

Research paper

## Investigating ELT University Teachers' and Students' Attitudes toward Online Instruction during Covid-19 Pandemic

Seyyed Hossein Kashef\* , Haniye Mehdikhah

*Department of English Language, Ur. C., Islamic Azad University, Urmia, Iran*

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\*corresponding author: Sh.kashef@iau.ac.ir

### **Abstract**

The demand for online instruction rises significantly to address the needs of students and teachers during the outbreak of the emerging COVID-19 virus. This study aims to explore whether the COVID-19 pandemic, which required universities to offer online instruction, affected the attitudes of Iranian ELT students and ELT teachers toward online education methods. In addition, the present study investigates the barriers associated with the use of online tools. The data for this study were focused on the experiences of ELT students at Azad University in Urmia in using VADANA, the online education platform provided by Islamic Azad University. On the other hand, it focused on the experiences of ELT teachers at Azad University in Tehran, Tabriz, and Urmia in using VADANA. 110 students and 110 teachers were selected randomly for this study. They were either male or female from B.A. and M.A. classes. There were questionnaires used for the two groups, and the results were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Based on the results, ELT students and ELT teachers had positive attitudes towards this kind of instruction. Notwithstanding, the ELT teachers were more interested in this kind of instruction due to its educational advantages.

**Keywords:** COVID-19 Pandemic, ELT Students, ELT Teachers, Online Instruction

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### **Introduction**

With the advent of life human has faced many kinds of diseases. All aspects of life can be changed by a tiny virus, especially when it comes to a widespread one which infects many people

from whole over the world. An infectious virus called COVID-19 spanned the world since the beginning of 2020 for about two years, and affected almost all countries. In that era, the countries cautioned people to take a responsive care like washing hands, wearing masks, keeping enough physical distance, and avoiding gatherings. Several schools, colleges, and universities stopped face-to-face teachings. As a result, the COVID-19 pandemic created the largest disruption of education systems in human history. This was the first time to force educational institutions around the globe into distance and online learning (Williamson, Eynon, & Potter, 2020).

Consequently, because it was the first time most Iranian students used online instruction, they confronted many challenges. In particular, students had to realize their responsibility for guiding and directing their own learning (Hartley & Bendixen, 2001, Hsu and Shiue, 2005), for time-management (Hill, 2002, Roper, 2007), for keeping up with the class, for completing the work on time (Discenza et al., 2003), and for being active contributors to instruction (Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, & Fung, 2004). Meanwhile, Faculty who were earlier adopters have been gaining experience for years; however, many faculty were just beginning to transition their face-to-face courses to teaching in an online environment (Hixon, et al., 2012). Learning to use technology tools proficiently takes time. For faculty members who have not accomplished a level of comfort and proficiency with technology tools, it may have more to do with a lack of time and less to do with opposition (Thormann & Zimmerman, 2012). Cahyani, Listiana, and Larasati, (2020) reported that students with a lack of motivation were greatly affected by external factors like learning environment, learning time, and instrumental supports, which in turn affected the achievement. It should be mentioned that, not all learners had good internet connections which means some learners suffered from network problems and didn't have high-quality learning devices. Because

all students carried out their assignments and examinations from home, it was challenging to find the authenticity of their work and to make sure if the actual learning took place.

But actually, online courses provide learners with a variety of benefits such as convenience (Poole, 2000), flexibility (Chizmar & Walbert, 1999), and opportunities to work collaboratively and closely with teachers and other students from different schools or even across the world. The transition to online learning was one of the best ways to learn during the COVID-19 outbreak. Because most of the students were willing to have access to the lectures anytime to learn better, they usually asked the teacher to record the class. Since the classes were recorded the teachers had to be prepared well, and it could certainly improve teaching strategies. In addition, it could be cost-effective because online learning reduces travel and other costs required to attend in-person classes and also may provide learning opportunities for adult students while also engaged in full-time or part-time jobs (Fedynich, 2014; Yilmaz, 2019). On the other hand, the students were not physically faced with other students or the teacher, so they could be confident having a good relationship with others (Kim, 2020).

Apart from the limited number of studies on COVID-19, to the best of the researcher knowledge, no comprehensive study has been conducted in the Iranian context focusing on teachers' and students' perceptions of online instruction. Therefore, the study seeks to address this gap by exploring their attitudes and experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Main Research Objectives**

The purpose of the present study is to investigate Tehran, Tabriz and Urmia Azad university's ELT teachers and Urmia Azad university's ELT students, toward online instruction as they experienced it during COVID-19 Pandemic. The results of the study would determine whether the

teachers and students have a positive attitude toward online instruction or not. In order to help teachers and students to use online instruction, the current study was supposed to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the attitudes of ELT university students toward online instruction during COVID-19 pandemic?
- 2- What are the attitudes of ELT university teachers toward online instruction during COVID-19 pandemic?
- 3- Is there any difference between ELT university teachers' and learners' attitudes toward online instruction?
- 4- What factors are barriers to learn by means of online instruction during COVID-19 pandemic as perceived by ELT university students?
- 5- What factors are barriers to learn by means of online instruction during COVID-19 pandemic as perceived by ELT university teachers?

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Framework**

Developments in the field of science and technology influenced the education as many other scientific areas. For this, it becomes very important to expand the technological infrastructure for educational institutions, particularly as the methods and technologies of education change quickly.

Internet usage and developed social media interactions by means of the internet technologies has influenced the technology facilitating the pedagogical services.

In 1995, Holmberg significantly broadened his theory of distance education. This comprehensive theory is divided into a number of parts and the belief that distance education

serves diverse, individual learners who cannot or do not want to make use of face-to-face teaching. Distance education thus promotes students' independence and freedom of choice. Society benefits from distance education's provision of, on the one hand, liberal study opportunities for individual learners, and, on the other, professional/occupational training. Distance education is an instrument for recurrent and lifelong learning and for free access to learning opportunities and equity.

According to Holmberg, distance education is characterized by the following statements:

- All learning concerned with the acquisition of cognitive knowledge and cognitive skills, as well as affective learning and some psychomotor learning, is effectively provided for by distance education.
- Distance education is based on learning as an individual activity. Learning is guided and supported by noncontiguous means.
- Distance education is open to behaviorist, cognitive, constructivist, and other modes of learning.
- Personal relations, study pleasure, and empathy between students and those supporting them (tutors, counselors) are central to learning in distance education. Feelings of empathy and belonging promote students' motivation to learn, influencing learning favorably.

On one level, Holmberg's expanded theory represents a description of distance education. On a deeper level, it is a theory from which hypotheses are generated and that has explanatory power by identifying a general approach favorable to learning and to the teaching efforts conducive to learning (Holmberg, B. 1995).

The present study is grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989), which provides a framework for understanding individuals' attitudes toward technology. According to TAM, two key factors influence users' intention to adopt a new technology: perceived usefulness, defined as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular

system would enhance their performance, and perceived ease of use, which refers to the degree to which a person believes that using the system would be free of effort.

In the context of online English language teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, these factors help explain both teachers' and students' attitudes toward online instruction, their engagement with digital platforms, and their overall acceptance of distance learning. By employing TAM as the theoretical foundation, this study aimed to investigate how perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use affect stakeholders' experiences and perceptions of online language education.

### **Empirical Studies**

Sazegar (2024) conducted a study aimed to investigate Iranian EFL learners' perspectives on online education courses in language institutes. The results indicated that EFL learners generally approved of the effectiveness of the approach and their study habits; while, they undervalued the personal suitability and teachability of online learning. Also, this study explored the relationship between learners' perspectives on online education and their personality traits and found a positive correlation between personal suitability and conscientiousness, extroversion, and emotional stability, respectively.

Hamzehloo (2023) conducted a survey of 53 English teachers in which data was gathered on their experiences, motivations, and teaching practices through multiple-choice, Likert scale, and open-response questions. 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.

Khazaenezhad and Yasari (2023), sought to determine the pros and cons of online courses as perceived by Iranian language teachers and learners. An overall analysis of questionnaires and interviews revealed that students and teachers could not find online education easier than its conventional counterpart. Online education provides teachers with a precise image of applying the appropriate teaching methodology in their online classes as well as enhancing their autonomy. The research recapped that online educators and administrators of faculties ought to lay the foundations for making the benefits of online education bold for learners.

Seçil Tümen-Akyıldız (2021) conducted a qualitative study in order to investigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the field of EFL, particularly by revealing the viewpoints of secondary school students on pandemic remote education. Students at all levels were encouraged to continue learning despite the difficulties they had throughout the crisis. Nevertheless, they admitted that online language teaching has several advantages comparing to traditional face-to-face education besides its challenges such as technical, economic, contextual, and individual problems. Lastly, several noteworthy suggestions were made regarding teachers, policymakers, families, and students themselves.

In this era for some countries which were not used to use remote instruction before, Whatsapp application was a good means. It was an easy way to be in touch with the teacher and students.

Sirajul Munir (2021) in a qualitative study tried to describe students' views on the use of WhatsApp in English Teaching Department classes during the covid-19 pandemic. The researcher concluded that WA could be used to do the online learning process because it empirically helps the students to get enthusiastically involved in learning activities.

Also COVID-19 Pandemic provided a situation in which students and teachers became familiar with online instruction, in a way that mostly they show their willingness to use this kind of instruction even after disappearing of COVID-19.

Mushtaque et al. (2021) investigated the Students' Attitude and Impact of Online Learning; Role of Teachers and Classmate Support during the Covid-19 Crisis. The result revealed that students have an enthusiastic attitude to using the online medium and would like to use online learning in the future or after the pandemic goes away.

Conversely, the online education system remains underdeveloped, with no well-established platform available to adequately address the needs of the students and teachers.

On the other hand Mushtaque et al. (2021) in the mentioned study highlighted issues including an inappropriate study environment, a disparity of gadget availability, inadequate online study content, no access or slow internet speed, and electricity load shedding. The above problems negatively affect students' studies in terms of minimum or no students' involvement and proxy attendance in the online class. In addition, the health of students is also reported as being seriously affected by attending online classes. Students had weak eyesight, increased weight, sleep deprivation, and behavioral problems. Overall, students showed a positive attitude and generous support from their teachers in the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ismaili, (2021) examined the students' attitude toward distance learning during the pandemic (Covid-19). In this case study students were compelled to use online platforms that the university provided, such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom, to resume their studies. The results of this study show that distance learning is still in the development stage, and although traditional classrooms appeared to be indispensable, the positive attitudes and willingness of the majority of students to

engage in distance learning classes in the post-COVID-19 pandemic indicate that there is an immense potential future for e-learning platforms in higher education institutions.

In this regard Reza Pustika (2020) examined Future English Teachers' Perspective towards the Implementation of E-Learning in Covid-19 Pandemic Era. A survey method was carried out in this research. The result of this research showed that the future English teachers find e-learning is beneficial for them, but still have some lacks to overcome. Besides, the subjects of this research are aware of things they need to prepare before they conduct e-learning, and they also suggest the stakeholders in Indonesia to improve the technology development to support the e-learning implementation. But remote instruction and distance education are not exactly the same. The term corrective feedback has recently been imperative part of foreign language teaching.

Mardiah (2020) in a descriptive qualitative research examined The Use of E-Learning to Teach English in the Time of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The result of the study suggested that E-Learning system is considered as the one and only relevant teaching-learning method in the time of pandemic. Teachers and students just accessed the internet from homes and they would be connected to the E-learning application that has been approved by the institutions or the lecturers. However, challenges in applying E-learning were also undeniable, for instances: the unavailability of internet access/WIFI, learners feel unmotivated, poor levels of student engagement. The lack of actual social and psychological interactions between teachers and students in E-learning system seemed to minimize affective domains. The interactive teacher-student talk is not as effective as in normal classroom. Supports from institutions (colleges or universities) and government are needed for the success of E-learning, particularly in the time of COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 made a big a transition to remote instruction in which teachers experienced many challenges.

Marshall, Shannon and Love (2020) in a quantitative survey research answered the question of how teachers experienced the COVID-19 transition to remote instruction. In this study teachers found all aspects of teaching more challenging during remote instruction and shared a range of experiences related to training opportunities, barriers to student learning, as well as support for English learners and students with special needs. Based on the teachers' comments, the authors recommend incorporating digital learning days in future school calendars and putting clear plans in place for future emergencies.

Overall, the reviewed studies provide valuable insights into how online instruction affected language learning and teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. They collectively highlight the importance of teachers' preparedness, students' motivation, and the role of online platforms in maintaining educational quality. Building on these findings, the present study focuses on both teachers' and students' attitudes toward online English instruction in the Iranian context. By considering their perceptions and experiences, this study aims to complement previous research and offer a more comprehensive understanding of how online education was implemented and received during the pandemic.

### **Gap in the Literature**

Despite the growing number of studies on online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no comprehensive study has been conducted in the Iranian context specifically examining ELT teachers' and students' attitudes. Previous research primarily focused on the impact of remote instruction on language learning outcomes (Fedynich, 2014; Marshall, Shannon, & Love, 2020; Sazegar, 2024), but little attention has been given to teachers' and students' perceptions and experiences in adopting online language teaching.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the perspectives of ELT university teachers and students toward online instruction during COVID-19 pandemic. It also examines the differences between the ELT university teachers' and students' attitudes toward online instruction highlighting the barriers and challenges they face and how they cope with these obstacles.

## **Methodology**

### **Design**

Considering the procedures of the data collection and data analysis of the present study, this adopts a mixed-methods design including a qualitative and quantitative exploratory-survey research. In the qualitative part, it focuses on eliciting ELT students' and teachers' attitudes towards online learning and teaching during COVID-19 pandemic. In addition it explores ELT teachers and learners' perceived barriers on the way of online learning and teaching. In the quantitative part, it focuses on comparing the ELT teachers' and students' attitudes toward online instruction.

### **Participants**

This study was conducted at Tehran, Tabriz, and Urmia branches of Azad University. These universities were selected to represent that the sample was composed of individuals with relevant experience in using online instruction while providing coverage across different geographic regions of Iran. Due to the limited number of university English teachers in the country, most participants were recruited from these three cities. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select ELT teachers and students who had experience with online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 110 teachers and 110 students participated in the study. The students were

chosen between males or females from B.A. and M.A. English classes of Urmia Azad University. The participants were either first-year or final-year students. The participants' age ranged from 18 to 35 who had already experienced online learning for about two years. Simultaneously, ELT teachers were chosen from B.A. and M.A. classes who experienced online teaching for about two years. They were either male or female between 35-60 years old. The students and teachers used a website named VADANA (designed by Islamic Azad University) to learn the courses online.

### **Instrumentation**

A) Questionnaires: In this study, there are two separate questionnaires for students and teachers. In students' questionnaire the first part of the instrument included demographic characteristics of gender, age, city, years of studying. The next part of the questionnaire measured the preparedness of students toward online learning. Then the third part measured the attitudes of students toward online learning. At last the questionnaire studied the real barriers to the online learning process by asking the students to explain their ideas. On the other hand, in teachers' questionnaire the first part of the instrument included demographic characteristics of gender, age, city, years of teaching. The next part of the questionnaire measured the preparedness of teachers toward online teaching. Then the third part measured the attitudes of teachers toward online teaching. At last the questionnaire studied the real barriers to the online teaching process by asking the teachers to explain their ideas.

B) VADANA Platform: The participants used VADANA, an online learning platform designed by Islamic Azad University, to conduct courses remotely. The platform provides access to course materials, virtual classrooms, assignments, quizzes, and discussion forums, allowing both students

and teachers to engage in synchronous and asynchronous learning. VADANA supports multimedia content such as audio and video files, interactive exercises, and additional learning resources, which help instructors monitor students' progress and provide timely individual or group feedback. Students can participate in collaborative activities, ask questions, and interact with peers, enhancing their engagement. In this study, VADANA played a central role in delivering online English language instruction at the selected universities during the COVID-19 pandemic, facilitating communication, collaboration, and continuous assessment. By using VADANA, participants were able to continue their educational activities effectively despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, ensuring that learning objectives were met and academic progress was maintained.

### **Data Analysis**

The questionnaire had two parts, the quantitative and qualitative questions. For the quantitative part the researcher used the mean value and the p values (i.e. Sig.) in the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. Considering this result, the researcher used independent-samples t-test (i.e. a parametric test) to determine the significance of the difference between the ELT students' attitudes towards online instruction during COVID-19 pandemic with the ELT teachers' attitudes towards this kind of instruction.

On the other hand, for the qualitative part the researcher used thematic analysis to determine the underlying themes in the participants' answers to the open-ended questions.

The obtained quantitative data was analyzed by Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 22.

### Quantitative Data Analysis

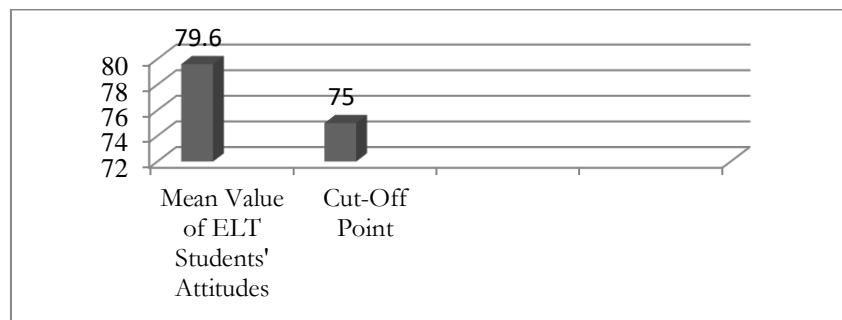
To answer the first research question, (What are the attitudes of ELT university students toward online instruction during COVID-19 pandemic?) the researcher took advantage of mean value in order to determine the ELT students' attitudes towards online instruction during COVID-19 pandemic as shown in the below table:

**Table 1.**

*Descriptive Statistics for the ELT Students' Attitudes towards Online Instruction during COVID-19 Pandemic*

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ELT Learners	110	79.60	8.235	.785

As shown in Table 1, the ELT students had positive attitudes towards online education during the COVID-19 pandemic due mainly to the fact that the mean value of their attitudes towards this kind of instruction (79.60) was larger than the cut-off point of the questionnaire (i.e. 75). Figure 1, shows these results:



**Figure 1.** Comparison between the mean of the ELT students' attitudes towards online instruction

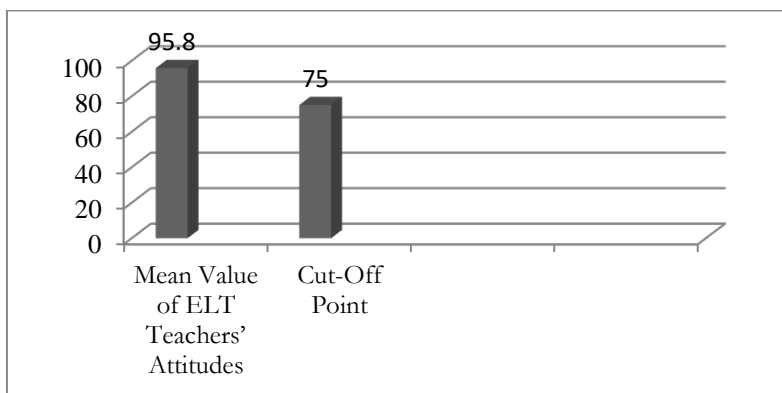
For the second research question the researcher used the mean value in order to determine the ELT teachers' attitudes towards online instruction during COVID-19 Pandemic. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the ELT lecturers' attitudes towards this kind of instruction:

**Table 2.**

Descriptive Statistics of the ELT Teachers' Attitudes towards Online Instruction during COVID-19 Pandemic

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ELT Teachers	110	95.80	5.920	.564

According to Table 2, the ELT teachers had positive attitudes towards online education during the COVID-19 pandemic due mainly to the fact that the mean value of their attitudes towards this kind of instruction (95.80) was larger than the cut-off point of the questionnaire (i.e. 75). Figure 2, shows these results:



**Figure 2.** Comparison between the mean of the ELT teachers' attitudes towards online instruction

For the third research question, the researcher compared the ELT students' attitudes towards online instruction during COVID-19 pandemic with the ELT teachers' attitudes towards this kind of instruction. Table 3 shows the results of this comparison:

**Table 3.**

Comparison between ELT Students' and Teachers' Attitudes towards Online Instruction

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ELT Students	110	79.60	8.235	.785
ELT Teachers	110	95.80	5.920	.564

As shown in Table 3, the ELT teachers had more positive attitudes towards this kind of instruction in comparison with the ELT students. Nonetheless, the researcher had to take advantage

of parametric or non-parametric statistics to determine the significance of this difference. To this end, she examined the normality of the obtained data. Table 4 shows the results of the normality tests:

**Table 4.**

Tests of Normality of ELT Students' and Teachers' Attitudes towards Online Instruction

Groups	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
ELT Students	.201	110	.257	.552	110	.545
ELT Teachers	.155	110	.292	.900	110	.651

According to Table 4, all of the p-values (i.e. Sig.) in the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests of normality were larger than .05. Consequently, the obtained data were normally distributed. Considering this result, the researcher used independent-samples t-test (i.e. a parametric test) to determine the significance of the difference between the ELT students' attitudes towards online instruction during COVID-19 pandemic with the ELT teachers' attitudes towards this kind of instruction. Table 5 shows the results of this test:

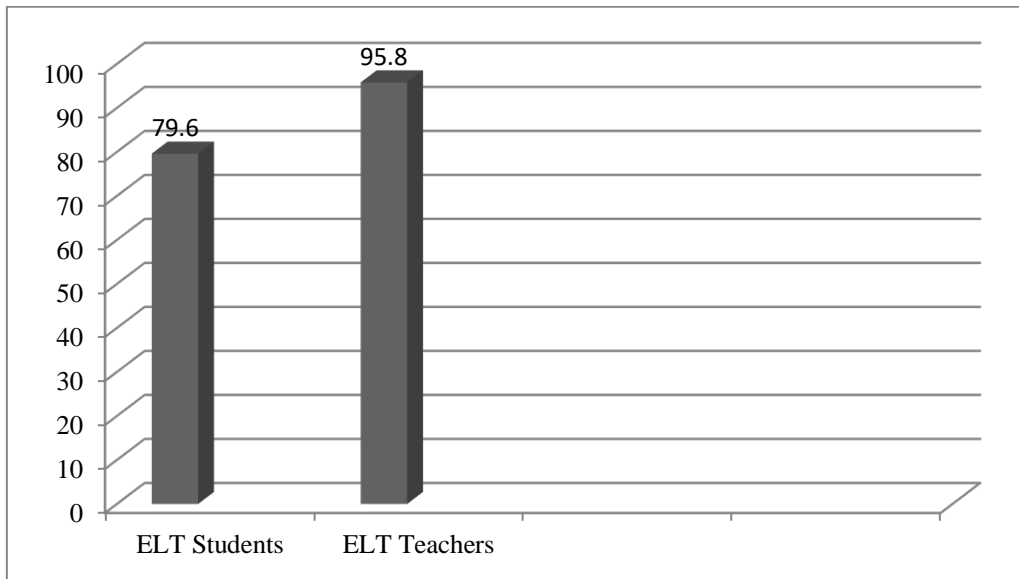
**Table 5.**

Independent-Samples t-test of ELT Teachers' and Students' Attitudes towards Online Instruction during COVID-19 Pandemic

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean	Std.	Conf. Interval	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.053	.306	-16.75	218	.000	-16.20	.967	-18.106	-14.29
Equal variances not assumed			-16.75	197.	.000	-16.20	.967	-18.107	-14.29

As shown in Table 5, the p-value in the results of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances .306 was larger than .05. Consequently, the researcher used the first line of results (i.e. Equal variances assumed). Based on this line of results, there was a significant difference between the ELT learners' attitudes towards online instruction during COVID-19 pandemic and the ELT teachers'

attitudes towards this kind of instruction since the p-value (.000) was less than .05. Figure 4.3 shows these results:



**Figure 3.** Comparison between ELT students and teachers' attitudes towards online instruction

### Qualitative Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher took advantage of thematic analysis in order to determine the underlying patterns or themes in the participants' answers to the open-ended questions of the researcher-developed questionnaire of the study. The relevant research questions are answered below:

RQ 4: What factors are barriers to learn by means of online instruction during COVID-19 pandemic as perceived by ELT students?

The scrutiny of the ELT students' answers to the questions of the relevant questionnaire underlined the existence of two main themes in their responses. The first theme in these responses was lack of appropriate online instruction infrastructure. Eighty-nine of the ELT students stated

that they were not satisfied with the relevant learning management system of their university and encountered numerous problems during their online classes and exams.

The second theme in the ELT students' responses to the items of the researcher-developed questionnaire was lack of adequate preparation for online instruction. Ninety-one of the ELT students stated that they did not know how to use the learning management system due to their lack of information on the various aspects of the relevant learning management system.

RQ 5: What factors are barriers to learn by means of online instruction during COVID-19 pandemic as perceived by teachers?

The examination of the ELT teachers' responses to the relevant questionnaire items highlighted the existence of two underlying patterns or themes in their responses. The first theme in the teachers' responses was lack of satisfactory online learning equipment. Ninety-one of the ELT teachers stated that the ELT students were not able to take advantage of the online classes due mainly to the fact that they did not use modern and effective equipment.

Furthermore, the scrutiny of the lecturers' responses to the items of the pertinent questionnaire showed that the second theme in their responses was lack of possibility to make the learners use the camera feature of the learning management system. Eighty-two of the participants accentuated the fact that most of their learners did not use the camera feature due to the Internet connection problems or their reluctance to take advantage of this feature.

## **Discussion**

The results of the present study regarding the first and the second research questions highlighted the fact that the ELT students and ELT teachers had positive attitudes towards online instruction

during COVID-19 pandemic. These results are in line with the results of the studies by Bozkurt and Sharma (2020), Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, and Bond (2020) and Hassani (2021).

Jackowicz and Sahin (2021) pointed out that the language learners are likely to adopt positive attitudes towards online language learning due mainly to the fact that this approach to language instruction provides them with the opportunity to focus on the various aspects of the target language without being distracted by the contextual factors. They explained that, in the in-person classes, a large number of the learners are not able to concentrate on their lessons due to a number of intervening variables including the noise, the small class size, and the temperature of the classroom among others.

Moreover, Walther (2020) stated that, most of the language teachers have a tendency to adopt positive attitudes towards online language instruction due to its professional development advantages. He noted that, a large number of the language teachers consider online education during the Covid-19 pandemic to be a perfect opportunity to promote their digital literacy. Furthermore, as he explained, these teachers are interested in this approach to language teaching since it enables them to attend various online conferences, teacher education courses, and workshops across the world and to ensure their continuous professional development.

The results of the study regarding the third research question showed that, the ELT teachers had more positive attitudes towards online language classes during the Covid-19 pandemic in comparison with the ELT students. These results are in line with the results of the studies by Karataş and Tuncer (2020), and Shahnama, Yazdanmehr, and Elahi Shirvan (2021).

Coeckelbergh (2020) stated that ELT teachers may have positive attitudes towards online language learning approach since they are aware of its great potential for ameliorating the language learners' process of language learning. He explained that, most of the lecturers consider the

Internet to be a valuable source of information on the target language and believe that online language learning is likely to prompt the learners to use this source for developing knowledge of the various aspects of the target language. Likewise, Walther (2020) stated that, a number of ELT teachers are interested in online language instruction since the learning management systems enable them to use their various features to provide the learners with audio-visual materials in a more effective way compared to the in-person classes.

The results of the study regarding the fourth research question showed that lack of appropriate online instruction infrastructure and lack of adequate preparation for online instruction were the barriers to online language learning based on the ELT students' perspectives. These results support the results of the studies by Hosseinpour, Biria, and Rezvani (2019), and Karataş and Tuncer (2020).

Hodges et al. (2020) stated that, the Covid-19 pandemic shocked all of the educational settings including the universities and forced them to take certain educational measures in a rushed way. They explained that, most of the universities were concerned about the possibility of education during the pandemic and disregarded the preferences and educational needs of the language learners. According to them, this issue resulted in their use of the various learning management systems without providing the learners with sufficient information on them.

Finally, the results of the study regarding the fifth research question showed that lack of satisfactory online learning equipment and lack of possibility to make the learners use the camera feature were the barriers to online language learning based on the ELT teachers' perspectives. These results corroborate the results of the studies by Hassani (2021), and Shahnama et al. (2021).

Walter (2020) stated that prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the language learners were not aware of the educational potential of their digital equipment including their cell-phones

and computers. As he explained, most of these learners used old equipment since it satisfied their normal every-day needs. Nonetheless, he noted that, the old equipment was not able to deal with the requirements of the online management systems. Moreover, a large number of learners were not able to buy modern equipment due to its high prices.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the ELT students' and ELT teachers' attitudes towards online language instruction during Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, it investigated the differences between the opinions of these groups regarding the online language teaching approach and made an effort to determine the barriers to the use of this approach based on the ELT students' and ELT teachers' perspectives.

Based on the results, ELT students and ELT teachers had positive attitudes towards this kind of instruction. Notwithstanding, the ELT teachers were more interested in this kind of instruction due to its educational advantages. Moreover, the learners and teachers itemized the infrastructure-based issues and Internet-connection-based problems as the barriers to their use of the learning management systems.

It was argued that the ELT syllabus designers, teachers, and learners have to develop a better understanding of the online education in their relevant academic settings. Finally, it was concluded that the future studies have to deal with the limitations and delimitations of the present study in order to provide more information on the utility of online education in foreign language learning contexts.

## Implications

According to the obtained results, it can be argued that, ELT syllabus designers have to use online language instruction along with in-person language instruction in order to facilitate the language learners' acquisition of the target language in their preferred environments and to provide the teachers with an opportunity to promote their digital literacy and to ensure their continuous professional development.

Considering the obtained results, it can be stated that the ELT teachers should make an effort to promote their digital literacy and to obtain sufficient information on the state-of-the-art language instruction software to be able to perform their role in a satisfactory way in their online classes.

In Conclusion, it can be stated that the ELT students have to make an endeavor to obtain adequate information on the Internet-based language acquisition sources. Moreover, they should try to take advantage of their teachers and peers' support to become familiar with the various online management systems and to use their different features in order to interact with their class members in the process of task performance.

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