difficulties in maintaining discipline. Without a structured environment, students may struggle to stay focused and motivated. Similarly, Zúñiga (2022) noted that online education can increase anxiety and lower motivation. Factors such as connectivity issues, the absence of non-verbal communication, and the instructor's teaching style contribute to these challenges, potentially impeding effective learning and reducing overall student satisfaction.

The implementation of online learning is made more complex by factors such as teachers' ICT skills, available infrastructure and resources, and the adequacy of their working conditions. Jayampathy and colleagues (2023) discovered that these variables had a notable beneficial effect on the effective execution of e-learning amid the COVID-19 outbreak. Yet, if these components are absent, the efficiency of virtual teaching may be greatly diminished. Mese and Sevilen (2021) identified several negative perceptions of online education among students, including limited social interaction, unmet expectations, organizational difficulties, and challenges with the learning environment. These issues can foster feelings of isolation and frustration, ultimately diminishing the quality of the learning experience. Similarly, Jelena et al. (2022) observed that, although technology and digital tools can boost motivation, online classes tend to reduce speaking anxiety. However, they emphasized the need for strategies to manage overall student anxiety and promote active engagement. This suggests that while online learning alleviates some stressors, other forms of anxiety and disengagement still require attention.

In 2022, Alufohai found various barriers to implementing e-learning in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) centers amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the restrictions are limited human resources, funding shortages, the absence of e-learning technology, restrictions on ICT and internet speed, unreliable electricity supply, and problems in institutional management. These obstacles emphasize the importance of significant investment and assistance to guarantee the effective execution of online English language teaching.

The perception and performance of students in online courses also present challenges. Price Banks and Vergez (2022) found that students generally rated online courses more negatively compared to in-person courses. Their study showed significant differences in student achievement and perception based on the type of course delivery. Although there was a weak positive relationship between student achievement and their perception of the learning modality, the overall preference for in-person learning indicates that online instruction may not fully meet the needs and expectations of all students.

In conclusion, while online English language instruction offers flexibility and the potential for innovative teaching methods, it also faces several challenges that can impact its effectiveness. Addressing technical issues, enhancing teacher competence in ICT, improving infrastructure, and considering students' learning preferences are critical steps in overcoming these challenges. By acknowledging and addressing these limitations, educators and

policymakers can better support the successful integration of online learning in English language education.

### **Benefits of In-Person English Language Instruction**

In-person instruction offers the irreplaceable value of direct interaction between teachers and students, which significantly enhances the learning experience. This format supports better communication, immediate feedback, and the ability to conduct hands-on activities that are often crucial for language acquisition. The structured environment of a physical classroom also helps in maintaining discipline and focus among students, contributing to a more conducive learning atmosphere. Larson et al. (2023) found that students participating in mixed modalities or attending in-person classes outperformed those in live online sessions. The flexibility to select their preferred learning modality proved advantageous, as it allowed students to align their learning styles and schedules, leading to improved performance and greater satisfaction.

Face-to-face communication between students and teachers creates a stronger emotional bond that boosts motivation and engagement levels. Resnik et al. (2023) discovered that students who are more autonomous and emotionally intelligent typically have a greater enjoyment of foreign language (FL) classes, even when facing difficult situations. They pointed out that the lack of physical presence in classrooms diminishes emotional bonds and severs the connection between students, as classes taught remotely lack emotional impact.

Considering the course content, student's needs, preferences, and both teachers' and learners' technological proficiency helps in finding a balance between the advantages and difficulties of online and in-person formats. Hybrid approaches that blend digital and face-to-face components can provide a workable remedy, utilizing the advantages of both formats to enhance the educational experience. Cowan et al. (2022) discovered that there were no notable variances in student knowledge gain when comparing traditional in-person learning with online educational platforms, indicating that both could be successful given appropriate circumstances.

However, Gufon (2023) highlighted that students often prefer offline classes due to better interaction, comfort, comprehension, and language practice. Offline learning leads to higher satisfaction, improved language skills, and fosters greater engagement compared to online learning, which may have limitations. These varied perspectives underscore the complexity of learning preferences and the need for tailored language acquisition strategies.

Interviews conducted by Zakiyah et al. (2024) further indicated a preference for offline learning, primarily due to issues with internet connectivity and home distractions affecting comprehension in tests such as TOEFL. These findings suggest that while online learning offers flexibility and access, the traditional classroom environment remains essential for many learners to achieve their full potential.

It shows while in-person instruction provides unparalleled benefits through direct interaction and emotional engagement, a hybrid approach that combines the best of both online and offline learning environments can address diverse student needs. By understanding and integrating the strengths of each format, educators can create a more effective and satisfying learning experience for students.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a mixed-methods design to explore English teachers' preferences and motivations for online versus in-person teaching formats. A quantitative survey was used to collect data from a sample of teachers, providing insights into general patterns and trends. In addition, qualitative interviews were conducted with a subset of participants to gain deeper understanding of their personal motivations and contextual factors influencing their preferences. This combination of quantitative and qualitative data allows for a more comprehensive analysis, aligning with the study's aim to capture both measurable outcomes and subjective experiences.

### **Participants**

This study involved 53 English language teachers who participated in an online survey. The participants were recruited through various educational networks and institutions, ensuring a diverse sample from different teaching levels and contexts. The survey link was disseminated via email and social media like LinkedIn and Telegram leading the participants to a questionnaire hosted on the Civilica platform. The questionnaire comprised multiple questions designed to gather detailed data on their preferences, experiences, and motivations regarding online and in-person teaching formats. This method made sure to include various viewpoints, leading to a thorough comprehension of the factors affecting English language teachers' preferences for classroom formats after the pandemic.

### **Instrument**

For this study, data was gathered through the creation of a detailed survey that included a variety of question types such as multiple-choice, Likert scale, and multiple-answer questions. The questionnaire aimed to capture a wide array of information regarding English language teachers' preferences and motivations for choosing between online and in-person teaching formats.

The questionnaire was hosted on the Civilica platform, ensuring easy access and completion for participants. This combination of question types facilitated a comprehensive analysis of the nuanced factors impacting English language teachers' decisions regarding online and in-person instruction.

### **Procedure**

The study's data collection process consisted of multiple meticulously planned phases to guarantee thorough and precise data collection. At first, a comprehensive survey was created.

This study included different kinds of questions, such as multiple-choice, Likert scale, and multiple-answer questions. The main goal of the research was to collect detailed data on the preferences and rationales of English language teachers for online and in-person teaching methods.

Next, the recruitment of participants was conducted. The questionnaire link was disseminated to English language teachers through a variety of educational networks and institutions. Participants, who represented a broad spectrum of teaching levels and contexts, received the survey link via email. This link directed them to the Civilica platform, where the survey was hosted.

The data collection phase involved participants completing the online questionnaire. They provided their responses to the multiple-choice, Likert scale, and multiple-answer questions, resulting in the collection of 53 responses. This sample size ensured a diverse range of perspectives from English language teachers. After collecting the data, the analysis was carried out with the help of SPSS Statistics software. The analysis included using descriptive statistics to summarize data and inferential statistics to examine relationships and differences between variables. In conclusion, the interpretation stage included studying the statistical analysis results to grasp the main factors affecting English language teachers' choices between online and in-person teaching formats. These results were then used to reach conclusions and provide suggestions to enhance teaching methods in the post-pandemic education field.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis section of this study provides a detailed exploration of the respondents' characteristics and their preferences regarding teaching formats. By examining demographic information, teaching experience, and various aspects of teaching practices, this analysis aims to offer valuable insights into the current landscape of English language instruction. The following sections will present a thorough overview of the respondents' backgrounds, their teaching methods, and their attitudes toward online and in-person teaching, shedding light on the factors influencing their preferences and experiences. This examination will help to understand the broader trends and implications for English language education in today's evolving educational environment.

#### *Demographic Information:*

##### *Gender*

The majority of respondents are female (62.3%), indicating a higher participation rate among female English teachers. This gender disparity may influence the trends and preferences observed in the responses, as gender can play a role in teaching styles and technological adaptation.

##### *Age*

The predominant age group is 35-44 years old (47.2%). This suggests that a significant portion of the respondents are experienced educators, possibly influencing their comfort levels

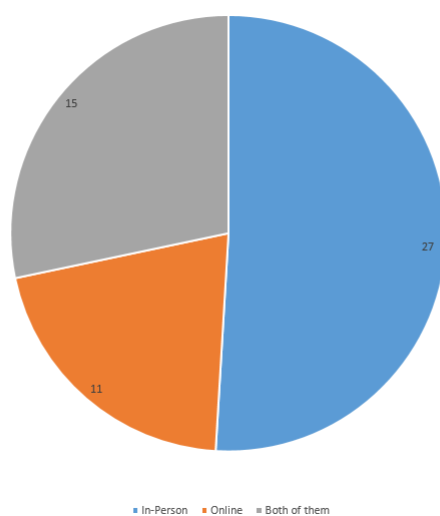
and preferences for teaching methods. Younger teachers might be more adaptable to new technologies compared to older age groups.

#### *Teaching Experience:*

Most respondents have more than 10 years of teaching experience (58.5%), indicating a seasoned group of educators. This experience level may correlate with preferences for traditional methods or familiarity with specific teaching strategies.

#### *Current Teaching Method:*

*Figure 1. Teaching method distribution*



Half of the respondents teach in person (50.9%), while a significant portion (28.3%) uses both methods. This distribution suggests a balanced perspective on the benefits and challenges of online and in-person teaching formats. These teaching methods are visualized in Figure 1.

#### *Preference for Online Teaching:*

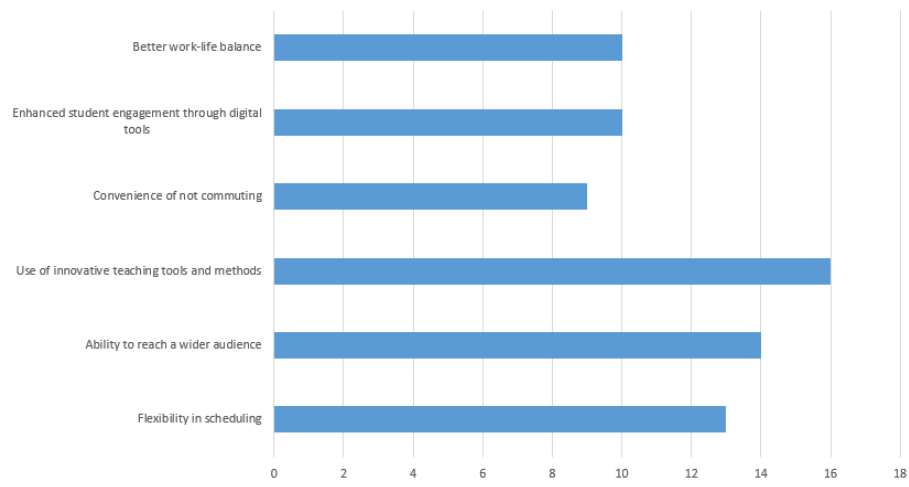
##### *Do you like teaching online?*

A substantial majority (87.5%) enjoy teaching online, indicating a positive reception towards online teaching among those currently using this method. This preference might be driven by perceived advantages such as flexibility and innovative tools.

#### *Advantages of Teaching Online:*

The most cited advantages are the use of innovative teaching tools (76.2%) and reaching a wider audience (66.7%). Flexibility in scheduling is also highly valued (61.9%). These benefits highlight the perceived strengths of online teaching in terms of modern educational practices and audience reach. These preferences are visualized in Figure 2.

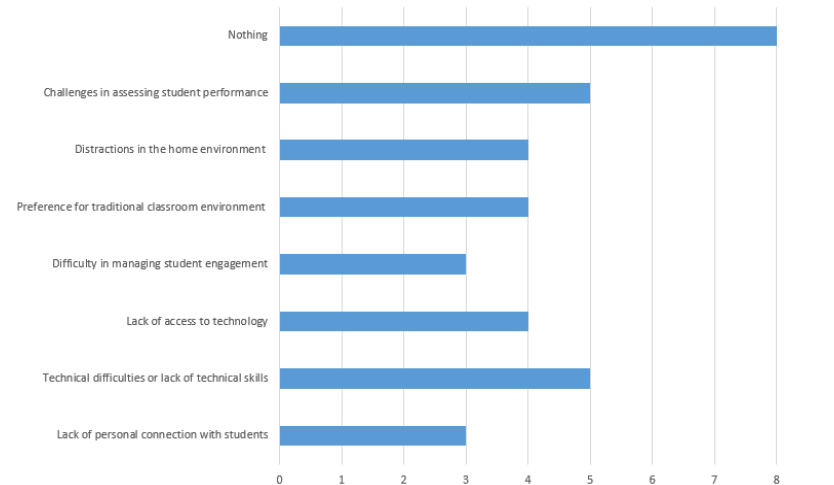
Figure 2. Reasons for preferring Online teaching



*Reasons for Not Teaching Online:*

Technical difficulties and challenges in assessing student performance are notable barriers (both 17.9%). However, a significant portion (28.6%) indicated no particular issues, suggesting a mixed perception of the obstacles to online teaching. These concerns are depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Reasons for Disliking Online Teaching



*Type of English Language Courses:*

Most respondents teach both general and special-purpose English courses (57.7%), indicating a diverse teaching portfolio. This mix may require varied teaching strategies and adaptability to different student needs.

*Use of Cellphones for Teaching:*

Most respondents are skilled or very skilled in using cell phones for teaching (61.6%), indicating an overall ease in incorporating mobile technology into their teaching methods.

*Use of Learning Management Systems:*

65.4% of respondents exhibit proficiency or high proficiency levels in learning management systems. This indicates a substantial use of digital platforms for educational purposes.

*Use of Social Media Platforms for Teaching:*

A large majority (75%) use social media platforms for teaching, indicating that these tools are a common supplement to traditional and online teaching methods.

*Use of Video Conferencing Tools:*

Most respondents are proficient or highly proficient in using video conferencing tools (60%), reflecting their integration into teaching practices, especially in online settings.

*Handling Technical Problems:*

The majority (70.8%) handle technical problems themselves, indicating a high level of self-reliance and technical competence among respondents.

*Training in Information Technology:*

A significant portion (27.3%) have not taken any IT courses, while those who have focused on Office tools (33.3%) and Internet skills (24.2%). This suggests varied levels of formal IT training among respondents.

*Comfort with Technology:*

A vast majority (88%) feel comfortable using technology in their teaching, indicating a strong sense of technological confidence.

*Individualized Instruction in Online Classes:*

A large percentage (64%) believe or strongly agree that online classes provide improved personalized instruction, suggesting a perceived advantage of online education.

*Managing Student Engagement in Online Classes:*

Opinions vary, as 44% believe that handling student engagement is simpler in an online setting, 28% have no strong feelings either way, and 24% do not agree that it is easier. This shows different levels of student involvement in online activities.

*Personal Connection and Interaction in In-person Classes:*

Most people (64%) agree or strongly agree that they appreciate personal connection and interaction in face-to-face classes. This indicates that many teachers value personal interactions, emphasizing the significance of in-person communication in education.

*Preference for Structured Environment of In-person Classes:*

A majority of survey participants (57.7%) have a neutral stance on the organized setting of face-to-face lessons, with 34.6% expressing agreement or strong agreement with it. This shows

that while some teachers value the format of traditional classes, others may not have a particular view on this matter.

*Effectiveness of Hands-On Learning Activities in In-person Classes:*

Most respondents are neutral (46.2%) about the effectiveness of hands-on learning activities in in-person classes, while 38.4% agree or strongly agree. This suggests a mixed perception of the value of hands-on activities, with some teachers finding them beneficial and others less convinced.

*Overall Experience with Online Teaching:*

A majority of respondents (76.9%) report a positive or very positive experience with online teaching, indicating overall satisfaction with this mode of instruction. This positive outlook aligns with the higher preference for online teaching seen earlier.

*Overall Experience with In-person Teaching:*

Most respondents (76.9%) also report a positive or very positive experience with in-person teaching. This high level of satisfaction reflects the continued value placed on traditional classroom settings.

*Student Engagement in Online vs. In-person Classes:*

A majority (44%) of respondents disagree that students are more engaged in online classes compared to in-person classes, indicating that engagement levels may not be universally higher online. This contrasts with the more positive views on online teaching overall.

*Learning Outcomes in Online vs. In-person Classes:*

There is a split in opinions regarding whether students perform better academically in traditional face-to-face classes compared to virtual online classes, with 38.5% in agreement and 38.5% remaining neutral. This implies that learning results could be viewed as comparable in both forms or that variances are not substantial for every participant.

## Results

The results of the study reveal significant insights into the preferences and motivations of English language teachers regarding online and in-person teaching formats. Demographically, the majority of respondents were female (62.3%) and predominantly aged 35-44 years (47.2%), suggesting a seasoned group of educators with substantial experience. Most participants (58.5%) reported having more than 10 years of teaching experience, indicating a depth of professional background that likely influences their perspectives on teaching methods.

A notable finding is that half of the respondents (50.9%) currently teach in-person, while a significant portion (28.3%) employs both online and in-person methods. This distribution underscores a balanced perspective on the benefits and challenges of each format. Interestingly, a substantial majority (87.5%) expressed enjoyment in teaching online, with the primary advantages cited being the use of innovative teaching tools (76.2%), the ability to reach a wider audience (66.7%), and flexibility in scheduling (61.9%).

Despite these advantages, technical difficulties and challenges in assessing student performance were notable barriers for some teachers (both cited by 17.9%). Additionally, a significant portion (28.6%) indicated no particular issues with online teaching, suggesting a mixed perception of its obstacles. The proficiency levels with educational technologies among respondents were relatively high, with 61.6% feeling proficient or highly proficient in using cell phones for teaching and 65.4% with learning management systems. This reflects a general comfort level with integrating digital tools into their teaching practices.

A large majority (75%) also use social media platforms for teaching, and most respondents (60%) are proficient or highly proficient in using video conferencing tools. This indicates that these tools are common supplements to both traditional and online teaching methods. Additionally, 70.8% of people resolve technical issues on their own, showing a strong sense of independence and technical skill.

Interestingly, a large percentage (64%) believed that online courses offer improved personalized teaching, showing a perceived advantage of online education. Nevertheless, there were varying opinions on student involvement, as 44% found it easier to manage engagement online, 28% were unsure, and 24% thought it was more difficult. This indicates different levels of student involvement in online environments.

In terms of personal connection and interaction, 64% of respondents valued this aspect highly in in-person classes, highlighting the importance of face-to-face communication in the educational process. Additionally, while 57.7% were neutral regarding the structured environment of in-person classes, 34.6% appreciated this structure. Opinions varied on the effectiveness of hands-on learning activities, with 46.2% expressing neutrality and 38.4% agreeing or strongly agreeing on their effectiveness.

In total, 76.9% of participants expressed satisfaction with online and in-person teaching, stating a positive or very positive experience with both methods. Nonetheless, 44% of respondents did not believe that students are more involved in online courses than in traditional ones, suggesting that engagement levels may not always be greater in online settings. Opinions on learning outcomes were divided, with 38.5% agreeing and 38.5% being neutral about whether students achieve better outcomes in in-person classes compared to online ones. This suggests that perceived differences in learning outcomes between the two formats might not be significant for all respondents.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this research showcase the changing trends in preferences for teaching English and the detailed viewpoints of seasoned educators. The data on demographics shows a group of experienced educators, mostly women aged 35-44, with a significant amount of teaching experience. This demographic profile is important because it represents a group of individuals who are mature and experienced, likely to possess established opinions and flexible

teaching approaches necessary for handling the challenges of online and offline teaching settings.

The balanced distribution of teaching formats, with half of the respondents teaching in person and a significant portion employing both methods, underscores the versatility and adaptability of modern educators. This adaptability can be linked to the Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes the importance of active engagement and the use of diverse teaching strategies to accommodate varied learning styles. The high level of enjoyment expressed for online teaching (87.5%) highlights the shift towards embracing digital platforms, driven by the advantages of innovative teaching tools, broader audience reach, and flexible scheduling. This finding aligns with current educational trends that emphasize the integration of technology to enhance learning experiences.

However, the mixed responses regarding technical difficulties and student performance assessment highlight ongoing challenges in the online teaching domain. The fact that a significant portion of respondents indicated no particular issues with online teaching suggests a varied landscape where some educators have seamlessly adapted, while others continue to grapple with these challenges. This contrast emphasizes the necessity of professional development and support systems to foster resilience among educators, aligning with Adult Learning Theory, which posits that adults learn best when they have opportunities to apply their skills in real-world contexts and receive support during their learning processes.

Educators are generally well-prepared to navigate digital teaching environments due to their high skill levels with educational technologies and the common use of social media and video conferencing tools. This skill shows promise for successful online teaching, as it indicates that teachers are at ease using digital tools to improve their teaching methods. The discovery that a substantial number of participants think that online courses offer improved personalized guidance is especially noteworthy. This suggests that online platforms may offer unique opportunities for tailored educational experiences, which can be a significant advantage in addressing diverse student needs.

However, the mixed opinions on student engagement highlight a critical area for further exploration. Different experiences with engagement indicate that some teachers may have an easier time handling engagement online, while others might face challenges. This disparity aligns with the Community of Inquiry Framework, which posits that effective online learning requires a balance of social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence to foster meaningful engagement. This emphasizes the importance of specific strategies to improve student interaction in virtual environments, such as fostering a sense of community and belonging among students.

The lasting significance of face-to-face communication in education is highlighted by the strong emphasis placed on personal connection and interaction in traditional classroom settings. This inclination towards face-to-face communication follows conventional

educational values that highlight the importance of teacher-student connections in creating an effective learning atmosphere. The mixed opinions on the effectiveness of hands-on learning activities emphasize the varied perspectives on the advantages of traditional teaching methods, alongside the value placed on the structured environment of in-person classes.

Overall, the positive experiences reported with both online and in-person teaching formats indicate a general satisfaction among educators. However, the divided opinions on student engagement and learning outcomes suggest that while both formats have their merits, they also present unique challenges that need to be addressed. The perception that engagement might not be universally higher online and the mixed views on learning outcomes indicate that the effectiveness of each format can vary significantly depending on the context and implementation.

This research highlights the intricate nature of English language educators' preferences and motivations for teaching formats. The results emphasize the importance of combining online and in-person teaching to maximize strengths and overcome challenges. Ongoing professional growth, technology support, and specific tactics to improve participation and educational results are crucial for maximizing the efficiency of all teaching methods.

In summary, linking these findings to established theories not only strengthens the rationale behind the educators' experiences but also provides a framework for future research and practice in this evolving educational landscape.

## Implications

1. **For Educators:** The findings suggest that educators should embrace a blended approach to teaching, utilizing both online and in-person formats to cater to diverse student needs. Training programs should focus on developing skills in both environments, ensuring educators can effectively engage students regardless of the medium.
2. **For Institutions:** Educational institutions should consider providing continuous professional development that addresses both technical skills and pedagogical strategies for online teaching. This can include workshops, mentorship programs, and peer collaboration to foster a supportive teaching community.
3. **For Policy Makers:** Policymakers should recognize the evolving landscape of education and advocate for policies that support the integration of technology in classrooms. This includes funding for digital resources, infrastructure improvements, and training for educators to effectively implement new technologies.
4. **For Future Research:** Further studies should explore the long-term effects of blended learning on student outcomes and engagement. Additionally, research could investigate the specific strategies that enhance student interaction and performance in online settings, contributing to a deeper understanding of effective teaching practices.
5. **For Curriculum Development:** The findings also imply a need for curriculum designers to create resources that are adaptable to both online and in-person formats.

This ensures that learning materials remain relevant and effective across different teaching modalities.

### Limitations

1. **Sample Size:** The study was conducted with a limited number of participants, which may not fully represent the broader population of English language educators. This could affect the generalizability of the findings.
2. **Geographic Scope:** The research was conducted in a specific geographical area, which may limit the applicability of the results to other regions with different educational contexts and cultural factors.
3. **Self-Reported Data:** The study relied on self-reported data from participants, which may introduce bias and affect the accuracy of the responses. Educators may have varying perceptions of their experiences that could influence their reported preferences.
4. **Lack of Longitudinal Data:** This study captures preferences at a single point in time, and without longitudinal data, it is difficult to assess how these preferences may change over time or in response to evolving educational trends.
5. **Variability in Online Platforms:** The diversity of online teaching platforms and methods used by educators may affect their experiences and perceptions, making it challenging to draw definitive conclusions about online teaching as a whole.

### Conclusion

This research has shed light on the various likes and reasons of English instructors with both online and traditional classroom settings. The results show a complex environment where each format has unique benefits and obstacles. Online teaching is appreciated for its flexibility, accessibility, and incorporation of technology, but face-to-face teaching is favored for promoting stronger student-teacher interactions and enabling immediate feedback and engagement.

The findings have important implications for schools looking to improve teaching methods in today's digital era. Institutions could think about using a hybrid method that blends the advantages of both types, providing flexibility while still enjoying the perks of in-person communication.

Nevertheless, this research has its constraints. The sample size, while adequate for preliminary observations, is quite limited and might not accurately reflect the broader English teacher population. Furthermore, biases that could impact the findings may arise from the study's dependence on self-reported data. Future studies should strive to involve bigger and more varied samples, as well as potentially conduct longitudinal research to explore how preferences and motivations change over time.

This study helps us understand better how English teachers view and handle the decision to teach online or in-person. Pinpointing the main factors that impact these preferences, creates a

basis for more investigation and real-world use in educational environments, to improve the overall success of language education.

### Recommendations

Following the results of this research, various suggestions are suggested to improve the teaching of the English language. It is recommended that educational institutions incorporate flexible teaching options to cater to a range of teacher preferences and enhance effectiveness, based on the preferences for online and in-person formats that have been identified. Teachers need specific training to use online teaching tools and strategies effectively, so they can be prepared to teach in different environments. Moreover, further studies need to examine the lasting effects of hybrid teaching methods on student performance and teacher contentment. Educators are advised to take these insights into account when developing curricula and support systems to better match changing educational requirements. By putting these suggestions into practice, schools can enhance their support for educators and enhance the overall standard of English language instruction.

### Ethical Considerations

In this study, ethical concerns are of utmost importance to uphold the integrity and honor the participation of participants. All the individuals were briefed on the aim of the study and their entitlement to remain anonymous and have their information kept private. The survey was created to gather information anonymously, and answers were stored safely to ensure confidentiality. All participants willingly took part in the survey after providing informed consent. The research followed ethical guidelines to prevent harm to participants and to guarantee that their feedback was only utilized for research objectives. This method not only maintains the ethical principles of academic research but also promotes trust and openness between researchers and participants.

### References

- Alolaywi, Y. (2021). Teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic: Teachers' perspectives. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(4), 2022-2045.
- Alufohai, P. (2022). E-Learning Challenges and Implementations Strategies for Teaching English Language Courses in Distance Learning Centres in the COVID-19 Era. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 6(1), 532-538.
- Chen, V., Sandford, A., LaGrone, M., Charbonneau, K., Kong, J., & Ragavaloo, S. (2022). An exploration of instructors' and students' perspectives on remote delivery of courses during the COVID-19 pandemic. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 53(3), 512-533.
- Cowan, E., Altschaf, B., Foertsch, J., Barnes, D., Lasarev, M., & Pelley, E. (2022). A new normal: Assessment outcomes and recommendations for virtual versus in-person curricula in post-COVID-19 times. *Medical Science Educator*, 32(2), 379-387.
- Gufon, A. A. M. Z. Exploring the Shift from Online English Learning to In-Person Instruction after COVID-19: A Classroom Action Research Study.

- Hamzehloo, M., & Hamzehloo, M. (2021). The effects of information technology on teaching and learning English. The 8th international and 14th national conference on E-Learning and E-Teaching. Tehran-Iran-Poster-ISC Code: 99201-71011.
- Hamzehloo, M., & Hamzehloo, M. (2022). Advantages of information technology in online English teaching and learning. The 7th international conference on studies of language and literature of nations. Tehran-Iran-Poster-Article Code: ICLL073571522.
- Hatmanto, E., & Purwanti, E. (2019, October). Challenges in Implementing E-Learning in the Language Education Context: Case Study at an English Education Department in Indonesia. In *Third International Conference on Sustainable Innovation 2019–Humanity, Education and Social Sciences (IcoSIHESS 2019)* (pp. 43-49). Atlantis Press.
- Jayampathy, A., Mohammed, L. A., & Anmary, S. A. (2023). The Challenges Confronted by the Asian English as Second Language Teachers on Implementation of E-Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Emerging Issues in Social Science, Arts and Humanities (IJEISSAH)*, 1(2), 01-20.
- Jelena, J., Bojana, K., & Rakić, D. (2022). THE EFFECTS OF ONLINE ENGLISH CLASSES ON STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN ENGLISH LANGUAGE. *Journal of Language & Literary Studies/Folia Linguistica & Litteraria*, (39).
- Kemp, N., & Grieve, R. (2014). Face-to-face or face-to-screen? Undergraduates' opinions and test performance in classroom vs. online learning. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 1278.
- Larson, M., Davies, R., Steadman, A., & Cheng, W. M. (2023). Student's choice: In-person, online, or on demand? A Comparison of Instructional Modality Preference and Effectiveness. *Education Sciences*, 13(9), 877.
- Martinsen, R. A., & Thompson, G. L. (2024). Virtual and in-person exchanges: Student perspectives on advantages and disadvantages. *Journal of Virtual Exchange*, 7, 38-59.
- Nishimwe, G., Kamali, S., Gatesi, E., & Wong, R. (2022). Assessing the perceptions and preferences between online and in-person classroom learning among university students in Rwanda. *Journal of Service Science and Management*, 15(1), 23-34.
- Price Banks, D., & Vergez, S. M. (2022). Online and In-person learning preferences during the COVID-19 pandemic among students attending the City University of New York. *Journal of Microbiology & Biology Education*, 23(1), e00012-22.
- Resnik, P., & Dewaele, J. M. (2023). Learner emotions, autonomy and trait emotional intelligence in 'in-person' versus emergency remote English foreign language teaching in Europe. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 14(3), 473-501.
- Resnik, P., Dewaele, J. M., & Knechtelsdorfer, E. (2023). How teaching modality affects Foreign Language Enjoyment: A comparison of in-person and online English as a Foreign Language classes. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*(0).
- Riaz, F., Mahmood, S. E., Begum, T., Ahmad, M. T., Al-Shaikh, A. A., Ahmad, A., ... & Khan, M. S. (2023). Students' preferences and perceptions regarding online versus offline teaching and learning post-COVID-19 lockdown. *Sustainability*, 15(3), 2362.
- Ropa, A., & Malahova, L. (2023). The benefits and limitations of teaching English for specific purposes online and face-to-face: Sport and health sciences students' perspectives. *Baltic Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture*, 13, 108-124.

- Shirvan, S. J. (2021). Some Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning and Teaching English Language Online for Adults of Non-native English Speakers. *Developments in Educational Sciences*, 425.
- Wahid, D. H., Zakaria, R., & Rusmiati, R. (2023). Exploring the Effectiveness of Online Tools in Enhancing English Language Learning: Opportunities and Challenges. *Buletin Literasi Budaya Sekolah*.
- Zakiyah, Z., Ulfa, N., & Amanah, F. P. (2024). From Classroom to Screen: Students' Preferences for Online TOEFL Learning. *Pulchra Lingua: A Journal of Language Study, Literature & Linguistics*, 3(1), 1-16.
- Zúñiga, A. I. (2022). The Effects of Online Learning on Students' Anxiety and Motivation (Doctoral dissertation, Illinois State University).