FROM QUARANTINE TO QUALITY: *EDUCAȚIE ONLINE'S* LESSONS FOR FUTURE ENGLISH CLASSROOMS

DE LA CARANTINA LA CALITATE: LECȚIILE *EDUCAȚIE ONLINE* PENTRU CLASELE DE LIMBA ENGLEZA

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Abstract: *This study examines the impact of online education on teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research aims to highlight how the integration of digital technologies has influenced the educational process, creating*

both opportunities and challenges for teachers and students. The methodology is based on a qualitative analysis of online teaching practices and digital resources used in instruction. The findings indicate that digital platforms have improved access to diverse educational materials and supported the development of students' digital competences. However, several challenges have been identified, including limited face-to-face interaction, difficulties in maintaining student motivation, and unequal access to technology. Furthermore, the use of multimedia tools has proven effective in enhancing the teaching and learning process. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the importance of combining digital technologies with appropriate pedagogical strategies in order to achieve effective and balanced English language teaching.

Keywords: *online education, English language, digital platforms, digital competence, EFL*

Rezumat: *Acest studiu analizează impactul educației online asupra predării limbii engleze ca limbă străină (EFL) în contextul pandemiei COVID-19. Scopul cercetării este de a evidenția modul în care integrarea tehnologiilor digitale a influențat procesul educațional, oferind atât oportunități, cât și provocări pentru profesori și elevi. Metodologia utilizată se bazează pe o analiză calitativă a practicilor de predare online și a resurselor digitale folosite în procesul de instruire. Rezultatele studiului arată că platformele digitale au facilitat accesul la o gamă variată de materiale educaționale și au contribuit la dezvoltarea competențelor digitale ale elevilor. În același timp, au fost identificate dificultăți legate de lipsa interacțiunii directe, menținerea motivației și diferențele de acces la tehnologie. De asemenea, integrarea instrumentelor multimedia s-a dovedit eficientă în sprijinirea procesului de predare-învățare. În concluzie, studiul subliniază importanța combinării tehnologiilor digitale cu strategii pedagogice adaptate, pentru a asigura un proces educațional eficient și echilibrat în predarea limbii engleze.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *educație online, limba engleză, platforme digitale, competență digitală, EFL*

The present research examines the way online education influenced English language teaching during the COVID-19 quarantine period, a stage in which the educational system was forced to rapidly adapt to new forms of instructional organization. The suspension of face-to-face activities led to the transition toward digital learning environments based on online platforms and technological tools, which significantly changed the processes of teaching, communication, and assessment.

The importance of this topic is supported by the continuous expansion of digital technologies in contemporary education. Even after the return to traditional classroom activities, online tools remain integrated into the teaching process as complementary resources. In this context, analyzing the experience of online education becomes relevant for understanding its impact on the quality of English language teaching and for identifying future directions for improving educational practices.

The main problem addressed in this study refers to the effects of the transition to online learning on the process of teaching and learning English, as well as the difficulties encountered by both teachers and students during this adaptation period. Based on this problem, the research aims to examine the impact of online education and highlight relevant aspects that may contribute to improving future educational processes.

The hypothesis of the study is based on the idea that online education generated both challenges and opportunities in English language teaching. On the one hand, difficulties emerged related to communication, student engagement, and technical issues. On the other

hand, this type of learning encouraged the development of digital competencies and the use of modern, more flexible teaching methods adapted to current educational needs.

The present study draws on this framework to investigate how teachers and students experienced the rapid transition to online instruction during the COVID-19 period, and what implications this experience holds for the continued integration of digital tools in EFL pedagogy.

The theoretical grounding for online education is most systematically developed by Anderson (2008), who frames online learning as a distinct mode shaped by three forms of interaction: student–teacher, student–student, and student–content. Anderson stresses that effective online learning depends on the deliberate design of these interactions rather than on the mere transposition of classroom practices into a virtual format. Complementing this perspective, Siemens (2005) proposes the theory of connectivism, in which learning is understood as the process of forming connections within networks of information, people, and digital nodes. Connectivism is particularly suited to the analysis of pandemic-era education, as it captures the way learners and teachers were obliged to navigate distributed digital resources and construct knowledge through online communities and platforms.

To conduct the research, a mixed-method approach was applied, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data was collected through questionnaires distributed to both students and teachers. The research instruments included closed-ended questions, used for obtaining statistical data, and open-ended questions, which allowed participants to express their opinions and experiences freely. The collected information was analyzed using statistical methods, such as percentage calculation and graphical representation, as well as qualitative interpretation in order to better understand participants' perceptions. The research participants include teachers of English and students of different age groups and proficiency levels who experienced online instruction during the pandemic period. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the research, the anonymity of their responses, and the use of the data exclusively for the present study.

The structure of the thesis is organized into three main chapters. The first chapter provides the theoretical background of the research, focusing on concepts related to online education and the role of technology in English language teaching. The second chapter describes the methodological framework of the study, including the aim, objectives, hypothesis, and data collection methods. The third chapter is dedicated to the practical analysis of the obtained results, presenting data interpretation and research findings. The paper concludes with general conclusions and recommendations regarding the effective integration of traditional and digital teaching methods in English language education.

Several limitations of the present research should be acknowledged. First, the sample is limited in size and geographical distribution and therefore does not allow for broad generalisations. Second, the data is based on self-reported perceptions, which may be influenced by recall bias or by the participants' overall attitude toward the pandemic period. Third, the study focuses primarily on the EFL context and does not address the teaching of other foreign languages, although some of its findings may be relevant beyond English. Despite these limitations, the research offers a focused, theoretically grounded analysis that may inform both pedagogical practice and further studies in the field.

The results of the research have significant practical value, as they may contribute to improving English language teaching strategies. The study highlights the importance of effectively integrating digital technologies and emphasizes the role of interactive methods in increasing student motivation and engagement. Furthermore, the findings may be useful for educational institutions in the process of incorporating digital resources into teaching practice. Overall, the value of the present research lies in its capacity to bridge a recent yet

formative chapter of educational history with the ongoing practice of English language teaching. By documenting how teachers and students experienced the rapid transition to online instruction during the COVID-19 period, the study contributes to a clearer understanding of which digital practices proved pedagogically effective and which generated obstacles to learning.

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