Adopting E-Learning to Facilitate English Teaching
and Learning in Kuwait
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Abstract
This research investigates the implications of adopting e-learning on the teaching and speaking proficiency of English among teachers in Kuwaiti public schools, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although many private schools in Kuwait had already transitioned to digital learning platforms, public schools lagged behind. This study used interviews and questionnaires to glean insights from teachers, with a particular focus on their experiences and perceptions. Initial findings suggest that while the shift to online learning introduced challenges, it also offered significant opportunities to improve teaching methodologies and English-speaking capabilities. Despite initial anxieties regarding the transition, e-learning proved to be a flexible and convenient medium, prompting a revaluation of its role in Kuwaiti public high school education. The research underscores the significance of understanding the strengths and weaknesses of e-learning in the English curriculum, especially as the world grapples with the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: e-learning, speaking skill, teaching English

1. Introduction
This paper pays attention to the implications of adopting e-learning to facilitate the teaching and learning of English in Kuwait. Specifically, this study looks into how adopting online learning has impacted the teaching and speaking of English among teachers in Kuwaiti public schools, which were the last to switch to digital learning because most private schools had already embraced the technology. Overall, the research reveals how using the technology presents a better chance for English teachers in Kuwait to improve their speaking and teaching of English. Engaging teachers through interviews and questionnaires gives an overview of their thoughts regarding the use of e-learning. Despite some of the challenges associated with online learning, the approach presents numerous opportunities that could elevate the teaching and speaking experience. Whereas shifting to online learning presents considerable anxiety to educators, the approach is convenient and flexible, thus making it necessary for educators in Kuwaiti public high schools to consider making it part of their practice. The chief purpose of the research is to find out how e-learning impacts Kuwaiti’s teachers’ ability to speak and teach English given the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.1 Research Objective
This research explores the effect of online teaching due to COVID-19 measures on English teachers in Kuwaiti public high schools. Thus, it was guided by the following research question:
(1) What is the effect of online learning due to COVID-19 measures on English teachers in Kuwaiti public high schools?

The present study sought to understand the impact of COVID-19 on teachers’ spoken English using Kuwaiti high school tutors as a case study. Notably, the study examined the effect of e-learning on English speaking and teaching among Kuwaiti high school teachers. The study limited its scope to public schools because they are the latest to shift to online teaching and learning platforms in response to government measures to contain COVID-19.

Various factors make the research significant. One of the reasons why the research is significant is that it helps tutors to understand some of the weaknesses that require considerable attention. For instance, high school teachers...
get to understand some of the factors they need to consider and the areas they need to improve on to become more efficient in the way they speak and teach English using technology. Online learning is quite different from traditional classroom-based learning and may require some form of additional knowledge to be able to perform well in this area. In addition, the study is significant because it shows the potential gains associated with e-learning. Being conversant with the merits of online learning would allow both school administrators and teachers to pay more attention to this area with the belief it could elevate their experience and that of learners as well as make the school appear more advanced, thus giving it a good reputation.

Particularly, the study highlights the need for tutors to understand some of the possible benefits associated with online learning and some challenges that are likely to emerge when using technological forms for teaching and learning purposes. The research is also significant because it is likely to foster more research in this area. Researchers are likely to develop an interest to shed more light on how e-learning facilitates teaching and give directions that could promote development in this area, which is increasingly gaining prominence given that COVID-19 is still a global threat that continues to impact how teaching and learning occurs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 COVID-19 Outbreak

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected almost every sphere of human life. Consequently, these effects have threatened to derail the realization of the United Nations (UN)’s economic goals by 2030 as outlined in its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; Naidoo & Fisher, 2020). The state of education is one of the elements of the SDGs that has been under threat during this period when the world is fighting the pandemic. Arguably, many policymakers across the world acknowledge the importance of education in improving people’s lives; however, many governments globally have closed schools for teaching and learning to enhance social distancing.

2.2 The Concept of E-Learning

E-learning has become a prominent educational tool driven by advancements in information technology, with institutions investing heavily in its adoption (Popovici & Mironov, 2015). Despite its potential, challenges persist in fully integrating e-learning into traditional teaching methods (Fischer et al., 2014). Various definitions of e-learning exist, yet they all revolve around the use of electronic means for education (Engelbrecht, 2003; Horton, 2012; Koohang & Harman, 2005). E-learning encompasses diverse platforms like mobile learning, online classes, and blended approaches (Fischer et al., 2014). Unlike traditional methods, which prioritize instruction, e-learning emphasizes both instruction and active learning, with a stronger student focus (Gallie & Joubert, 2004; Oye et al., 2011). Another differentiation is the broader range of informational sources and evaluation tools available online (Cheung & Cable, 2017). These distinctions underscore the necessity for curriculum modifications to effectively integrate e-learning in educational institutions.

2.3 The English Curriculum Expectations for Students in Kuwaiti High Schools

In Kuwait’s intermediate education curriculum, English is paramount. Teachers are mandated to cultivate a range of critical English-speaking skills among students (Almusawi et al., 2019). They must enhance students’ language awareness and encourage the use of English in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Given that most students are primarily acquainted with Arabic, this emphasizes the need for competency in promoting English as a primary communication tool. Furthermore, educators are tasked with enabling students to apply English skills to other foreign languages and immerse them in diverse cultural contexts (Almusawi et al., 2019). This includes fostering an understanding of other cultures and ensuring linguistic accuracy and fluency. Ultimately, these roles necessitate the right teaching competencies.

2.4 The Impact of E-learning on Teachers

Online learning offers several advantages for teachers, with 80% of faculty members in a study by Şad and Göktaş (2014) lauding its effectiveness in dynamic teaching and prompt feedback. However, the full benefits materialize only with appropriate infrastructure because inadequate resources can frustrate educators, particularly regarding internet stability (Pellas & Boumpa, 2016). Yusuf & Al-Banawi (2013) noted that without physical presence, timely feedback can be a challenge in online settings. Meanwhile, Burac et al. (2019) found that e-learning enhances teacher-student collaboration and communication. Platforms featuring web conferences and chat functionalities foster real-time feedback and communication (Cacheiro-Gonzalez et al., 2019). Similarly, Sadeghi (2019) identified accessibility, facilitated by online devices, as a primary advantage of e-learning over traditional methods.
3. Research Methods

The study uses a mix-method research design to respond to the research questions. It gathers data through interviews and questionnaires because they provide the chance to understand the respondents’ attitudes and perceptions toward the research question (Crescentini & Mainardi, 2009). Moreover, the technique is flexible for participants, thus offering them the chance to frame responses in a way that suits everyone (Crescentini & Mainardi, 2009). The use of interviews and questionnaires is also applicable in this instance because they are cost effective compared to other techniques such as experiments. In this case, interviewees participate through email interviews, which make it possible to reach participants far and wide.

3.1 Participants

Out of the sampled eight teachers to respond to the quantitative questionnaire, the ratio of males to females was equal. Based on the purposive sampling technique, the idea was to have an equal representation of males and females. At the same time, the objective was to understand the perspectives of both males and females concerning online learning. Age was also an essential variable that was used to understand the perspectives of teachers. The majority of the selected teachers were between 26 and 30 years old. The other age ranges registered relatively equal percentages.

The research provided participants, specifically teachers, with a quantitative questionnaire designed to gauge their views on online learning. Out of the participants, eight teachers were selected to partake in the study. These teachers were purposively sampled to ensure an equal representation of both male and female educators, highlighting the importance of understanding perspectives from both genders concerning online instruction. Each teacher was engaged in a 30-minute feedback session after the questionnaire to delve deeper into their experiences. Overall, by focusing on gender balance and considering age as a crucial demographic, the study aimed to offer a comprehensive insight into the teachers’ perspectives on online learning, ensuring that a wide array of views, influenced by age and gender, was captured.

3.1.1 Teaching Experience

Perspectives and attitudes toward online teaching of English can also be influenced by the number of years of experience. The sampled teachers were asked to state their teaching experience, and the majority (33%) had taught for about 2 to 3 years. Only 15% and 10% of the teachers had taught for 1 or fewer years and 5 or more years, respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching experience</th>
<th>0–1 year</th>
<th>1–2 years</th>
<th>2–3 years</th>
<th>3–4 years</th>
<th>5 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Respondent distribution according to teaching experience

Source: Survey data.

3.1.2 Grade of Students Being Taught

Teachers have different roles to play when teaching students in different grades. As mentioned above, the sampling included participants teaching in high school, particularly those serving grade 10, 11, and 12 students, and relatively equal numbers of teachers were teaching in the different grades.
4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Use of Internet Since the Onset of COVID-19

Because of global advancement in technology, the world has experienced an immense use of the internet. According to Al-Mulla et al. (2022), the internet has been the main driver of globalization as many people continue to connect through the platform. Thus, the ease of getting internet access and affordability of internet-connected devices have improved the intensity of connectivity. The teachers were asked about the extent of using the internet since the onset of COVID-19. The findings illustrated in the figure below indicate that the majority (53%) were using the internet once per week, whereas 27% used it twice or thrice per month. The finding is an indication that teachers in Kuwait are gaining new insights into the need of online teaching.

![Figure 2. Respondent distribution according to internet use](source)

Source: Survey data.

4.2 The Type of Online Platform Used by Teachers

Because of the shutting down of schools in Kuwait due to COVID-19, teachers are using different online platforms to reach their students. According to Burac et al. (2019), there are different online platforms that can be used to teach in these contemporary times. As noted in the figure below, the majority of the English lessons were conducted through video conferencing (55%). In addition to this, there were teachers that used personalized avenues like text chatting (25%) and emailing (7%), whereas the rest depended on different social media platforms.

![Figure 3. Respondent distribution according to the online platform teachers used](source)

Source: Survey data.

4.3 The Impact of Online Teaching on English Teaching Experience

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**Source:** CSENET. (2024). English Language Teaching, Vol. 17, No. 3. Retrieved from elt.ccsenet.org
The transition to online learning has transformed traditional teaching, with advancements in technology enhancing educational interactions, as noted by Al-Mulla et al. (2022). E-learning is esteemed by educators for improving instructional delivery and enhancing knowledge acquisition. Arkorful (2014) asserted that this approach augments teachers’ perceptions, critical thinking, and overall educational quality. Furthermore, Ismail and Mussa (2021) recognized the effectiveness of e-learning in catering to diverse learning styles within classroom settings. Online strategies often support self-paced learning, facilitating collaboration between students and teachers. A standout benefit for educators is e-learning’s time-saving nature.

Educators do not have to be physically present and therefore do not have to walk long distances to attend a lesson. With online learning, it is possible to teach within the convenience of one’s home or office. Moreover, the idea that teachers have a chance to learn new ideas and concepts while interacting with the technology makes the experience for teachers appealing. However, that does not mean that some educators do not have an unpleasant experience with e-learning. Teachers who lack the needed skills to teach as effectively as possible through e-learning experience undesirable effects and are less likely to achieve their goals. In addition, the experience may not be appealing when a teacher has to cope with connectivity issues due to poor internet coverage. Nonetheless, e-learning has boosted teachers’ experiences and deserves considerable attention.

![Online platforms providing multiple teaching platforms](image)

**Figure 4.** Online platforms providing multiple teaching platforms

Source: Survey data.

Based on the data, a large number of teachers (69.7%) agree that online platforms provide multiple teaching opportunities, and 30.3% strongly agree with this; however, 21.2% of teachers are neutral, and a small number (9.1%) disagreed with the idea that the platforms could enhance teaching opportunities.

Furthermore, the teachers were asked to state their level of agreement on whether e-learning tools are replacing traditional books. As illustrated in the figure below, 25% and 56% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement; however, 26% disagreed. The study is an indication that teaching models are changing.
E-LEARNING TOOLS CAN REPLACE BOOKS IN TEACHING ENGLISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. The opinion of teachers regarding whether e-learning tools are replacing books

Source: Survey data.

The above figure shows that the number of those who disagree and are neutral are the same on whether e-learning tools are replacing books. Based on this analysis, it is apparent that books are still impactful. Besides, the number of those who strongly agree, agree, and strongly disagree is the same, which further suggests how e-learning may not be replacing books. Moreover, the respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with a statement of whether it is easy to find ESL materials online. According to Al-Mulla et al. (2022), language learning is a daunting task, especially when it entails several rules especially a language as complex as English. As shown in the figure below, the majority of the respondents agreed that it is easy to find ESL materials through online learning.

Figure 6. The ease of using ESL materials online

Source: Survey data.

The high number of those who strongly agree and agree that it is easy to find ESL materials online suggests that the internet provides a suitable chance to access needed materials. The number of those who are neutral or disagree is not as high, which means that online platforms provide teachers with the opportunity to access needed ESL materials.
Figure 7. Competency in using internet-based resources in teaching English

Source: Survey data.

The data overwhelmingly show that more teachers (51.5%) strongly agree they are competent in using internet-based materials. In addition, a significant number agree they have the capacity to access needed materials. Thus, the data encourages teachers to become confident and believe they can engage with technological forms as effectively as possible.

Figure 8. Responsibility for the success of internet-assisted English learning

Source: Survey data.

The findings reveal that the largest number of teachers agree they are in charge for the success of internet-aided English learning. However, the number of those who are neutral (27.3%) is higher than those who strongly agree (18.2%). Nonetheless, the fact that the rate of those who strongly disagree and disagree is the same shows the need to make teachers feel confident about using internet based materials in teaching.
Figure 9. Confidence in using internet-based materials in teaching English

Source: Survey data.

The number of those who feel confident using internet-based materials is high, which suggests the need to continue encouraging educators to use online materials. Furthermore, the absence of those who disagree suggests that more teachers feel confident when using the sources.

Figure 10. Integrating internet sources in existing English curriculum

Source: Survey data.

The data is optimistic that at least a large number of teachers know how to use internet resources for their teaching practices. However, because some teachers are still neutral and others disagree or even strongly disagree, it is imperative to offer guidance that would enable them to excel in this area.
However, a majority of teachers feel that students are less attentive when teachers use online sources to teach. The numbers of those who disagree and are neutral are also higher than those who strongly agree and agree. The findings show a need to find ways for improving attention on the learners’ part when attending an online class.

Confidence in using the internet also differs. According to Burac et al. (2019), the willingness and confidence of using a new technology varies based on different factors, such as relative advantage, trialability, effectiveness, cost, and experience, among others. The selected teachers were asked to respond about their confidence of using internet-based materials, and they gave insightful information.

Many teachers believe the internet is a valuable resource for accessing English as a second language (ESL) materials, given the abundance of researchers sharing their findings online. This online repository offers diverse perspectives from writers of different backgrounds, leading to a rich array of insights on ESL (Mauidloh, 2020). However, this diversity can sometimes result in conflicting views, potentially causing confusion. It is essential to spend time comparing sources, which can be time-consuming and, in some cases, lead to disillusionment if materials are contradictory (Wen & Tan, 2020). Moreover, the limitless nature of the internet, while beneficial, can sometimes compromise material credibility (Anas & Musdariah, 2018). Despite these challenges, the consensus among English teachers is that the internet remains a crucial tool for accessing ESL resources.

4.4 The Impact of Online Teaching on Teacher’s Teaching Skills

Online teaching is also known to influence the teaching skills of teachers. The teachers were asked if they provide learning materials that can develop English oral and speaking skills. While 55% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 35% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The result is an indication that online platforms might bar teachers from offering necessary materials. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers questioned the level of activeness during online classes. As mentioned above, online classes are often affected by distractions and lack of concentration among students. Furthermore, 65% of the teachers disagreed with the statement that they teach English better through online platforms. At the same time, the finding revealed that appraising students was not easy through the e-learning model compared to traditional classrooms.

Nonetheless, the majority of the teachers mentioned that online teaching allows them to assign more speaking exercises to the students. The attentiveness of students during online classes is low. As such, there is still skepticism regarding whether online teaching meets the expectations of teachers. However, the e-learning platform provides new solutions and expectations.

Figure 11. Students’ attentiveness when teaching them online

Source: Survey data.
4.5 Qualitative Findings on Teachers’ Opinions on Online Teaching

The study’s qualitative analysis revealed e-learning’s time flexibility, given that lessons can occur anywhere, at any time, consistent with Burac et al. (2019). Teachers felt it allowed for individualized attention via platforms like Skype and enabled customized, anonymous instruction. However, disadvantages like the lack of face-to-face interaction and minimal socialization were evident, a sentiment Dhull and Sakshi (2017) also found, highlighting challenges like internet issues and students’ lack of computer skills. Discussing the questionnaire and interview responses provided insight into Kuwaiti high school teachers’ experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic, linking interview narratives with statistical data. These interactions emphasized themes of tools and resources, anxiety, and teaching outcomes during the pandemic.

5. Findings and Discussion

This section provides the findings of the study, which are divided into the three following categories: tools and resources, anxiety, and teaching outcomes. The categories involve the quantitative and qualitative studies of the teachers in the selected public school. The first subsection presents the results from eight teachers who were sampled using the purposeful technique.

5.1 Tools and Resources

Teachers employ diverse online teaching tools in e-learning, with many valuing the platform’s flexibility, as described by Teacher 4. According to questionnaire results, 55% of educators primarily use videoconferencing, and 70% believe that online platforms offer a plethora of teaching tools. This mirrors research by Doyumğaç et al. (2021) and Pokhrel & Chhetri (2021), who highlighted tools such as videoconferencing and text chatting. Yet, despite online tools’ benefits, 42% of respondents doubt e-learning tools could ever replace traditional books. Screen fatigue is a key concern, as Teachers 4, 7, and 8 noted challenges with extended screen exposure. However, the advantage of online platforms is the abundant English-language resources they offer (Anwar & Wahid, 2021), with 66% of teachers affirming the ease of sourcing ESL materials online. Gherhes et al. (2021) argued that e-learning is more student-centered, allowing learners to tailor their English studies to their proficiency and style.

E-learning tools, such as videoconferencing and text chatting, offer teachers flexibility, with research supporting their adaptability and dynamism in teaching contexts. Despite their advantages, 42% of surveyed teachers believe these tools will not fully replace traditional books in English teaching, and several expressed concerns about excessive screen time. The online platform provides unparalleled access to a variety of ESL materials, with 66% of teachers acknowledging the ease of sourcing them. In contrast to traditional methods, e-learning is considered more student-centered, allowing diverse resources tailored to learners’ needs, as highlighted by Gherhes et al. (2021).

5.2 Anxiety

Teachers’ attitudes toward e-learning encompass both excitement and distrust, centering on engagement, reliability, and communication. Although 76% of respondents felt competent with e-learning resources, technical issues like connection speeds and limited access for rural students were prevalent concerns. Teacher 2 highlighted economic disparities influencing technological access, and Teacher 4 emphasized connection challenges in smaller cities. Mahyoob (2020) affirmed the need for technical support, especially for students in underserved communities. Meanwhile, 67% of teachers expressed confidence in using e-learning tools. However, both Teacher 4 and Whalen’s (2020) research point to a lack of preparedness and need for more comprehensive training in technology. Despite challenges, teachers acknowledged the benefits of e-learning, such as reaching diverse students, flexibility, and the comfort of remote teaching.

Additional challenges include the need for technological training and resources, with some teachers feeling underprepared or unsupported during the abrupt shift to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the flexibility of e-learning, such as remote teaching and accessing diverse resources, was praised, emphasizing the potential of this educational approach.

5.3 Teaching Outcomes

Teaching outcomes using internet-assisted English learning show mixed results. While Teacher 5 believes online learning improves listening skills, only 42% of teachers feel students are more attentive online. Many teachers, echoing Nambiar’s (2020) findings, note a lack of teacher–student interaction in virtual settings, leading to challenges in engagement. Traditional face-to-face learning is preferred by some for better student interaction, as emphasized by Teacher 1 and supported by Teacher 4’s observations on distractions. However, tools like discussion forums and chats enhance online interaction (Jamil, 2022), and platforms offer a variety of learning opportunities (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Jamil, 2022). Teacher 9 highlights the scalability of online learning, but
Teacher 10 suggests limits for better engagement. Teachers generally recognize their role in the success of online learning, emphasizing the need for more training and support in e-learning tool implementation.

Teachers believe that while online learning can improve certain skills, like listening, there are challenges related to student attentiveness and the potential reduction in interpersonal interactions. According to the findings, only 42% of teachers felt that students are more attentive online, and many highlighted the benefits of traditional face-to-face learning for richer interactions. However, the majority of teachers recognize their role in fostering successful online learning, using tools such as blogs, forums, and videoconferencing to create an interactive environment. The varied teacher responses indicate a range of attitudes toward online teaching, but there is a consistent call for better training and support in using e-learning tools effectively.

6. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced new ways of teaching and learning, an emergence that has transformed how English teachers in Kuwait conduct their practices. Despite the challenges of online learning, English teachers have made significant strides toward adjusting to a new context where they have to rely on e-learning for their teaching practices. Engaging teachers in Kuwaiti public schools through questionnaires presents the chance to acquire information about some of the issues that impact teachers’ use of e-learning. Apparently, teachers feel the internet presents a suitable chance to access ESL materials that are essential for the teaching-learning processes. The research findings are important because they emphasize the need for teachers to consider e-learning as a possible alternative for improving the teaching experience.

References


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