# Challenges in online learning of English as a foreign language during the COVID-19 pandemic: Students' perspective at Ajman University, UAE

check for updates

 Najeh Rajeh Alsalhi[1,2+]
 Ahood Al Rawashdeh[1,2]
 Mohd. Elmagzoub Eltahir[1,2]
 Belal Zakarneh[2]
 Nagaletchimee Annamalai[3]

[1]College of Humanities and Science, Ajman University, Ajman, UAE.
[2]Humanities and Social Sciences Research Center, Ajman University, Ajman, UAE.
[1,2]Email: n.alsalhi@ajman.ac.ae
[1,2]Email: a.alrawashdeh@ajman.ac.ae
[1,2]Email: m.babiker@ajman.ac.ae
[2]Email: b.ibrahim@ajman.ac.ae
[3]School of Distance Education, Unviersiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia.
[3]Email: naga@usm.my

(+ Corresponding author)

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to explore the challenges of online learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) during the spread of COVID-19 from the students' perspective at Ajman University, UAE. The study used the descriptive approach. A questionnaire consisting of 26-items was distributed to a random sample of (282) students from different colleges who were studying online English Language courses during the pandemic. SPSS software was used to analyze the collected data. The results of the study indicated that the perspective of Ajman University students regarding the challenges of online learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) during the COVID-19 pandemic came at a high level, with an overall arithmetic mean of 3.54 and a standard deviation of 0.84. Students' responses varied by gender (in favor of female students) and by academic year (in favor of first year students). Additionally, the student academic evaluation (SAE) variable did not show statistical significance. The findings show that a deeper understanding of instructors' perspectives and experiences regarding the challenges of online English language learning is required. Likewise, developing EFL skills also requires a blended learning approach. The study recommended more understanding of instructors' perspectives and experiences concerning online English language learning challenges.

**Contribution/ Originality:** This study provides a modest addition to the literature about exploring the challenges of online learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) during COVID-19 from a students' perspective at Ajman University, UAE. Additionally, this study examined whether these challenges varied by gender, student academic evaluation (SAE), and academic year.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English has become a global language and a primary medium of international communication. English is used in education, tourism, business, medicine, and diplomacy (Mohammed, 2018). It has grown to be a global lingua franca among people worldwide. As a result, learning English has become increasingly important and necessary to

the development and growth of any nation where English is not its first Language at the educational, economic, and cultural levels. Unfortunately, teaching and learning English as a foreign language in some countries, mainly developing countries, is still a constant challenge (Akbari, 2015). As a result, authorities and educationalists across these nations invest substantial money, time, and effort into adapting policies and long-term strategic plans to develop English skills among their people.

UAE is no exception to this highly spreading norm as the English Language has become the lingua franca among all diverse nationalities living in the UAE. Moore-Jones (2015) indicates that the country's blue and white-collar foreign labor uses the English Language as the country's lingua franca (2015). As a tourist attraction and a trading hub at the international level, the country focuses a lot of its attention and effort on developing and improving teaching and learning English. To cope with this phenomenon, the concerned authorities of the country have dedicated enormous amounts of money and efforts to improve teaching and to learn English as a foreign language by adopting serious measures at its educational institutions.

However, despite all the money and effort invested by the authorities in the UAE, most students still need help learning and communicating with the English Language. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the COVID-19 worldwide has made the situation more complicated and more challenging for foreign language learners. After the spread of the pandemic, educational institutions worldwide were forced to resort to online learning as the best available alternative to successfully continue the educational process. This study seeks to shed some light, from the students' perspectives, on the obstacles and challenges that the students of Ajman University faced in learning English as a foreign language online during the outbreak of COVID-19.

This study investigates the challenges that the students of Ajman University in UAE encountered in learning English as a foreign language during the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The spread of the Pandemic disrupted the educational process worldwide. Most educational institutions worldwide had to opt for online learning as a form of distance learning that does not require face- to face interaction to minimize the spread of the virus by limiting social interaction. Some of these institutions had previous knowledge and experience in online education. The rest were exploring and experimenting with online teaching and learning for the first time, including their educators, instructors, and students. Therefore, facing challenges and difficulties for online learning a foreign language is normal and expected.

### 1.1. Research Questions

Two questions were attempted to answer in the current study:

1. What are Ajman University students' perceptions of the challenges of online learning of the English as a foreign language during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. Is there a difference in students' perceptions of the challenges of learning English as a foreign language during the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic, according to variables of gender, student academic evaluation (SAE), and academic year?

### 1.2. Significance of Research

The outbreak of the deadly COVID-19 caused the education system and educators across the globe to shift to online teaching to continue their teaching process. In such a state, challenges and difficulties caused by COVID-19 by students in general and foreign language learners, in particular, became very concerning and worthy of addressing in research studies. This study therefore examined the challenges and difficulties involved in the online learning of English as a foreign language during the COVID-19 outbreak from the students' perspective at Ajman University, UAE. It is hoped that this study would benefit higher education institutions, teachers of English as a foreign language, and the students themselves. It would provide educators with knowledge about the effectiveness and productivity, advantages, and disadvantages of teaching English as a foreign language entirely online.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. English as a Medium of Instruction in Higher Education

The English Language is becoming the global Language; the world dictates that non-English speaking nations should take extreme measures to develop and enhance learning and teaching English as a foreign language. This has led to a rapid emergence of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) phenomenon in higher education institutions (HEI), where the majority of institutions around the world started to adopt English as the medium of instruction. This phenomenon encouraged researchers at the University of Oxford to conduct an in-depth review of 83 studies in HEI to document the growth of EMI in different geographical areas.

In those studies, researchers have raised the issue that English, as the medium of instruction, was a growing global phenomenon in all phases of education. However, they also argued that this growth accelerated mainly in higher education (Macaro, Curle, Pun, An, & Dearden, 2018). In the United Arab Emirates, where the indigenous people constitute a minority of the population, the country embraced diversity among the people living in it, and the authorities drafted policies and regulations to foster foreign language learning (Hussein & Gitsaki, 2018). As a developing country with one of the fastest-growing economies in the Middle East, UAE has recognized the importance of learning the English Language. The Ministry of Education in UAE has begun to endorse the use of the English Language as the medium Language of instruction among the higher educational institutions in the country. The ministry has also drafted constant policies and regulations that develop and enhance learning English as a foreign language.

Rogier (2012) states that it has become mandatory for each student interested in attending a public institution in UAE to take an English-language proficiency test before being accepted by the university. Students who achieve scores below the minimal level will only be granted entry to the pre-baccalaureate English-language programs. This indicates that those students would not be able to attend any of the public higher education institutions in the country. In addition, the Ministry of Education imposed on private universities English Language proficiency tests, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests, as a primary requirement for admission to most of its undergraduate programs.

### 2.2. Challenges of Learning in EFL before the Spread of COVID

As nations worldwide recognized the importance of learning the English Language and the challenges and difficulties involved grew, researchers investigated various types of difficulties and challenges encountered by learners of English as a foreign language (Abuhmaid & Jarrah, 2022; Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Leki, 2017; Oteir & Al- Otaibi, 2022). The most common challenges in learning English as a foreign language observed and studied in depth by researchers in the field were attributed to several factors, such as motivation, EFL teachers, curriculum, teaching methodology, and assessment methods. Many studies examined the correlation between foreign language learning and motivation and its role in acquiring a foreign language. Gardner (1985) has conducted most prominent investigations on motivation to learn foreign language over almost fifty years through a series of research on the topic. He established a correlation between motivation, attitude, and foreign language learning. According to Gardner, motivation is considered one of the main factors affecting second language learning. Through his extensive investigation in the field, he concluded that raising the learners' motivation is crucial in learning a foreign language (Gardner, 1985).

In his later research, Gardner (2019) categorized and distinguished the types of motivation involved in foreign language learning, such as integrative and instrumental or intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and how they influence learning a foreign language. An earlier study conducted by Gardner (2010) asserts that attitudes are integral components of language learning. Additionally, some studies declare that motivation is a vital factor in language learning because it guarantees the learner's engagement in the learning process and point out that successful language learners tend to exhibit positive attitudes toward the target language (Wallace & Leong, 2020).

Educationalists and researchers in the field of foreign language learning determined that teachers' competencies and qualifications played a crucial role in EFL Learning (Akbari, 2015; Lin, Zhang, & Zheng, 2017; Turner & Windle, 2019).

Akbari (2015) claims that most teachers do not give equal importance to the four language skills when teaching a foreign language; instead, they mostly concentrate on the reading skill while neglecting the other skills. In addition, the study reflects on the students' perspectives on the role of the teacher, whom they believe should use communicative material and communicative spaces in the classroom. In another study exploring the role of instructors in second language learning in terms of the impact of teachers' pronunciation on students' learning, the results indicated that the teachers' pronunciation of the English language has a permanent impact on the students' pronunciation even after being exposed to input from the native speakers of English (Syed, 2015).

Declaring teachers as one of the influential factors involved in teaching and learning English as a foreign language, Muhammad, Ya'u, Aliyu, and Hassan (2018) affirm that some EFL teachers do not use modern teaching methodologies and that they should focus on implementing the communicative approach more often when teaching, use audio and visual aids, enhance their knowledge to guarantee accuracy in delivering the knowledge, receive more training to develop their teaching performance, and by going through teacher education programs that exhibit well-prepared content relevant to the demands of the 21 century (2018). Another challenge related to language learning is the curriculum and learning material and their essential role in language learning. The research has heavily investigated the concern for curriculum development and syllabus design in language programs.

Akbari (2015) argues that language teaching textbooks often lack enough tasks, depriving EFL learners of opportunities to practice the target language. Researchers in the field argue that a curriculum or syllabus should be designed and based on a needs analysis program to guarantee the success of learning the English Language, which they believe some course designers seem to neglect (Rahman & Alhaison, 2013). In another study by Alotaibi, Wu, and Alrabah (2018) the researchers tried to investigate the difficulties that Kuwaiti learners of English as a Foreign Language encounter in mastering prepositions in English. They attributed the challenges that the learners experienced to several reasons and listed the curriculum as one of the main reasons. They claim that the curriculum, which adopted the traditional pedagogical approach, is inadequate and does not accommodate the learners' needs, which hampers the process of learning the English Language and contributes to the students' shortcomings in mastering English prepositions.

Another issue related to the curriculum has been reviewed in past literature is course design. Designing syllabi without considering the learners' needs and identities is the norm that hinders foreign language learning (Khan & Khan, 2016). Several studies have also recognized the significant role of teaching methods used in teaching a foreign language or teaching and learning the target language. Some of these studies state that the teaching methods implemented in teaching a second language are outdated and are more useful in teaching the first Language than teaching the second Language. For instance, the grammar translation method is still widely used in teaching English as a second language; however when implementing this teaching method in a second-language classroom, teachers must discuss everything in the students' first language (Roy, 2017). Experts in second language learning argue that grammar translation method hinders learning a second language.

Moreover, Ashraf (2018) advocates the alteration and modification of teaching methodologies implemented in the EFL classroom to suit the needs of the students. He recommends that teachers consider that the millennial generation has many distractors due to the exposure and use of social media and suggests that teachers should use more modern and contemporary teaching methodologies that accommodate and seize the attention of the students (Ashraf, 2018). Kung (2017) also proposes that teachers should implement teaching methodologies that expose the students to authentic and genuine language learning through modern teaching methods, such as communicative-based teaching, which provides the students with opportunities to develop their proficiency in the target language through having to communicate real meaning.

Finally, the assessment methods used in teaching and learning English as a foreign language have not been effective enough to develop the learners' proficiency and command of the second Language. As a result, researchers overlook the vital role of the assessment methods in learning and teaching English as a foreign language. In a study investigating the challenges of teaching English in the Arab world, Farah (2021) proposes that listening and speaking skills are usually not tested. This clarifies the poor quality of students' oral and audial skills. According to Farah (2021), instructors tend to neglect to teach and assess the reading sub-skills. Furthermore, the study suggests that when teaching reading skills, instructors tend to neglect teaching and testing problem-solving and critical-thinking reading skills.

In another study, Ahmed and Qasem (2019) argue that writing skill is often not appropriately tested using the right assessment method. Their investigation concluded that ministry exams tend to ignore testing the listening and speaking skills and internal exams. Instead, they usually focus on the written components of the language, such as reading, writing, and grammar. The researchers believe that such practices contribute to the low proficiency level of learners in the English language (Ahmed & Qasem, 2019). Furthermore, Al-Nasser (2015) suggests that the focus in assessing the learners' proficiency in a foreign language should be on evaluation instead of testing since it suits the nature of English as a language which should be taught as an art since students tend to fear exams. He also points out that testing should focus on assessing the practical skill of listening and speaking instead of only testing the reading and writing skills.

## 2.3. Online Learning in the Middle East

Since the introduction of online learning, numerous studies have investigated the effectiveness of using online methods of teaching and learning a foreign language. Those studies aimed at exploring the impact of online teaching and learning methods in addition to the barriers faced by educational institutions, teachers, and students. In the Middle East, researchers tried to study online learning methods and their productivity and effectiveness in learning English as a foreign language from the students' perceptions prior to COVID-19 pandemic. However, according to Hazaymeh (2021) the research that explores the effectiveness of the online learning platforms before the spread of the pandemic is limited. Allo (2020) also believes that there is insufficient research that investigates the effectiveness of online learning in the field of EFL and claims that there is no research in the context of EFL that explores learners' perspectives about the effectiveness of online learning during the spread of the pandemic.

Wu, Hsieh, and Yang (2017) report how a few researchers explored the impact of creating an online learning community in a flipped classroom on the oral proficiency of the EFL learners. The findings of the study indicated that the online learning community had a positive impact on the oral proficiency of the EFL learners leading toward active interaction through the use of interactive learning activities, such as storytelling, dialogue collaboration, class discussion, and group presentations. In other studies, conducted prior to COVID-19, results revealed a positive attitude toward online English Language learning. like the study conducted by Alkharang and Ghinea (2013), which used semi structured interviews to collect the empirical data from academics and managers in HEIs in Kuwait. The research findings showed that the main barriers in Kuwait were lack of management awareness and support, technological barriers, and language barriers.

Dashti and Aldashti (2015) demonstrated students' satisfaction with using mobile devices in developing their English language knowledge by up to 80.3%. Additionally, in another study seeking to determine Kuwaiti undergraduate students' perceptions of Internet communication technologies in writing classes at a private HE institution in Kuwait, the results revealed that the students believed that the online tool was a valuable resource that provided them with the convenience and with the ability to learn on their own (Erguvan, 2015). Moreover, Alkhoudary (2018) aimed to examine how a blog as a computer-mediated tool develops learners' writing skills in English as a foreign language (EFL). The study's findings confirmed that integrating weblogs into teaching significantly impacts language learning at higher educational institutions. The students of the weblog group

significantly surpassed their counterparts. Furthermore, a study investigating the effectiveness of using Telegram in higher education in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from the students' perspectives established that this online tool was beneficiary in English language learning, mainly in learning vocabulary (Abu-Ayfah, 2020).

### 2.4. Challenges of Online Learning in EFL during the Spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic

For several years prior to COVID-19, researchers conducted many studies involving the efficacy of online education in learning and teaching English as a foreign language since online learning was already a norm in our everyday lives. Educational institutions had started to experiment and implement online learning in their programs. The debate regarding the effectiveness of online learning, mainly foreign language learning, is continuous and has become even more controversial, especially since the pandemic outbreak. The outbreak of COVID-19 has changed almost everything around the world. Humankind has yet to face something similar to what they are experiencing nowadays. The outbreak of this virus has forced educational institutions worldwide to shift to full-scale online learning, which, unfortunately, made learning English as a foreign language even more challenging than it already is. The spread of this contagious virus has shocked the world and has put educators and academics in limbo leading them to join forces to try to experiment and research to try to find the best educational resources and practices to make the best out of online learning experience during the surge of this infectious Pandemic.

In the Middle East, most countries have not had experience in online teaching and learning prior to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic due to the negative attitudes towards online learning, even though many educational institutions around the globe have implemented online learning for over (20) years. Unfortunately, the concerned parties and educational institutions across Middle Eastern countries ignore its existence, its benefits, especially in teaching and learning a foreign language, and its convenience to some learners in specific situations. This tendency among Middle Eastern countries led all parties involved in education to experiment with online education for the first time, including educational institutions, educators, instructors, and students as well, which meant facing challenges and difficulties in teaching and learning; as a result, there is a shortage in research that focuses on the effectiveness of online teaching and learning in the Middle East, especially from the learners' perspectives.

UAE is no exception to this norm. The only university that offers online programs in UAE and has long experience in online learning is Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University, established in 2009. In a comparative study that seeks to support knowledge-sharing among universities across the globe, the researchers explored the safety measures, precautions, and procedures practiced by (20) universities across (20) countries to continue the educational process amid the COVID-19 outbreak. The researchers concluded that most universities included in the study, including universities in UAE, need to draft strategic plans and progress towards online learning. They claim that some of these universities should have addressed the millennial generation's needs, which must be connected to technology and social media (Crawford et al., 2020).

Recent research investigating the impact of COVID-19 on learning determined that the spread of the virus hurts the motivation of foreign language learners, which made learning English as a foreign language even more challenging. In a study conducted via Li (2020), the author argues that due to COVID-19, students experience stress and anxiety during their stay-home lockdown, especially learners of foreign languages. Another study concluded that the widely spread virus truly changed the lives of many people around the globe, causing fear, trauma, depression, and anxiety to people everywhere, especially among those who lost their loved ones due to the pandemic. In the study, the researchers examined the Philippine teachers' practices in dealing with anxiety amid COVID-19 because, according to them, teachers experienced anxiety due to the spread of the pandemic as much as the students themselves (Talidong & Toquero, 2020).

In another study, "Digital Content for Millennial Generations: Teaching the English Foreign Language Learner on Covid-19 Pandemic," Fansury, Januarty, and Ali Wira Rahman (2020) propose that the COVID-19 pandemic lowered the student's motivation to learn because they only study at home . Several other studies tried to

seek the perceptions of EFL students of virtual learning and teaching midst of the COVID-19 epidemic. A recent study by Akhter (2020) explored the barriers encountered by EFL students in Saudi Arabia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study's findings disclosed that the learners experienced difficulty in the four-language skills, mainly listening, due to limited resources. They indicated that online learning needs improvement, especially since it lacks planning and preparation. On the other hand, in another study titled "Challenges of e-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic Experienced by EFL Learners", Mahyoob (2020) tried to shed some light on the EFL learners' insights toward online learning. The research results indicated the learners' EFL dissatisfaction with online learning, indicating that it did not lead to developing their language learning performance (2020).

In addition, Octaberlina and Muslimin (2020) reported several obstacles experienced by EFL learners during the pandemic wave: First, E-Learning lacks personal touch, such as teacher considering the overall learning outcomes and considering students' learning styles and not providing students with immediate feedback; second, lack of technology and internet connectivity on the students and the teachers part as well, third, physical barriers, such as eye strain for teachers and students. Another study by Efriana (2021) revealed different obstacles resulting from using online teaching and learning amidst the Pandemic. Those issues are experienced by teachers, students, and parents. The issues related to students can be summarized as inactivity following a learning situation, shortage of supportive facilities, and access to the internet network. Africa also provided a list of remedies to overcome those issues (2021).

In another study exploring "Attitudes and Challenges towards Virtual English Language Courses from Students' Perspectives at Taibah University during COVID-19 Pandemic", Ta'amneh (2021) confirmed students' positive attitudes towards online learning, considering it by far the best available strategy amidst the Pandemic. However, the study yielded several limitations to virtual learning, including pedagogical, technical, and personal barriers (2021). Besides, Atmojo and Nugroho (2020) conducted a study investigating the barriers and recommendations regarding online learning from EFL students' point of view and uncovered that unstable internet network connection and lessened social interaction caused students to be demotivated to learn and interact in the EFL classroom and less understanding of the delivered knowledge (2020). Another study that contributed to the literature on online language learning in the EFL field from teachers' perspective stated that teachers should be equipped with more knowledge, preparation, and training to enhance and develop their teaching approaches to be more compatible with virtual learning. Further, it calls for reforming future teacher and training programs, primarily by modifying the curriculum by including courses focusing on integrating technology and communication technology in language learning. The researchers concluded their study by advocating for more research to be conducted with a focus on teachers' development. Some of the research conducted during the outbreak of the Pandemic discussed the essential role of content in developing students' competencies in the target language focused on the importance of using digital content in teaching EFL because it aided the students' understanding, especially the millennial generation, and it compensates for direct contact.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Approach of the Study

This study used a descriptive method approach, which involved collecting quantifiable data that can be used for statistical analysis in order to describe the population, condition, or phenomenon being studied (Patricia & Travis, 2017). In order to gather data from participants, a questionnaire instrument was used.

### 3.2. Participants of the Study

The study participants consisted of (282) male and female students from different colleges at the Ajman University college campus who were studying online English language courses during the Pandemic in the first

semester of the academic year 2020/2021 during the COVID-19 spread. The total number was 282 undergraduate students. Table 1 and Figure 1 show the demographic information of the participants.

**Table 1**. Demographic information of students.

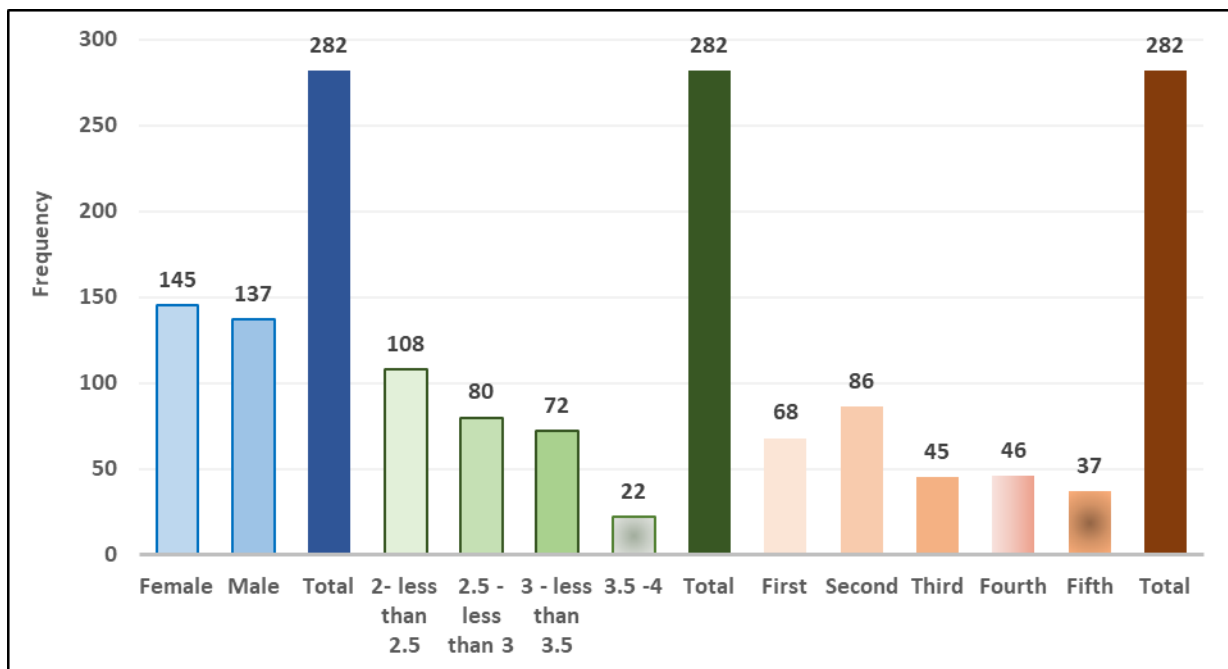| Study variables | Variables levels | Frequency (F) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 145 | 51.42% |
| | Male | 137 | 48.58% |
| | Total | 282 | 100.00% |
| Student academic evaluation (SAE) | 2- Less than 2.5 | 108 | 38.30% |
| | 2.5 – Less than 3 | 80 | 28.37% |
| | 3 – Less than 3.5 | 72 | 25.53% |
| | 3.5 –4 | 22 | 7.80% |
| | Total | 282 | 100.00% |
| Academic year | First | 68 | 24.11% |
| | Second | 86 | 30.50% |
| | Third | 45 | 15.96% |
| | Fourth | 46 | 16.31% |
| | Fifth | 37 | 13.12% |
| | Total | 282 | 100.00% |



**Figure 1.** Demographic information of the participants.

### 3.3. Study Tool

A questionnaire was designed to collect data from study participants during the COVID-19 Pandemic. It was given to them during the second semester of 2020/2021. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, the first covering general information about the students and the second representing questionnaire elements (n=26) based on the study's objectives. The questionnaire was divided into four domains (Motivation, Instructor, Curriculum, and Assessment Methods).

### 3.4. The Validity and Readability of the Tool

An arbitrator group consisting of seven faculty members from UAE universities with extensive experience in education was asked to evaluate the questionnaire items, including whether they were relevant for achieving the study objectives and if they were comprehensive and in number. The Cronbach's α method was used to verify the

137

internal consistency of the study tool. This method was applied to a pilot study involving 35 students outside the sample, resulting in a Cronbach alpha coefficient of (0.874), which is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The Alpha Cronbach's coefficient of reliability for the dimensions of questionnaires.

| Dimension | No. of items | Reliability coefficient of Alpha Cronbach |
|---|---|---|
| Motivation | 5 | 0.86 |
| Instructor | 6 | 0.73 |
| Curriculum | 7 | 0.74 |
| Assessment methods | 8 | 0.71 |
| Total | 26 | 0.87 |

### 3.5. Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee / Deanship of Graduate Studies and Research of Ajman University (Reference number: H-F-H-2020- December -07) on 04 January 2020.

## 4. RESULTS

*Study Findings Related to RQ 1:* What are Ajman University students' perceptions of the challenges of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) online during the COVID-19 pandemic? Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of participants' responses on each item (1-5) of the questionnaire.

Table 3. Participants' mean and standard deviation regarding the motivation domain.

| No of item | Items | Mean | S. deviation | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Online learning is motivating because students get higher grades. | 3.81 | 0.79 | High |
| 2 | COVID-19 lockdown decreases students' readiness to learn English as a Foreign language. | 3.51 | 0.80 | High |
| 1 | Online learning motivates students to learn the English Language. | 3.46 | 0.77 | High |
| 3 | Students would like to spend much time studying English as an EFL through online learning. | 3.02 | 0.91 | Moderate |
| 4 | The COVID-19 outbreak demotivates students from learning English as a foreign language. | 3.00 | 0.95 | Moderate |
| Total | | 3.36 | 0.84 | Moderate |

### 4.1. Motivation Domain

As shown in Table 3, the arithmetic mean of all questionnaire items (1-5) was (3.36) with a standard deviation of (0.84). According to this conclusion, Ajman University students' motivation for learning English as a Foreign Language online during the COVID-19 pandemic was moderate. Table 3 shows the highest average (3.81) when students respond to Item 5, "online learning is motivating because students get higher grades". Furthermore, based on the students' responses to item 2, it is evident that "COVID-19 lockdown decreasing the readiness of students to learn English as a foreign language." with a 3.51 average, this item is rated as having the second highest level. Item 1 " Online learning motivates students to learn the English language." had a mean of 3.46 with a high level of motivation, it came at the third highest. In the item (4), "The COVID-19 outbreak demotivates students to learn English as a foreign Language." had a moderate level of response, with an average of 3.00.

### 4.2. Instructors Domain

The results presented in Table 4 show that the arithmetic mean of all questionnaire items (6-11) was (3.86) with a standard deviation (0.89). This means that Ajman University students' instructors came in at a high level related to the challenges of online learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) during the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic from  students' perspective at Ajman University. According to Table 4, the highest average

(4.19) was obtained with the students' responses to Item 9, "EFL instructor is qualified to teach the online system.". Moreover, from students' responses to item 8, it is evident that "The instructor can deliver knowledge well through online learning.". Having an average of (4.11), this item was rated as having the second highest level. A score of 3.94 with a high level of was found for item 10, "The instructor has adequate knowledge of English language teaching methods.". An average of (3.94) with a high level was the third highest. There was a moderate level in item (11), "Instructor makes online learning motivational and interesting" with an average of (3.38).

**Table 4.** Participants' mean and standard deviation regarding the instructor domain.

| No of item | Items | Mean | S. deviation | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | EFL instructor is qualified to teach the online system. | 4.19 | 0.79 | High |
| 8 | The instructor can deliver knowledge well through online learning. | 4.11 | 0.70 | High |
| 10 | The instructor has adequate knowledge of English language teaching methods. | 3.94 | 0.78 | High |
| 6 | The instructor uses effective teaching strategies. | 3.94 | 0.89 | High |
| 7 | The teacher makes learning accessible to the students according to their skills. | 3.60 | 1.07 | High |
| 11 | Instructor makes online learning motivational and exciting. | 3.38 | 1.10 | Moderate |
| Total | | 3.86 | 0.89 | High |

### 4.3. Curriculum Domain

The results presented in Table 5 show that the arithmetic mean of all questionnaire items (12-18) was (3.49) with a standard deviation of (0.80). This means that the curriculum came in at a high level related to the challenges of online learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) during the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic from students' perspective at Ajman University. According to Table 5, the highest average (3.87) was obtained with the students' responses to item 16. "The online learning material meets the student's needs." Moreover, from students' responses to item 18, it is evident that "Online curriculum motivates students to learn." Having an average of (3.59), this item was rated as having the second highest level. A score of (3.49) as the third highest level, was found for item 12, " The online curriculum has clear aimed and objectives." There was a moderate level for items (17), "The online curriculum presents an authentic learning material"  and (15), "The online curriculum presents an authentic learning material"  with an arithmetic mean, respectively (3.28) and (3.27).

**Table 5.** Participants' mean and standard deviation regarding the curriculum domain.

| No of item | Items | Mean | S. deviation | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | The online learning material meets the students' needs. | 3.87 | 0.96 | High |
| 18 | Online curriculum motivates students to learn. | 3.59 | 0.87 | High |
| 12 | The online curriculum has clear aims and objectives. | 3.49 | 0.75 | High |
| 13 | Online curriculum improves students' ability to communicate in the English language. | 3.48 | 0.72 | High |
| 14 | Online curriculum improves students' knowledge. | 3.44 | 0.77 | High |
| 17 | The online curriculum presents an authentic learning material. | 3.28 | 0.71 | Moderate |
| 15 | Online curriculum improves students listening and speaking in the target language. | 3.27 | 0.80 | Moderate |
| Total | | 3.49 | 0.80 | High |

### 4.4. Assessment Methods Domain

The results presented in Table 6 showed that the arithmetic mean of all questionnaire items (19-26) was (3.46) with a standard deviation (0.83). This means that the assessment methods came at a high level related to the challenges of online learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) during the spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic

from a Students' Perspective at Ajman University. According to Table 6, the highest average (3.68) was obtained with the students' responses to Item 24, "Using proper assessment methods." Moreover, from students' responses to the item (20), it is evident that "Using interesting and motivating assessment methods.". Having an average of (3.59), this item was rated as having the second highest level. A score of (3.52) the third highest level, was found for item 23, "Assessment methods used cover the writing and reading skills.". Likewise, the items (26) and (22) with an arithmetic mean, respectively (3.51) and (3.49), came with the highest level and had an average. There was a moderate level of in the items (19) "Online assessment methods are fair." (21) "Online assessment methods are interesting and motivating" with an average of (3.38). Furthermore, there was a moderate level off in the items (19), "Online assessment methods are fair.". (21), and "Online assessment methods are interesting and motivating." with an arithmetic mean respectively (3.30) and (3.26).

**Table 6.** Participants' mean and standard deviation regarding the assessment methods domain.

| No | Items | Mean | S. deviation | Description |
|----|-------|------|--------------|-------------|
| 24 | Using proper assessment methods. | 3.68 | 0.66 | High |
| 20 | I am using exciting and motivating assessment methods. | 3.55 | 0.71 | High |
| 23 | Assessment methods used cover writing and reading skills. | 3.52 | 0.74 | High |
| 26 | Assessment methods need to include testing listening and speaking skills. | 3.51 | 0.90 | High |
| 22 | Problem-solving and critical thinking reading skills are tested. | 3.49 | 0.85 | High |
| 25 | The online assessment method is comprehensive to the whole curriculum. | 3.34 | 0.93 | Moderate |
| 19 | Online assessment methods are fair. | 3.30 | 1.04 | Moderate |
| 21 | Online assessment methods are exciting and motivating. | 3.26 | 0.79 | Moderate |
| Total | | 3.46 | 0.83 | High |

**Table 7.** Participants' means and standard deviations of students' responses in the four questionnaire domains.

| Dimension | Mean | S. deviation | Description |
|-----------|------|--------------|-------------|
| Motivation | 3.36 | 0.84 | Moderate |
| Instructor | 3.86 | 0.89 | High |
| Curriculum | 3.49 | 0.80 | High |
| Assessment methods | 3.46 | 0.83 | High |
| Total | 3.54 | 0.84 | High |

The results presented in Table 7 showed that the arithmetic mean of all questionnaire domains was (3.54) with a standard deviation (0.84). The results presented in Table 7 showed that the arithmetic mean of all questionnaire domains was (3.54) with a standard deviation (0.84). This means that the challenges of Online Learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) during the spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic from the Students' Perspective at Ajman University came in at a High level.

*Study Findings Related to RQ 2:* Is there a difference in students' perceptions of the challenges of learning English as a foreign language during the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic, according to gender, Student academic evaluation (SAE), and the variable of the academic year?

A mean score and standard deviation were calculated. A T-test and variance test was used to assess the importance of differences between averages. In post hoc comparisons, Scheffe's test was used to determine the significance of differences between means. Participants' responses are arranged by study variable as follows:

### 4.5. Gender Variable

The independent sample test (T) was used to evaluate the significance of differences between students' perceptions of the challenges of learning English during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic by gender, as seen in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Students' responses by gender, with means and standard deviations.

| Gender | N | Mean | Std. deviation | T. value | Sig (Tailed) | Sig. level |
|--------|-----|------|----------------|----------|--------------|------------|
| Female | 145 | 3.60 | 0.349 | 2.865 | 0.004* | Significant |
| Male | 137 | 3.48 | 0.384 | | | |

**Note:** *Statistically significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

The results presented in Table 8 show that the (t) value obtained was (2.865), which is greater than the (t) table, implying that there are significant differences at the significance level of (0.004) and less than the required statistical significance level (0.05); between the mean value of male and female, favoring female students.

### 4.6. Academic Year Variable

Table 9 displays the results of the Analysis of Variance Variable by One Way ANOVA test by academic year for students' responses.

**Table 9.** Analysis of variance according to academic year variable by one way ANOVA test.

| | | Sum of squares | Df | Mean square | F | Sig (Tailed) | Sig. level |
|---------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|--------------|------------|
| College | Between groups | 1.713 | 4 | 0.428 | 3.211 | 0.013* | Significant |
| | Within groups | 36.932 | 277 | 0.133 | | | |
| | Total | 38.644 | 281 | | | | |

**Note:** * Statistically significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Table 9 indicates that there are statistically significant differences at the level of (0.00), lower than the required significance level (0.05) for students according to the academic year variable. In Table 10, the Schiffe test was used to determine the source of the differences in the following comparisons:

**Table 10.** The result of the Scheffe test to identify the sources of differences between students based on academic year variable

| (I) College | (J) College | Mean difference (I-J) | Sig. |
|-------------|-------------|----------------------|------|
| First | Second | 0.13479* | 0.024 |
| | Third | 0.10247 | 0.145 |
| | Fourth | 0.14141* | 0.043 |
| | Fifth | 0.25648* | 0.001 |
| Second | First | -0.13479* | 0.024 |
| | Third | -0.03232 | 0.631 |
| | Fourth | 0.00662 | 0.921 |
| | Fifth | 0.12169 | 0.091 |
| Third | First | -0.10247 | 0.145 |
| | Second | 0.03232 | 0.631 |
| | Fourth | 0.03894 | 0.611 |
| | Fifth | 0.15401 | 0.058 |
| Fourth | First | -0.14141* | 0.043 |
| | Second | -0.00662 | 0.921 |
| | Third | -0.03894 | 0.611 |
| | Fifth | 0.11507 | 0.155 |
| Fifth | First | -0.25648* | 0.001 |
| | Second | -0.12169 | 0.091 |
| | Third | -0.15401 | 0.058 |
| | Fourth | -0.11507 | 0.155 |

**Note:** * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Based on the Academic Year variable, the Scheffe test was conducted Table 10 to determine the source of differences in student responses. In terms of the Academic Year variable, the results showed a difference in favor of the students in the first Academic Year.

## 4.7. Student Academic Evaluation (SAE) Variable

Table 11 displays the results of the Analysis of Variance by Student academic evaluation (SAE) by One Way ANOVA test for students' responses.

**Table 11**. Analysis of variance according to student academic evaluation (SAE) variable by one way ANOVA test.

| | | Sum of squares | Df | Mean square | F | Sig (Tailed) | Sig. level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| College | Between groups | 0.869 | 3 | 0.290 | | | Not significant |
| | Within groups | 37.775 | 278 | 0.136 | 2.131 | 0.097 | |
| | Total | 38.644 | 281 | | | | |

**Note:** * Statistically significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$ ).

Table 11 makes it clear that the differences, at the level of (F=2.131), are more significant values (0.097) than the required statistical significance level (0.05), which means that it is not statistically significant from students' perspective concerning the (SAE) variable.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Professional development programs for teachers about modern teaching methods based on modern technology, such as blended learning and its various models, e-learning, and distance learning, might be attributed to the weakness revealed in this study. The results obtained regarding the first study question related to the challenges of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) online during the COVID-19 pandemic, showed that it came at a high level, with an overall arithmetic mean of 3.54 and a standard deviation of 0.84 as indicated in Table 7. This means that the challenges of online learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) during the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic from the students' perspective at Ajman University came in at a High level. Table 7 shows that instructors were the biggest challenge of online learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The average rating for this aspect was (3.86) and the standard deviation was (0.89).

On the other hand, we noted that the curriculum domain came with the second biggest challenge of the Online Learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The average rating for this domain was (3.49) and the standard deviation was (0.80). The curriculum domain was noted as the second biggest challenge of the Online Learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This domain had an average rating of (3.49) and a standard deviation of (0.80). The authors may attribute this to the online learning material needing to meet students' needs. Furthermore, students may need more than online learning materials, which indicate a poor curriculum. Thus, students' English skills need to improve.

Regarding assessment methods, as shown in Table 7, it is also noted that this domain came with a high level of challenge of online learning of English as a foreign (EFL). The average rating for this aspect was (3.46), and the standard deviation was (0.83). The authors may attribute this to the assessment methods needed to be more suitable for assessing students. Additionally, it may have been possible for students to cheat due to the assessment methods used. It is also noted that the motivation domain came with a moderate challenge of online learning of English as a foreign language (EFL). The average rating for this aspect was (3.36) and the standard deviation was (0.84). There may be a reason for this moderate challenge, namely that the student's readiness to learn English as a foreign language was decreased due to the new learning environment as COVID-19 spread. Also, online learning enables students to get higher grades. The results are consistent with many studies that have focused on the challenges of online learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) from university Students' Perspectives (Aboagye, Yawson,

& Appiah, 2020; Ali & Bin-Hady, 2019; Anggraeni, 2014; D Hijazi, 2012; D. Hijazi & Al-Natour, 2019; Mahyoob, 2020; Rahim & Chandran, 2021). The results of these studies confirm that there are challenges to Online Learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) during the spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic from a Students' Perspective.

In the second research question, we sought to determine if students' perceptions of the challenges of learning English as a foreign language differed depending on their gender, SAE, and academic year. According to Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11, the responses of students regarding the challenges of learning English as a foreign language during a COVID-19 pandemic differed depending on gender (in favor of female students). In contrast, there was no statistical significance found regarding the student academic evaluation (SAE). In this study, EFL online learning challenges were examined during the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the study has a few limitations as well. Firstly, the study was conducted at a single university in the United Arab Emirates, and the sample was non-probability. Due to this, the results cannot be generalized to the Emirati higher education system. Second, the authors were not able to generalize the research results due to the limited number of participants (282).

## 6. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are some educational implications of our study and recommendations for future studies on online learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL):

1. Further study is recommended to understand instructors' perspectives and experiences concerning online English language learning challenges.
2. Comprehensive training of teaching instructors in the fields of modern methods of teaching that directly connects with technology and assessment strategies.
3. Adopt a blended learning approach when teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL).
4. We provide students with mandatory e-learning skills training and handling e-content and e-exams.

## 7. DELIMITATIONS OF STUDY

1. *Subject Limits:* The study focused on the challenges of online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning.
2. Human Limits: Students at Ajman University in United Arab Emirates (UAE).
3. *Spatial Limits:* Ajman University in the United Arab Emirates.
4. *Time Limits: Second semester of* the academic year (2020/2021).

## REFERENCES

Aboagye, E., Yawson, J. A., & Appiah, K. N. (2020). COVID-19 and e-learning: The challenges of students in tertiary institutions in Ghana. *Social Education Research, 2*(1), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.37256/ser.212021422

Abu-Ayfah, Z. A. (2020). Telegram app in learning English: EFL students' perceptions. *English Language Teaching, 13*(1), 51-62. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n1p51

Abuhmaid, A., & Jarrah, H. (2022). Education leaders' perception on the effectiveness of online learning during the COVID -19 crises in UAE universities. *Nurture, 16*(2), 54–64. https://doi.org/10.55951/nurture.v16i2.127

Ahmed, S. T. S., & Qasem, B. T. A. (2019). Problems of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in South Yemen: A case study of Lahj governorate. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies on Humanities, 2*(4), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.34050/els-jish.v2i4.7458

Akbari, Z. (2015). Current challenges in teaching/learning English for EFL learners: The case of junior high school and high school. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 199*, 394-401. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.524

Akhter, T. (2020). Problems and challenges faced by EFL students of Saudi Arabia during COVID-19 pandemic. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities, 12*(50), 1-7.

Al-Nasser, A. S. (2015). Problems of English language acquisition in Saudi Arabia: An exploratory-cum-remedial study. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 5*(8), 1612-1620. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0508.10

Ali, J. K. M., & Bin-Hady, W. R. A. (2019). A study of EFL students' attitudes, motivation, and anxiety towards WhatsApp as a language learning tool. *Arab World English Journal, 5*, 289-298. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/call5.19

Alkharang, M. M., & Ghinea, G. (2013). E-learning in higher educational institutions in Kuwait: Experiences and challenges. *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications, 4*(4), 1-6.

Alkhoudary, Y. A. M. (2018). The impact of weblog on Omani learners' writing skills in the English language. *International Journal of Technology Diffusion, 9*(4), 33-51. https://doi.org/10.4018/ijtd.2018100103

Allo, M. D. G. (2020). Is the online learning good in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic? The case of EFL learners. *Jurnal Sinestesia, 10*(1), 1-10.

Alotaibi, A. M., Wu, S.-H., & Alrabah, S. (2018). Challenges in learning English prepositions by Kuwaiti EFL learners: A call for bridging the gap in Kuwait's new English language curriculum. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, 5*(11), 516-530. https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.511.5659

Anggraeni, A. (2014). Using E-learning to support learning and teaching language: The importance of virtual learning environment (VIE) to improve student speaking skill. *Journal of English Language Teaching in Indonesia, 2*(1), 9-16.

Ashraf, T. A. (2018). Teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia: Struggles and strategies. *International Journal of English Language Education, 6*(1), 133-154. https://doi.org/10.5296/ijele.v6i1.13148

Atmojo, A. E. P., & Nugroho, A. (2020). EFL classes must go online! Teaching activities and challenges during COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. *Register Journal, 13*(1), 49-76. https://doi.org/10.18326/rgt.v13i1.49-76

Barnawi, O. Z., & Al-Hawsawi, S. (2017). *English education policy in Saudi Arabia: English language education policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Current trends, issues and challenges. In: Kirkpatrick, R. (Eds.), English Language Education Policy in the Middle East and North Africa* (Vol. 13). Cham: Springer.

Crawford, J., Butler-Henderson, K., Rudolph, J., Malkawi, B., Glowatz, M., Burton, R., . . . Lam, S. (2020). COVID-19: 20 countries' higher education intra-period digital pedagogy responses. *Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching, 3*(1), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2020.3.1.7

Dashti, F. A., & Aldashti, A. A. (2015). EFL college Students' attitudes towards mobile learning. *International Education Studies, 8*(8), 13-20. https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v8n8p13

Efriana, L. (2021). Problems of online learning during covid-19 pandemic in EFL classroom and the solution. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Literature, 2*(1), 38-47.

Erguvan, D. I. (2015). Kuwaiti undergraduate students' perceptions of ICT in writing classes. *Arab World English Journal, 6*(1), 280-297. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol6no1.22

Fansury, A. H., Januarty, R., & Ali Wira Rahman, S. (2020). Digital content for millennial generations: Teaching the English foreign language learner on COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University, 55*(3), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.35741/issn.0258-2724.55.3.40

Farah, R. (2021). Exploring the English needs of mechanical engineering students in ESP class: Indonesian University Context. *Al-Ta'lim Journal, 28*(1), 76-81.

Gardner, R. (2010). *Motivation and second language acquisition: The socio-educational mode.* New York: Peter Lang.

Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation.* London: Edward Arnold.

Gardner, R. C. (2019). The socio-educational model of second language acquisition, in The Palgrave Handbook of Motivation for Language Learning. eds. M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry and S. Ryan. In (pp. 21–23). Springer Nature Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hazaymeh, W. (2021). EFL students' perceptions of online distance learning for enhancing English language learning during covid-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Instruction, 14*(3), 501-518. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.14329a

Hijazi, D. (2012). Difficulties Jordanian non-English major university students face while learning English as a foreign language: A student perspective. *Journal of the College of Education, Aswan University, 26*, 29-54.

Hijazi, D., & Al-Natour, A. (2019). The level of pedagogical content knowledge of in-service English language teachers in a foreign language context. *Arab Journal Arts, 16*(2), 681-700.

Hussein, M. A., & Gitsaki, C. (2018). Foreign language learning policy in the United Arab Emirates: Local and global agents of change. In C. C. Kheng (Ed.), Un(intended) language planning in a globalising world: Multiple levels of players at work. In (pp. 97-112). Warsaw, Poland: De Gruyter Open.

Khan, T. J., & Khan, N. (2016). Obstacles in learning English as a second language among intermediate students of districts Mianwali and Bhakkar, Pakistan. *Open Journal of Social Sciences, 4*(2), 154-162. https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2016.42021

Kung, F.-W. (2017). Teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Taiwan: A sociocultural analysis. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language, 21*(2), 1-15.

Leki, I. (2017). Undergraduates in a second language: Challenges and complexities of academic literacy development. In (1st ed., pp. 352). New York: Routledge.

Li, G. (2020). Principles for developing learner agency in language learning in a new eduscape with Covid-19. *Languae Learning, 5*, 30-40.

Lin, C., Zhang, D., & Zheng, B. (2017). *Preparing foreign language teachers for next-generation education*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Macaro, E., Curle, S., Pun, J., An, J., & Dearden, J. (2018). A systematic review of English medium instruction in higher education. *Language Teaching, 51*(1), 36-76.

Mahyoob, M. (2020). Challenges of e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced by EFL learners. *Arab World English Journal, 11*(4), 351-362. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no4.23

Mohammed, M. H. (2018). Challenges of learning English as a foreign Language (EFL) by non-native learners. *International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research, 3*(4), 1381-1400.

Moore-Jones, P. (2015). Linguistic imposition: The policies and perils of English as a medium of instruction in the United Arab Emirates. *Journal of ELT and Applied Linguistics, 3*(1), 63-73.

Muhammad, H. A., Ya'u, S., Aliyu, U. I., & Hassan, M. (2018). Teaching and learning English language in Nigerian schools: Importance and challenges. *Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies, 3*(1), 10-13. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.tecs.20180301.13

Octaberlina, L. R., & Muslimin, A. I. (2020). EFL students perspective towards online learning barriers and alternatives using moodle/google classroom during Covid-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Higher Education, 9*(6), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v9n6p1

Oteir, I., & Al- Otaibi, A. (2022). The relationship between the socio-economic status and students' speaking anxiety: A study of Saudi EFL students. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Scientific Studies, 5*(4), 409–418. https://doi.org/10.53894/ijirss.v5i4.1005

Patricia, S., & Travis, W. (2017). Public administration methodology: A pragmatic perspective in Raadshelders, J . and Stillman, R. Foundations of Public Administration. In (pp. 75- 92). New York: Melvin & Leigh.

Rahim, M. N., & Chandran, S. S. C. (2021). Investigating EFL students' perceptions on e-learning paradigm-shift during covid-19 pandemic. *Elsya: Journal of English Language Studies, 3*(1), 56-66. https://doi.org/10.31849/elsya.v3i1.5949

Rahman, M. M., & Alhaison. (2013). Teaching English in Saudi Arabia: Prospects and challenges. *Academic Research International, 4*(1), 1-7.

Rogier, D. (2012). *The effects of English-medium instruction on language proficiency of students enrolled in higher education in the UAE*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Exeter.

Roy, N. (2017). *Challenges in Indian classroom to teach English as a second language*. Paper presented at the Conference Proceedings. ICT for Language Learning.

Syed, N. A. (2015). The role of the teacher in second language learning. *NUML Journal of Critical Inquiry, 13*(1), 71-91.

Ta'amneh, M. A. A. A. (2021). Attitudes and challenges towards virtual classes in learning English language courses from students' perspectives at Taibah university during COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 12*(3), 419-428. https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1203.12

Talidong, K. J. B., & Toquero, C. M. D. (2020). Philippine teachers' practices to deal with anxiety amid COVID-19. *Journal of Loss and Trauma, 25*(6-7), 573-579. https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2020.1759225

Turner, M., & Windle, J. (2019). Exploring the positioning of teacher expertise in TESOL-Related curriculum standards. *TESOL Quarterly, 53*(4), 939-959. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.527

Wallace, M., & Leong, P. (2020). Exploring language learning motivation among primary EFL learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 11*(2), 221–230. https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1102.10

Wu, W.-C. V., Hsieh, J. S. C., & Yang, J. C. (2017). Creating an online learning community in a flipped classroom to enhance EFL learners' oral proficiency. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society, 20*(2), 142-157.