Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) Forced by the Covid-19 Pandemic: EFL Teachers' Practices and Perspectives Two Years Later

Eman Barri
University of Central Florida

Part of the First and Second Language Acquisition Commons, and the Language and Literacy Education Commons

Find similar works at: https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd2020

This Masters Thesis (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2020- by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

STARS Citation
EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING (ERT) FORCED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:
EFL TEACHERS' PRACTICES AND PERSPECTIVES TWO YEARS LATER

by

EMAN BARRI
B.A. An-Najah National University, 2009

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
in the College of Arts and Humanities
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term
2022
ABSTRACT

When the Covid-19 pandemic first hit the world in March 2020, all aspects of life were drastically disrupted, and the education sector underwent radical changes. An almost overnight shift from traditional classrooms to delivering instruction online became an enforced necessity rather than an option to continue education during the pandemic, which required teachers around the world to adapt to the new reality on very short notice. Because little research has been undertaken to understand language teaching practices globally during the pandemic from the teachers' perspectives, shedding light on how English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers responded to the emergency remote teaching (ERT) is important. Examining those experiences showed what impact this mode of instruction had on English language teaching in general and what plans there are for more successful teaching practices of similar possible scenarios in the future. This case study approach examined five Palestinian EFL instructors' perceptions and practices shifting to ERT during the Covid-19 outbreak. Through Zoom semi-structured interviews, the respondents reported changes to their pedagogical practices to adjusting to ERT, including changes to their communication, pedagogical, and classroom management strategies. While participants faced pedagogical challenges, as well as issues related to technology, communication, assessment, classroom management, lesson planning, and course delivery, distinct benefits emerged as a result of the switch to online teaching. Furthermore, participants reported their beliefs that online teaching and learning will persist in the post-pandemic era.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my advisor, Dr. Kerry Purmensky for her guidance, advice, and support that made this journey an inspiring experience for me. I would also like to offer my deepest gratitude to my committee members, Drs. Vitanova and Mihai, for their guidance and feedback that made this work possible.

I would like to sincerely thank my husband, Mohammad, who supported me throughout my master's journey and believed in my abilities to successfully finish my studies. My sincerest thanks go to my four children, Khalid, Zain, Majd, and Mira, who have been inspiring me to work hard, overcome obstacles with grace and courage, and achieve my goals.

My father and mother, thank you for always being there for me despite the distance. I want you to know how grateful I am for everything that you have done for me. You are my secret to success.

I would like to thank the study participants who showed their enthusiasm to participate in this study and shared their experiences and thoughts openly. I am so grateful for your collaboration and contributions that made this work possible.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ........................................................................................................ vii
LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................................................ viii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION ............................................................................... 1
  Statement of the Problem ......................................................................................... 1
  The Purpose of the Study ....................................................................................... 4
  The Significance of the Study .............................................................................. 5
  Research Questions .............................................................................................. 6
  Definition of Terms ............................................................................................... 6

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .................................................................... 9
  Theoretical Framework ......................................................................................... 10
  The Shift to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) ................................................. 13
    Distance Education .......................................................................................... 15
    Online Distance Education versus Emergency Remote Teaching .................. 17
  Teachers' Perspectives of ERT: Reported Experiences ....................................... 19
    Reported Changes ......................................................................................... 20
  Challenges to Education During the Pandemic .................................................. 25
    Challenges of Online Education: Pre-Pandemic ............................................. 25
    Challenges to Education During the Pandemic ................................................ 30
  Key Benefits of Delivering Instruction Online ................................................... 34
    The Positive Aspects of Delivering Instruction Online: Pre-Covid ................. 34
    The Positive Aspects of ERT ........................................................................ 35

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY ....................................................................... 38
  Study Design ....................................................................................................... 38
  Data Collection ................................................................................................... 42
  Participants .......................................................................................................... 43
  Data Analysis ...................................................................................................... 43
  The Researcher Role ........................................................................................... 44
  The Study Context ............................................................................................... 46

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS ..................................................................................... 47
  Demographics ...................................................................................................... 49
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Reported Disadvantages</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantages in the Shift to ERT</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation, Creativity, and Flexibility</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing Technological Knowledge</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining Communication</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse Learning Resources</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Change</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from Colleagues and Institutions</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Future of Education</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of Study</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Research</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A  IRB APPROVAL LETTER</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B  INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C  RECRUITING EMAIL</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX D  EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: TPACK image based on the original on TPACK.org ......................................................... 12

Figure 2: Three major components and the related issues in an online education environment
(Kebritchi et al., 2017) ................................................................................................................ 28
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Participants Demographic/Informational Table ................................................................. 52
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In March 2020, higher education institutions in more than 190 countries were physically shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing an unprecedent disruption of education systems and forcing billions of learners to stay home (UN, 2020). To help stop the spread of the virus and keep the education process alive, educational institutions around the globe moved the traditional face to face method of teaching to a novel virtual experience. Correspondingly, a new teaching pedagogy has emerged, which I will call “Covid pedagogy,” the teaching pedagogy that was forced by the pandemic and caused teachers' mixed feelings of discomfort and the unpredictability of what might happen regarding teaching in general and the fear of the disease, specifically. As educational institutions across the world pivot online, many complications appeared on the surface as teachers and students were unprepared for such a sudden transition. Many teachers had not taught online classes or received any training in online teaching before the pandemic which might have caused confusion and discomfort among those teachers. Due to this abrupt change, teachers had to confront several challenges, such as dealing with technology issues, caring about students’ emotional, mental, and personal problems, and adapting to new pedagogical practices to suit this unprecedented time, which left many teachers with the feeling of uncertainty towards the effectiveness of delivering courses online during that time. More pressure was added on the part of teachers when they or their learners are experiencing distance learning for the first time. Additionally, successfully moving the class content from face-to-face mode to online was another challenge for teachers (Kebrtich et al., 2017), and keeping students engaged during the time of a pandemic was considered difficult (Zhang, 2020). Moreover,
developing materials that guarantee students' engagement while experiencing online mode of instruction for the first time and caused by a pandemic was another problem.

The response to the global pandemic has been different in higher education institutions around the globe due to issues related to technology preparedness and the availability of resources. Some educational institutions in low-income countries were unable to offer online learning platforms due to economic factors or lack of technology tools. As a result, many students were deprived of their rights to learn. Other institutions succeeded in offering online courses, but the unexpected shift to remote instruction still had its own problems. Consequently, it has become a necessity to conduct more research to prepare the educational system around the world for potential future crises similar to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although English teachers had to deal with many challenges while teaching remotely, their experiences and reflections on delivering instruction online might be different, so it is crucial to investigate EFL teachers' experiences teaching English during the pandemic. To that end, this study aimed to document EFL instructors’ perceptions of the transition from their face-to-face classrooms to online instruction delivery in the midst of the pandemic.

The incorporation of online learning in higher education has become a widespread method to provide education over the last decade. As technology has revolutionized the world these days, the importance of such incorporation comes from the flexibility and convenience of such a method (Poláková & Klímová, 2021). Additionally, the lower cost of online courses compared to traditional classes has pushed the former to grow at a phenomenal rate. Despite the importance and the increasing growth of online learning, the sudden and rapid shift from face-to-
face teaching to delivering courses online in higher education caused by the pandemic has been challenging and cannot be compared to the well-designed online education. Keegan (1980) defined distance education to distinguish it from face-to-face lecturing and private studies as the one that includes the following six elements: the separation of teacher and student, the employment of technical media, the impact of educational institutions, the two-way communication between teachers and students, the possibility of occasional meetings either for educational or socializing purpose, and the involvement of an industrialized form of education.

What can be concluded from Keegan's definition is that the move from one method of teaching to distance education requires preparation. The delivery of higher education in online environments does not merely imply the switch from the classroom setting to a virtual one, but it requires the restructuring of curricula, reassessing teaching methods, and preparing students to the new teaching environment (Isaias et al., 2020). Additionally, in person courses cannot be completely transferred to an online environment due to losing the interactions of the traditional classroom (Chan et al., 2021). In the case of the forced change to remote education during the pandemic, the switch from the traditional classroom to the virtual environment went from an option to a ubiquitous necessity, and teachers were thrown into a state of unrest when they had to rapidly adapt to the new circumstances formed as a result of the pandemic. Consequently, teachers did not have the time to prepare themselves or their students for this drastic change.

Todorova & Bjorn (2011) stated that "the key lesson for others may be to embrace e-learning technology before disaster strikes!" (p. 559). As the switch to online instruction was embraced globally, unlike other disasters that hit individual countries, this mode of delivery has gained more importance. It has become essential that the education system should be more
prepared to be able to adapt to scenarios similar to the pandemic, and more research is still needed to help create a better online learning environment for both teachers and students in higher education institutions where English is taught as either a foreign or a second language. Instructors’ perceptions of the switch to remote instruction during the pandemic are considered fundamental to help lead to more effective learning outcomes and to ensure better learning conditions in case of future lockdowns.

**The Purpose of the Study**

Although online learning has been around for a long time, the way the Covid-19 pandemic imposed remote instruction to be the only method of education is considered novel. Because educators around the world are used to the traditional face to face mode of teaching, at the beginning of the pandemic, they were hesitant to rapidly switch to the new normal but ultimately forced to do so. Moving the traditional classroom into online in a very short time and in the middle of a pandemic was challenging for teachers, and even though this move helped educational institutions offer education to students amidst the pandemic, this form of education is not a feasible solution that can be used for a long time (Johnson et al., 2020). In the present study, EFL instructors’ perceptions and practices were investigated to shed more light on the professional adjustment and adaption of the new teaching reality by EFL instructors to expand the knowledge about online EFL education experience during the pandemic. The following was underlined to help English educators improve online pedagogies for future practices: the changes that they made to their pedagogical practices, the new teaching methods that they used, their opinions regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the sudden shift to remote instruction,
and the future promising teaching practices that came out as a result of their teaching experiences during that time.

**The Significance of the Study**

Because the Covid-19 pandemic threatened the educational sector globally for the first time as it did to other sectors, shedding light on the vulnerability of the education system and showing that education institutions around the world were not prepared to deal with the challenges imposed by the pandemic and the sudden changes to delivering instruction online, it has become an urgent need that institutions and instructors are prepared to smoothly embrace such changes in the future. Moreover, because the COVID-19 crisis has changed higher education, and as online teaching and technology have become an indispensable part of today’s education system worldwide, more attention is being paid to online education as an everlasting option to face life challenges. Consequently, more research should be conducted to evaluate it, understand all its aspects, and improve its quality as delivering courses online requires planning and training on the part of teachers as well as collaboration between institutions and faculty members. Studying all aspects of the emergency remote instruction based on teachers’ experiences has become an important need for educational institutions to be more prepared in other times of crisis like the pandemic.

To sum up, this study aimed to contribute to the body of existing literature by analyzing ERT which was forced by the pandemic through the analysis of EFL teachers' experiences and perspectives of this change and help offer English language teachers the best means to better prepare for similar experiences. The semi-structured interviews used as the study instrument
collected participants answers to the research questions, and then the researcher analyzed the
data collected through transcribing the interviews scripts and then categories were identified,
recognizing major themes.

**Research Questions**

During the unexpected and sudden change in instructional practices driven by the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in the switch from face-to-face instruction to delivering courses online in Spring 2020,

1. What changes did EFL instructors make to their pedagogical practices?
2. What were the EFL instructors' self-perceived advantages and disadvantages of this change to ERT?
3. If any, what are the EFL instructors' recommendations regarding future promising teaching practices that came out as a result of the switch to ERT?

**Definition of Terms**

**Face-to face-instruction** is defined as the traditional instruction mode that implies the physical presence of both teachers and students in the classroom (Akhter & Mahmood, 2018).

**Pedagogical practices**: Khader (2012) defined pedagogical practices as the teaching strategies and methods of instruction used in the classroom to instruct, so the "changes in pedagogical practices" can be defined as any changes that occur in the strategies and methods of instruction. The changes in the classroom are usually displayed by the teacher, but in this research, the cause of the pedagogical practices change is the Covid-19 pandemic.
**EFL instructors** are English as foreign language teachers who teach English Literature for undergraduate students at a Palestinian university.

**Online learning:** Singh & Thurman (2019) defined online learning as “learning experiences in synchronous or asynchronous environments using different devices (e.g., mobile phones, laptops, etc.) with internet access. In these environments, students can be anywhere (independent) to learn and interact with instructors and other students.” According to Curtain (2002), both web-based education and e-learning are synonymous with the term online learning.

**Distance education:** Keegan (1980) defined distance education as "a form of indirect instruction. It is imparted by technical media such as correspondence, printed materials, teaching and learning aids, audio-visual aids, radio, television and computer" (p.42). He further defined distance education to distinguish it from face-to-face lecturing and private studies as the one that includes the following six elements: the separation of teacher and student, the employment of technical media, the impact of educational institutions, the two-way communication between teachers and students, the possibility of occasional meetings either for educational or socializing purpose, and the involvement of an industrialized form of education.

**Emergency remote teaching (ERT):** Emergency remote teaching is defined as an unexpected interim shift of instructional delivery to an online instructional mode as a result of a crisis (Hodges et al., 2020). The emergency remote teaching in this research is defined as being unplanned and was forced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Teaching methods:** EFL is an acronym that stands for English as a foreign language. It is defined as teaching English in countries where English is not the native language. For example,
teaching English in Palestine falls under this category. Chaves & Hernández (2013) defined teaching methods as "procedures in terms of teaching strategies, techniques and activities, altogether with stipulations about contents and the functions of teachers, learners, and materials" (p. 62). EFL teaching methods refer to teaching strategies, techniques and activities used by EFL teachers to facilitate students learning.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Research documenting the novel Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (hereafter referred to as the pandemic) is largely growing now, and this study aimed to contribute to the growing literature by examining EFL teachers’ practices and perspectives of this teaching mode in the context of English language teaching to help develop plans for future pedagogical practices that suit similar scenarios as the pandemic. The objective of this study was to explore the impact of the pandemic on teaching and learning English as a foreign language in higher education, focusing on teachers' experiences and perspectives during the sudden switch to ERT. Because the education sector could face another shutdown related to a similar crisis, teachers' pedagogical responses to their experiences during the pandemic should be reported to consider if those experiences were effective (Coyne et al. 2020) in order to prepare the education sector for future emergencies.

As teachers and educational institutions entered the online era during the new pandemic normal, the purpose of the following chapter is to research studies that investigated the rapid transition from a face-to-face (F2F) mode of instruction to remote mode of instruction caused by the pandemic from the point of view of teachers. This review will explore their pedagogical practices, experiences, and the challenges they encountered during this transition. The literature that covers concepts of distance education, online teaching, and ERT will be reviewed to compare the three modes of instruction. Different studies concerning teachers' perceptions and practices in response to ERT will be reported, and the advantages and disadvantages of online
education will be analyzed. This chapter will additionally focus on EFL teachers’ perceptions of the shift to remote education and its effect on teaching English as a foreign language.

**Theoretical Framework**

According to Rowley (2002), ”The method of generalization for case studies is not statistical generalization, but analytical generalization in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study” (p. 20). For this reason, this study is built on the TPACK framework to contextualize the study within a technological framework. As the pandemic has imposed the complete integration of technology in teaching, the impact of this integration and the new technologies used while teaching requires a pedagogical shift for educators. However, it is important to understand that the mere integration of technology and technological tools while teaching does not necessarily mean that they are going to be successfully utilized. Koehler and Mishra (2006) stated that "Good teaching is not simply adding technology to the existing teaching and content domain. Rather, the introduction of technology causes the representation of new concepts and requires developing a sensitivity to the dynamic, transactional relationship between all three components suggested by the TPACK framework" (p. 134). Technology integration must intersect with two more bodies of knowledge: content and pedagogy, according to the TPACK model. This model employs a teacher knowledge framework called the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge or the TPACK. The TPACK framework was first introduced by Punya Mishra and Matthew J. Koehler through a design experiment in 2006. They stated that their framework was based on Shulman’s Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) but with the integration of the technology knowledge
Koehler and Mishra (2006) believed that this framework leads to a better understanding of teachers’ use of technology and helps them, both in schools and universities settings, to develop their teaching practices with the use of technology.

Koehler and Mishra (2006) stated that teaching is a complex practice, "The basis of our framework is the understanding that teaching is a highly complex activity that draws on many kinds of knowledge" (p. 120). They further claimed that TPACK is a complex interaction between Content Knowledge, Pedagogy Knowledge, and Technology Knowledge, and the three bodies must interact to lead to the successful integration of technology as follows: PCK (pedagogical content knowledge), TCK (technological content knowledge), TPK (technological pedagogical knowledge), and TPACK (technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge).

Figure 1 shows a summary of the interaction between the three bodies of knowledge according to Koehler and Mishra (2006).
Figure 1: TPACK image based on the original on TPACK.org

According to Koehler & Mishra (2009), Content knowledge (CK) is the teachers' knowledge of the subject that they teach, which according to them, is important that teachers have comprehensive knowledge of content that they teach. Pedagogical knowledge (PK), on the other hand, involves teachers' knowledge of teaching practices and methods. Koehler & Mishra (2009) stated that PK "applies to understanding how students learn, general classroom management skills, lesson planning, and student assessment" (p. 15). Technology Knowledge (TK) refers to the deep understanding of information technology to "apply it productively at work and in their everyday lives, to recognize when information technology can assist or impede the achievement of a goal, and to continually adapt to changes in information technology" (p. 15). They defined TCK, TPK, and TPACK:
• Technological Content Knowledge (TCK) is the understanding of how technology and content affect and limit one another.

• Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK) is the understanding of how teaching changes when technology is used in specific ways.

• Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) results from the interaction of the three bodies of knowledge content, pedagogy, and technology, which is the basis of effectively integrating technology in teaching.

According to Koehler & Mishra (2009), the integration of new technology is challenging for teachers; however, according to this research, the task is more complicated when the integration of technology is forced rapidly in the middle of a pandemic. Successfully integrating new technological tools and technology pedagogies can be challenging, particularly if it must be accomplished rapidly during a time of uncertainty. Consequently, using the TPACK framework for this study helped understand how effectively teachers integrated technology in their classrooms during the pandemic.

**The Shift to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT)**

When the pandemic occurred, the traditional mode of teaching was drastically altered as the majority of educational institutions around the globe were forced to change their mode of teaching. Educational institutions shifted to a rapid remote instruction that allowed students to continue their education home. Teachers had to adapt to this shift in a short period of time. Consequently, delivering courses online became the new reality of education for many, and
research is required to evaluate teachers' experiences to prepare the education sector for similar future scenarios.

Singh & Thurman (2019) discussed how the term online learning is overused by scholars to refer to other distinct concepts, and with the switch of the teaching delivery mode caused by the pandemic, different terminologies were interchangeably used by scholars and authors to refer to the same mode of instruction, such as E-learning (Mseleku, 2020), online learning (Dhawan, 2020), distance education (Mabrook, 2020), blended learning (Bin Dahmash, 2020), and emergency remote teaching (Shisley, 2020; Talidong, 2020; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Researchers want to avoid using those terms interchangeably when evaluating the mode of instruction used during the pandemic (Hodges et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2020) because the temporary solution of ERT as a response to the pandemic is different from the well-designed online learning, and both are not comparable in terms of planning and design. Thus, the first section of the review of literature reviewed and compared definitions for distance education, online teaching, and ERT. Throughout this paper and based on the study of Johnson et al. (2020), terms such as delivering courses/instruction online were used to acknowledge the context of the pandemic and describe the in-person courses switched to online due to the pandemic (Johnson et al., 2020).

There are a limited number of studies that have been conducted on teachers’ experiences of the new ERT. Therefore, it has become a necessity to define ERT and examine teachers’ practices with this unique experience. The central question that is of interest to many is whether this mode of instruction is similar to distance education and online teaching, which have been
around for many years. It is important to define the three terms and have a better understanding of the similarities and differences, if any, between these modes of instruction in order to provide a definition of the instruction delivered during the pandemic.

**Distance Education**

To define distance education, it is important to review the definitions of pioneers of distance education and compare their definitions to more recent ones. Several studies have offered different definitions of distance education (Keegan, 1980; Rumble, 1989; Saykili, 2018). Keegan (1980) defined distance education based on the following six essential elements:

1. The separation of teacher and learner which distinguishes it from face-to-face (F2F) lecturing
2. The influence of an educational organization which distinguishes it from private study
3. The use of technical media, usually print, to unite teacher and learner and carry the educational content of the course
4. The provision of two-way communication so that the student may benefit from or even initiate dialogue
5. The possibility of occasional meetings for both didactic and socialization purposes
6. The participation in an industrialized form of education (p. 6)

Although Keegan's definition of distance education consists of important elements of distance education, it does not state the systematic design and careful planning element of
distance education. Additionally, according to Saykili (2018), despite the importance of the first element of Keegan's definition, it does not clearly present what kind of separation between teachers and students distance education implies. Saykili (2018) defined distance education:

Distance education is a form of education which brings together the physically distant learner(s) and the facilitator(s) of the learning activity around planned and structured learning experiences via various two- or multi-way mediated media channels that allow interactions between/among learners, facilitators as well as between learners and educational resources (p. 5)

Unlike Keegan's definition, Saykili's definition covers the physically distant nature of distance education and the structured aspect of it. Martyn (2003) defined distance education as a learning environment that involves the physical separation of both teachers and students and incorporates a range of low to high tech technology. Rumble (1989) reviewed Keegan's definition of distance education and added that distance education can be used jointly with face-to-face teaching. His definition of distance education has the following four elements:

1. In any distance education process there must be: a teacher; one or more students; a course or curriculum that the teacher is capable of teaching and the student is trying to learn; and a contract, implicit or explicit, between the student and the teacher or the institution employing the teacher, which acknowledges their respective teaching-learning roles.
2. Distance education is a method of education in which the learner is physically separate from the teacher. It may be used on its own, or in conjunction with other forms of education, including face-to-face.

3. The teaching/learning contract requires that the student be taught, assessed, given guidance and, where appropriate, prepared for examinations that may or may not be conducted by the institution. This must be accomplished by two-way communication. Learning may be undertaken either individually or in groups; in either case it is accomplished in the physical absence of the teacher.

4. Where distance teaching materials are provided to learners, they are often structured in ways that facilitate learning at a distance (p.19).

**Online Distance Education versus Emergency Remote Teaching**

Singh & Thurman (2019) defined online learning as “learning experiences in synchronous or asynchronous environments using different devices (e.g., mobile phones, laptops, etc.) with internet access. In these environments, students can be anywhere (independent) to learn and interact with instructors and other students and are not dependent on their physical location for participating in this online learning experience” (p.302). According to Curtain (2002), both web-based education and e-learning are synonymous with the term online learning.

Bozkurt & Sharma (2020) believed that emergency remote teaching and online distance education are not the same, and it is unfair to put them in the same equation. ERT is defined as an unexpected interim shift of instructional delivery to an online instructional mode as a result of a crisis (Hodges et al., 2020). According to Bozkurt & Sharma (2020), ERT differs from the
well-designed online course in that it is a temporary solution to the problem caused by the pandemic. They further explained that “By definition, distance education is characterized by the distance in time and/or space between learners and learning resources. While remote education refers to spatial distance, distance education considers distance within the perspective of different angles and strives to explain it through transactional distance” (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020, p. 2). When assessing an emergency mode of instruction in response to a crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic, Hodges, et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of understanding the difference between the planned online experiences from a rapid switch to online classes due to a crisis. To distinguish it from the planned online teaching mode, Hodges, et al. (2020) defined ERT as the shift from the face-to-face mode of instruction to a temporary online delivery as a response to a crisis. They further claimed that the main reason for this shift was not to establish a strong education system but to offer temporary rapid access to education during the crisis of Covid-19. Shisley (2020) claimed that ERT shares some features with online teaching, but the difference between them comes from design, which results in other differences related to assessment, course design, teachers training, preparation and the reason behind the delivery of instruction. Barbour et al. (2020) made a strong claim about the difference between online teaching and ERT when they state that "The distinction is important between normal, everyday type of effective online instruction and that which we are doing in a hurry with bare minimum resources and scant time: emergency remote teaching" (p.6). They argued that carefully planned and designed online courses lead to effective online learning.

After reviewing definitions of distance education and online teaching vs ERT, the following definition of ERT was proposed:
Emergency remote teaching is defined as a forced, rapid, and unplanned physical separation of both teachers and students due to a crisis, which can be caused by a natural disaster, a disease, or political instability. This physical separation is a temporary substitute to face-to-face teaching, and once the cause of the shift is gone, the previous mode of teaching will be used again. This mode of instruction lacks the planned design steps that form online and distance education. In this mode of instruction, teachers will experience a tremendous increase in the use of technology to offer streamable or video-recorded lessons. In other circumstances, others will use emails, texts, and YouTube videos. Because the use of technology depends heavily on the availability of digital resources, there will be a difference in how much technology will be used, if any, depending on the economic situation of each country. The instruction delivered under the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic is an example of Emergency Remote Teaching.

To conclude, ERT shares some elements of online learning, except for the unplanned nature of the former. Thus, emergency distance education, emergency remote teaching, delivering courses/instruction online will be used interchangeably in this research to refer to the rapid online shift of face-to-face education caused by the pandemic.

**Teachers' Perspectives of ERT: Reported Experiences**

Coyne et al., (2020) stated that during the shift to remote education caused by the pandemic, many faculty members were not familiar with the use of online tools and received limited training in delivering their courses online. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2020) claimed that teachers were not prepared for the shift. This caused a myriad of challenges for teachers who
were expected to deliver their content online within a few days. A prior online teaching experience is an important criterion when it comes to how smoothly teachers adapt to ERT during the pandemic. However, according to Mseleku (2020), "in cases of emergency events, such as the one of Covid-19 outbreak, proper planning and investment for online learning in advance is nearly impossible" (p. 591).

In a study conducted by Whalen (2020), an online survey was distributed to collect data regarding teachers experiencing the transition to remote teaching during the pandemic. The study took place between April 3 and May 10, and 325 K-12 teachers participated in the study by filling out an online survey. The results of the study showed that teachers with previous experiences in online teaching reported a smoother shift to ERT; however, those with no experience seemed to be learning how to use the tools for teaching remotely while teaching. Whalen (2020) described the latter situation of teachers as “building the plane while flying it” to describe how most teachers were overwhelmed by the rapid shift and adaption of ERT. In another study conducted by Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway (2020), it was stated that it is important that teachers are prepared and well-trained for teaching online courses. However, despite the rapid shift of teaching to online caused by the pandemic and the lack of teachers' training and preparation, teachers showed great willingness to move their F2F classes to the online mode of instruction.

**Reported Changes**

As this study focused on examining how the shift to ERT influenced the effectiveness of EFL teaching, it is important to understand it from the point of view of EFL teachers'
pedagogical experiences during the pandemic and the changes that they made to their practices to make the shift as smooth as possible.

During the pandemic, teachers became not only teachers but trainers, monitors, and supporters to their students. According to, Al-Khresheh (2021), most teachers in his study agreed that the most crucial parts of their EFL teaching practices were to create a peaceful environment, support students by focusing on their needs and motivation, and train them to use technology. In a study conducted to elicit the responses of higher education faculty from 672 US institutions from 47 states, 93% of the faculty reported that they had to modify the curriculum and their teaching practices to better suit the transition to ERT, and 56% of the participants reported that they had to use new teaching methods despite the fact that 64% of them had no previous experience with online teaching (Johnson et al., 2020).

In Talidong (2020), the focus of the quantitative research was to explore the perceptions of Philippine teachers of the implementation of ERT in China and the material they used. The results showed that teachers perceived ERT as beneficial and manageable despite the challenges of the modality switch in education. The main tool used by most participants was Tencent Meeting, and PowerPoint presentations were among the most used material in remote teaching. The majority of teachers believed that the main challenge they encountered during ERT was internet connection; however, they highlighted that learners were communicating effectively. The one important quality of teachers doing online education was being practical and positive: being proactive was the most important quality of online classes. Moreover, the study highlighted that when planning for ERT, students' needs should always be taken into
consideration as the former is driven by this. It is worth mentioning that this study has a limitation when it comes to the participants numbers for a quantitative study. The study had only 20 participants, so the results cannot be generalized.

To explore pedagogical strategies used by English teachers and the changes they made in their practices to survive the challenges provoked by the shift from face-to-face to ERT, a qualitative study by Castañeda-Trujillo & Jaime Osorio (2021) examined English teachers' perceptions of this shift. Two questionnaires were used to collect data from both groups. The first group of participants was 11 full-time and 4 part-time English teachers at a public university in Colombia, and the second group had 26 pre-service teachers, who had to respond to the second questionnaire. Teachers had to answer questions related to teaching strategies and technological resources they used during the shift to ERT. Teachers faced several challenges which led them to change their pedagogical practices and strategies, but this change has left several future challenges. The results of the study were presented according to the following themes: challenges encountered by teachers due to ERT, changes teachers made, and the future challenges brought by their experiences of ERT. The first change was to shift what was planned for face-to-face instruction to an online modality. Teachers highlighted that they had to replan and redesign their teaching activities to suit the new situation. For example, in face-to-face modality, they focused on using activities that encouraged group discussion and collaborative work, which they had to adapt to virtual. Furthermore, they stated that they used social media to increase and maintain communication with their students. Teachers described the use of social media as being the most successful tool used to create more interaction with students, especially with those who experienced connection issues or lack of resources. Teachers believed that they
were not updated with technology as required by the shift to ERT, so they requested training in how to effectively integrate technology in the classroom, and they noted the importance of the use of technological tools with the support of the university. They also highlighted the complexity of interaction between teachers and students in a virtual environment as a future challenge.

Hazaea et al. (2021) suggested that ERT should be connected to specific teaching contexts such as English language learning, so the term Emergency Remote English language teaching (ERELT) was created. This qualitative study aimed to explore the challenges encountered by English language teachers when they delivered their courses online and some solutions to face those challenges. The participants were 19 EFL language teachers who taught face-to-face classes but experienced the shift to online during the pandemic and came from two different contexts: low-tech countries, such as Yemen and Libya, and high-tech countries, such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia. The participants were invited to participate in the discussion forum through ResearchGate. The results showed that the challenges encountered by teachers in high-tech vs low-tech contexts were different. In low-tech countries, there was no way to use ERT to continue education due to the lack of resources, such as the unavailability of electricity and the lack of technological resources. Consequently, they did not apply ERELT. On the other hand, high-tech countries reported technical challenges, which were divided into: technology-related issues, such as unstable internet connection and user-related issues, which implied the lack of digital resources of both teachers and students, pedagogical issues, which implied that EFL teachers were not prepared for technology, and issues such as preparing material and applying pedagogical strategies that they used in the face-to-face courses are considered challenging. The
communicative approach of EFL teaching was hard to employ as teachers expressed that they focus on theory rather than skills. Maintaining students' engagement and motivation and assessing their performance were among the reported pedagogical challenges. Teachers revealed that students relied on others to do their tasks which made it hard to accurately evaluate them. Among the solutions presented in this study was incorporating online teaching with traditional face-to-face, raising students' awareness of the importance of ERT, and the importance of raising teachers' knowledge of technology and digital resources to help them deliver their content. The study of Hazaea et al. (2021) concluded that "What can be deduced from the discussion is that ERELT challenges are not specific to the ELT. The ERT studies reported here showed that in case there is no technological infrastructure and a good internet connection, ERT will occur neither with English nor chemistry courses" (p:215).

Atmojo, & Nugroho (2020) examined EFL teachers’ practices through teachers’ interviews. Based on the written reflections of 16 EFL teachers regarding their practices teaching English remotely during the pandemic and the follow-up interviews with 5 of them, they declared that they used google classroom and Schoology to manage class; PowerPoints for lecturing; WhatsApp and Zoom to share and explain the material; YouTube videos as visuals; Kahoot, Quizizz; and google forms for assessment. They also used content maker applications, such as Autodesk, SketchBook, TEDED, FastStone capture. When it came to extracurricular activities, they mentioned that they used similar activities used in face-to-face classes. Teachers taught both synchronously and asynchronously based on the availability of technology. However, most teachers claimed that they carried their online learning in synchronous mode due to schools’ rules.
Challenges to Education During the Pandemic

Challenges of Online Education: Pre-Pandemic

To better understand the challenges encountered by teachers caused by the rapid transition from in-person classes to delivering classes online and to better understand the impact that the missing aspect of careful design of the emergency shift had on teaching, it is important to review studies that covered the challenges encountered by teachers experienced the carefully-planned online teaching. According to Koehler & Mishra (2009), teaching effectively with technology is not an easy task, "Teaching with technology is a difficult thing to do well" (p. 67), but with a time of a pandemic, it becomes more challenging, and in order to successfully integrate technology into their teaching practices, they suggested that teachers should demonstrate knowledge of the three following components as presented in the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Koehler & Mishra, 2009): knowledge of content, knowledge of pedagogy, and knowledge of technology. In order to implement effective teaching with technology, the interaction of the three components is necessary. Koehler & Mishra (2009) distinguished between two types of technology used in the classroom: pedagogical technologies (e.g., a pencil) and digital technologies (laptops), which are considered unstable and challenging to teachers. They also claimed that teaching with technology is connected to social factors. Most of the time, teachers have insufficient experience and training in technology use which makes it challenging to implement the use of technology in the classroom. The interaction stated by (Koehler & Mishra, 2009) includes technological content knowledge, technological pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. Content knowledge can be defined as the teacher's knowledge of the subject taught. Pedagogical
knowledge is the knowledge of teaching methods and practices. It is an umbrella term that includes students' needs, classroom management, planning, and assessment. Technological knowledge is the understanding of technology and applying it effectively in the classroom. Viewing these components in isolation will affect good teaching. Based on this framework, it is imperative that there should be more research to understand the effectiveness of the use of technology in the classroom in the time of the pandemic as not all teachers demonstrated technological knowledge or had previous experience teaching online before the pandemic, which means that the technology knowledge component of successful teaching according to the TPACK framework is missing. There was also a mismatch between content and the delivery mode as the curricula were designed for face-to-face delivery. Based on the study of (Koehler & Mishra, 2009), it can be concluded that pre-service and in-service teachers must have training in the use of technology in teaching.

As online education encompasses the physical separation of teachers and students, several factors such as assessment, teachers' feedback, and communication with students are considered important (Bender et al., 2004) and might impose challenges in the teaching and learning process. Bender et al. (2004) studied the time spent teaching one course in two different modes: online and F2F were reported. They highlighted the fact that both classes were alike in terms of the course work, grading, objectives, and length. The number of students enrolled in the face-to-face classroom was six times the number of students in the distance course. In this study, faculty members and teaching assistants in two different universities in the United States recorded the time spent in the two courses to explore the belief that teaching a traditional classroom takes less time than teaching courses remotely. The results of the study did not support
that claim; however, when the number of students enrolled in the two courses was added, the
distance education course took twice the time as the traditional class. The limitation of this study
comes from the unequal number of students enrolled on both courses which makes it hard to
reach the conclusion of which course needs more time to be taught. Another limitation that was
referenced by the researchers was the data collection method of logging the teaching hours by
teachers or teaching assistants which may cause an inevitable bias that threatened the validity of
the results.

Kebritchi et al. (2017) stated that the fast integration of online learning into higher
education has its challenges, and online educators must closely identify those challenges. In their
review of literature of 104 articles, they categorized the challenges in teaching online to examine
the quality of online learning as issues related to learners, content, and teachers.

Figure 2 shows a summary of the challenges of online education according to (Kebritchi et al.,
2017).
In order to facilitate online learning, the results of Kebritchi et al. (2017) emphasized that higher education institutions should offer professional development for teachers, training for students, and technical support for developing and delivering content, which was lacking during the shift to distance education during the pandemic. Other studies, on the other hand, reported challenges related to remote assessment in higher education (Jacobs, 2014). Jacob (2014) stated that the lack of face-to-face interaction between teachers and students in an online environment made it hard to determine if the lesson was successfully delivered and understood.
Additionally, preparing for online mode of instruction is not an easy task. In order to examine the time required to teach three online courses, a longitudinal case study was piloted at the University of Michigan-Dearborn (Lazarus, 2003). The investigator of this study, who was a female associate professor of special education, used a stopwatch to record the time needed to teach each course. In each course, there were 25 undergraduate and graduate students. Responding to emails, grading discussions and participating in them, and grading assignments were the three variables measured in this study. The study concluded that online courses required 3 to 7 hours weekly. The results in the three courses showed that participating and grading discussions took the most amount of time but responding to emails required the least. However, the difference between online and traditional classrooms was that in the former, teachers needed to be available online every day for the students. When generalizing the results of the study, the researcher highlighted important factors when examining the time needed to teach online courses, such as "content area, type and level of course, course design, and a variety of student factors such as graduate and undergraduate levels" (Lazarus, 2003 p. 53). Additionally, adding the element of the rapid shift to switch a F2F class to an online course makes it hard to compare the time used by teachers in preparing for their courses.

Similarly, according to Cavanaugh (2005), despite the rapid success of the integration of distance education in higher education, many challenges evolved around offering online learning. He further stated that preparing for online courses needed significantly more time than preparing for the traditional face-to-face method. Online courses required twice the time needed to prepare even with a smaller number of students.
In sum, this section discussed how delivering instruction online even if thoughtfully crafted can impose several challenges as it is different from the traditional classroom in several aspects. This emphasized that the shift to online instruction can be difficult, and it is more challenging when it is forced by a natural crisis that forced teachers to shift their courses to online without any preparation.

**Challenges to Education During the Pandemic**

According to Mseleku (2020), challenges to the education system caused by the pandemic exceeded the opportunities. Even though online learning has been an option for some teachers and students, it became a necessary choice for everyone in response to the Covid pandemic (Chen et al. 2020). Because of the unplanned nature of the choice of online instruction forced by a crisis, teachers had to deal with several challenges while trying to embrace the new teaching situation (Affouneh et al. 2020). Bozkurt & Sharma (2020) emphasized that delivering content during the time of the pandemic was not the only concern, supporting learners during that time was also important. Thus, this was considered a challenge added on the teachers’ part. Wen & Kim Hua (2020) believed that the main challenge faced teachers during the shift to ERT was the lack of access to infrastructure and resources. Communication between teachers and students is considered another important challenge caused by the online shift. In a study conducted in South Korea, EAP teacher's responses to the communication disruption between teachers and students during the pandemic were reported, and the results showed that technical limitations and the lack of proactiveness of the institution decisions were the causes of the communication disconnection between the teacher and the students (Chang, 2020). The physical
disconnection between teachers and students is considered a weakness when it comes to the switch to online teaching (Dhawan, 2020). Additionally, Aboud (2020) stated that e-learning has an impact on EFL instructors' internal factors, such as "motivation, attitudes, commitments and autonomy and other external factors such as school environment and lacking training programs" (p. 22). Sahu (2020) claimed that the transition from face-to-face teaching to online mode created an issue when it came to students' evaluation. As a result, online assessment became a challenge for teachers as switching to online assessment for face-to-face classes was not an easy task. Similarly, Guangul et al. (2020) found that assessing students during the pandemic imposed several challenges on teachers. In their recent study, which was conducted in Middle East College located in Oman, a questionnaire was distributed through google forms to investigate remote assessment challenges faced by 50 teachers during the emergency remote instruction. The challenges found during the remote assessment were academic dishonesty, infrastructure problems, achieving the learning outcomes of the modules, and the commitment of students to submit assignments. The authors recommended that with the collaboration of colleges, faculties, and students, all these challenges can be addressed.

Hodges, et al. (2020) claimed that for online learning to become effective, there should be a focus on integrating three bodies of interaction as teaching is not only a means of transmitting information. Planning for online teaching does not imply the focus on developing content that covers lessons only, but teachers have to keep in mind how they can maintain three important types of interaction; student–content, student–student, and student–instructor, which implies the social aspect of the learning process.
Mseleku (2020) highlighted other important challenges caused by the sudden shift to ERT. The result of reviewing 85 published studies on the sudden shift to ERT during the pandemic showed several challenges to both teachers and students: teachers' and students' difficulties adjusting to the new reality, internet and connection issues, lack of basic needs, issues related to mental health, and the lack of resources for teaching and learning. When it came to describing the difficulties experienced by teachers during the shift to remote teaching, the study reported that due to the limited time that teachers had to adjust and work on new platforms and the limited training that they had on online teaching, teachers had to deal with issues related to courses delivery, such as choosing suitable platforms, planning for lessons to be delivered online, and assessing students (Chen et al., 2020). Similarly, students were not prepared for such a quick shift and the major challenge as appeared in the literature reviewed by the researcher was students' access to online platforms which can be either due to the lack of stable internet connection or the unavailability of devices such as laptops, especially for students who live in low-income families. Regarding connectivity and internet issues, the literature reviewed reported that this challenge had a tremendous effect on learning and teaching during the pandemic. Students did not have equal access to online education due to the lack of either reliable internet connection or suitable software or hardware. Learning and teaching from home was not the best environment for all. Additionally, stress, anxiety, and uncertainty of what might happen in the future were all issues related to mental health affected students learning abilities (Rossi et al., 2020; Tandon, 2020) as cited in (Mseleku, 2020).

In Al-Khresheh (2021), EFL teachers in a Jordanian university expressed that some of the challenges that they encountered when they switched to online mode of teaching, which
disrupted the effectiveness of their teaching practices can be summarized as follows: the lack of resources, fewer students' participation and group work, the absence of face-to-face interaction, and teachers and students stress and anxiety. They mentioned that the toughest challenge that they encountered and that affected the efficacy of EFL teaching during the pandemic was students' assessment. Teachers expressed their worries regarding fairly evaluating students when cases of cheating and unethical behavior occurred. The researcher claimed that this challenge highlighted the inconsistency between fair assessment and the use of technology during the pandemic.

Other similar studies reported challenges related to remote assessment in higher education in the context of COVID-19 (Guangul et al., 2020; Al-Samiri, 2021). Al-Samiri (2021) reported that assessment and academic dishonesty were considered issues, but the absence of visual input was a remarkable challenge for EFL teachers as it is considered an important part of language development. Turning on the cameras for both teachers and students was not required due to cultural reasons, which meant that the use of paralinguistic information, such as body language, gestures, and facial expressions were missing.

Atmojo, & Nugroho (2020) also examined challenges encountered by teachers during the shift to online delivery. Most teachers believed that students' lack of digital devices and a stable internet connection, their economic status and the inability to afford internet, their low technology literacy, their lack of punctuality of attending the online sessions or submitting their assignments, and the different learning styles of students were all considered challenges. Teachers also encountered challenges related to creating materials that work for online modality
due to their lack of experience in online teaching. They also noted challenges related to individual feedback to students, low motivated students’ engagement, the absence of effective high-quality technology, issues of preparation and planning, and the lack of emotional bonds between teachers and students.

**Key Benefits of Delivering Instruction Online**

Although several challenges were encountered by teachers and students alike, ERT provided several opportunities and positive experiences for teachers and students. Mseleku (2020) believed that unlike other studies that emphasized the negative impact of the pandemic on the teaching process, their study highlighted the opportunities provided as a result of this new experience, such as "innovation and capacity development" (p. 593). It is important to indicate that both online and F2F modes of instruction are of the same quality, and despite the stereotype that online learning is considered of lower quality compared to face-to-face education, research has proven otherwise (Hodges et al. 2020). As mentioned in a previous section, what happened during the pandemic was not online teaching but ERT, and teachers can utilize what they learned and their experiences to develop better online education practices and prepare for future needs to pivot online.

**The Positive Aspects of Delivering Instruction Online: Pre-Covid**

Some teachers reported that the benefits of teaching online courses exceeded the disadvantages (Martin, 2003). Similarly, Lazarus (2003) concluded that students had more opportunities to participate in online classes than in lecture-based traditional courses. Additionally, the study highlighted that the students in the online courses participated in class
discussions more than they usually did in live courses. Cavanaugh (2005) stated that there are several advantages of teaching online, and even though online courses demand twice the time needed for face-to-face courses, the preparation for online teaching can be performed at the instructors' convenience. The flexibility that it gives to instructors' schedules is considered an advantage. Cavanaugh (2005) also stated that the inclusion of technology in the teaching process is considered rewarding for educators.

The Positive Aspects of ERT

According to a survey conducted to evaluate 386 teachers' perspectives of shifting their courses from the traditional face-to-face to online courses, 49 percent of the teachers believed that their technology skills improved tremendously due to the use of technology during the switch to delivering courses online during the pandemic (Klein, 2021). Similarly, Al-Khresheh (2021) stated that participant teachers expressed that despite having negative experiences teaching remotely, they had positive experiences. They believed that the challenge imposed on them to switch to online mode in a short period of time caused them to "acquire new skill sets and shift to technological platforms may not have previously encountered" (p. 82).

In order to understand teachers' practices during the pandemic and reach the main goal of this research of creating an effective emergency remote teaching system, it is important to review students’ perspectives of ERT. In a study conducted in South Korea, 393 students answered a questionnaire regarding their experience of ERT during the pandemic. The results showed that students believed that ERT offered them a comfortable learning environment, saved their time, and the interaction between them and professors was smooth (Shim & Lee, 2020).
Despite the challenges of the emergency shift to online learning as listed by Mseleku (2020), several opportunities emerged. Some of those opportunities involved the development of new approaches and tools to teaching online Mseleku (2020), and the urgency to find solutions to save the education system during the lockdown had pushed different universities to enter the new era of technology (Ratten, 2020) as cited in Mseleku (2020). Additionally, this sudden shift and dealing with technology offered a great place for creativity and innovation when it comes to online teaching, and at the same time, opened new doors to researchers to investigate this new era. Al-Samiri (2021) believed that the use of digital tools in teaching English resulted in "incidental learning" as students were exposed to English more than they would in a traditional F2F classroom as English is the most used language online.

According to Toquero (2020), the pandemic imposed challenges on developing countries that have never shifted to distance education. However, it is considered a turning point in that it offered academic freedom for teachers and allowed for innovation when it comes to teachers employing teaching strategies to support students' communication.

In sum, as the pandemic caused educational institutions around the globe to shift online, ERT became the new reality of today's education system. ERT has imposed several challenges for EFL teachers, students, and institutions, as it fully replaced the F2F classroom, and teachers had to provide fast solutions by making changes to their teaching practices and adjusting them to suit the new modality. On the other hand, new opportunities for teachers and students have surfaced such as the flexibility of online classes. However, according to Al-Samiri (2021), "the flexibility of distance learning is a double-edged sword" (p. 155). The author gave an example by
stating that even though ERT allowed more flexibility for students to join their classes from anywhere and access education with no limitations of time and place, the home environment caused learning distraction. It is important that teachers understand the challenges expected from the online shift, and as technology becomes an integral part of language teaching and learning, more training should be offered for teachers on the integration of technology to enhance language learning (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Atmojo & Nugroho (2020) further stated that EFL teachers must show a mastery of "the content (the language they teach), technology in online language learning, and pedagogy of foreign language learning to effectively deliver their content online" (p.62).
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This study employed a case study approach with the purpose of exploring EFL instructors' perceptions and experiences of the shift to emergency remote teaching during the pandemic. The following research questions framed the analysis of data:

During the unexpected and sudden change in instructional practices driven by the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in the switch from face-to-face instruction to delivering courses online in Spring 2020,

1. What changes did EFL instructors make to their pedagogical practices?
2. What were the EFL instructors' self-perceived advantages and disadvantages of this change to ERT?
3. If any, what are the EFL instructors' recommendations regarding future promising teaching practices that came out as a result of the switch to ERT?

The population of the study consisted of five Palestinian English instructors who taught online in the time period of Spring 2020 to Spring 2021 and experienced the sudden shift of the teaching delivery mode forced by the pandemic. This section presents the study design, the population, and the data analysis method.

Rowley (2002) claimed that the type of research questions is the most significant factor when it comes to determining the research approach utilized. Based on the nature of this study research questions, the researcher determined that the case study method was the most appropriate for this study. According to Pacho (2015), the use of case studies in research leads to
greater depth of understanding of one situation. A case study approach, as part of qualitative research (Starman, 2013) or both the qualitative and quantitative method of collecting data as stated by Dornyei (2007) and Starman (2013), was used in this study to examine EFL instructors’ practices and perceptions of delivering instruction online during the pandemic between Spring 2020 and Spring 2021. This study presented the case study as a type of qualitative research. Qualitative research was defined by Dornyei (2007) as an approach to understanding a complex social phenomenon that entails data collection that leads to open-ended data. The data is analyzed using non-statistical methods. He further defined a case study as a method of research that deeply explores an individual phenomenon. He explained that a case study is not a technique but a method that is utilized to collect data to maximize understanding of a certain phenomenon. Because this study did not aim to explore cause and effects (Stake, 1995) but to explore a certain individual phenomenon, the researcher chose to use the case study method.

Case studies have been found to be valuable in different areas such as education (Dornyei 2007; Starman 2013). Crowe, et al. (2011) claimed that the case study approach is helpful when exploring a phenomenon as it happens in real life to provide an in-depth explanation. They described the approach as naturalistic, which entails the researcher's control over the variables. The case study approach provides detailed information of how, why, and what questions. Despite the claim that case studies are poor sources of generalization, Stake (1995) stated that a case study is not used to reach generalizations, but it is used to modify old generalizations and make readers more confident when it comes to generalizations. He stated, "the real business of case study is particularization, not generalization. We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does." (p.8), so this study
aims to deeply explore the case of EFL teachers' reflections of their experiences teaching online. Rowley (2002) also believed that despite the traditional view of case studies as lacking objectivity, case studies are commonly used because they can provide insights that cannot be achieved by other approaches. Gerring (2004) stated that case study is a "way of defining cases, not a way of analyzing cases or a way of modeling causal relations" (para. 1). He further claimed that despite being the direct source of much of what we know about the empirical world now, the case study method is underestimated or is sometimes disregarded.

Stake (1995) classified case studies according to three different types: Intrinsic, Instrumental, and Collective case studies. An intrinsic case study aims to provide a better understanding of a single case, and researchers should use it if they are interested in the single case (Stake, 1995); however, Instrumental case studies offer an understanding of something else other than the particular case. When the study involves more than one case, it is called Collective case study. For this research, the aim is to study the one case of Palestinian EFL teachers and their experiences switching to online delivery during the pandemic, and because the objective of this research is to get deep understanding of this certain case, it is considered an intrinsic case study.

According to Schoch (2020), the case study approach has benefits when it comes to both process and outcome. The case study allows researchers to collect several kinds of data to reach an in-depth understanding of the case, and its design helps researchers to focus on the particular case within a specific time and place. When it comes to outcome, Schoch (2020) claimed that case studies lead to transferability which entails the applicability of one case to another, which is
distinct from quantitative research generalizability. For this case study, learning about the experiences and practices of EFL teachers during the shift to remote teaching caused by the pandemic helps other English teachers and educational institutions to apply those experiences to other situations and similar scenarios or learn from those experiences. One of the advantages of a case study approach according to Pacho (2015) is the deep analysis that it offers, and it suits situations that are little known or poorly understood. Because there is little research conducted to understand teachers’ experiences and practices shifting to emergency remote teaching, the case study approach offered a deep analysis for this little-known circumstance. Van Lier (2005) believed that processes explored in case studies cannot be sufficiently reached with other types of research methods. Starman (2013) listed four advantages of using the case study method in research as appeared in the work of George and Bennett (2005): conceptual validity, deriving new hypotheses, exploring causal mechanisms, and modeling and assessing complex causal relations.

According to Stake (1995), case studies are not about sampling as case studies do not aim to understand other cases but to understand a particular case. Cases in this study were selected through convenience sampling, which is defined as the most common sampling strategy that implies selecting participants who are available due to "less-than-ideal circumstances" (Dornyei, 2019, p. 129). The researcher contacted the head of the English department at a public university and the administration of a private institution in Palestine. Then, the institutions contacted teachers regarding the study, and those who were interested contacted the researcher.
**Data Collection**

This study utilized a semi-structured interview as an instrument (See Appendix B for interview questions). According to Pan & Tan (2011), interviews are considered the primary source for case studies data collection, and theses interviews are the source for rich data compared to the closed-ended surveys in that they establish realities about the participants rather than only provide answers to questions (Yin, 2009). After accepting the invitation, the researcher contacted the teachers individually to arrange the time for the interviews. As the researcher conducted the study in a different country than her place of residency, the interviews were conducted via Zoom. In February 2022, five semi-structured interviews were conducted individually via Zoom to elicit the responses of two groups of English instructors who work in two different institutions in Palestine. Both groups of teachers taught using online platforms during the pandemic. Although the researcher and the participants speak Arabic, the interviews were conducted in English to preserve the original meaning and avoid losing it in the process of translation, and each interview lasted for about an hour. The interview questions were open-ended with a semi-structured format, and upon the participants' approval, the interviews were audio recorded. The data collected was transcribed and analyzed.

Participants demographical data was collected along with their responses to questions about online teaching experiences during the pandemic; the changes that they made to their pedagogical practices; the new teaching methods that they used; their opinions regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the sudden shift to remote instruction; and future promising teaching practices that came out as a result of their teaching experiences during that time. Participants received the same guidelines about the study, and throughout the interviews, the
researcher made modifications or additions to the questions to suit the situation. When the responses were all collected, the data was transcribed and analyzed.

**Participants**

The target population of the study were teachers in higher education institutions who were remotely teaching English as a foreign language during the time period of Spring of 2020 to Spring 2021. The participants were five Palestinian EFL teachers who experienced the shift to remote teaching forced by the pandemic. Three instructors, two females and one male, work for the English Literature department at a public university. The other two instructors, who were females, work at a private educational organization.

**Data Analysis**

As this case study was qualitative research, the analysis was done with words, which is called according to Dornyei (2007) language-based analysis. The first step for analyzing the interview data, which was the instrument used in this study, was to transform the audio recordings into written data. The researcher carefully transcribed the recordings of each interview individually. This step was important in that it allowed the researcher to thoroughly understand the data (Dornyei, 2007). Stake (1995) defined analysis as, "a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations" (p. 71). The researcher read the interview transcripts thoroughly several times and took notes in the form of a journal, which helped shape the way this data was put into a meaningful framework. Then the researcher started the initial analysis through carefully reading the written texts, identifying concepts, and finding
themes among them. The data was organized according to categories and themes that corresponded to the focus of the interview, research questions, and the TPACK framework. While analyzing the data and based on the three themes of the TPACK framework, the researcher wrote down the themes and patterns noticed and created a list of thematic ideas based on what was identified.

In sum, this study is built on the TPACK framework which posits that in order to successfully integrate technology in teaching, teachers should utilize three bodies of knowledge: content, pedagogy, and technology. The intersection between the three bodies is the key to successfully using technology in teaching. Additionally, the study employed a case study approach with the purpose of exploring EFL instructors' perceptions and experiences of the shift to emergency remote teaching during the pandemic. The participants were five Palestinian English instructors who taught online in the time period of Spring 2020 to Spring 2021 in two different institutions and experienced the sudden shift of teaching delivery mode forced by the pandemic. The diversity of the participants' backgrounds helped in providing an in-depth understanding of this particular study. The researcher used semi-structured interviews as the instrument for this study and analyzed the data using the theoretical TPACK framework.

**The Researcher Role**

As the researcher belongs to the same community and shares a similar background with the group studied, such as the language, culture, ethnicity, race, and experiences, the researcher had an insider role status with respect to her study regarding EFL teachers' perspectives of the shift to ERT during the pandemic. The researcher was raised in Palestine, studied in institution
B, and had the experience of learning and teaching English as a foreign language in Palestine. In qualitative research, it is important to discuss the researcher’s membership in the group studied since the researcher plays a key role in data collection and analysis (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). The researcher can have the status of either an insider or an outsider to the group being studied. Insider research is defined as the type of research where the researcher is part of the community, or the group studied or has previous knowledge of the group studied. According to Fleming (2018), case studies are among the methodologies that can be used to conduct insider research. Researchers with insider knowledge often develop research questions based on their rich understanding of the issues that need to be explored, which is considered an advantage of conducting insider research Fleming (2018). Other advantages stated by Fleming (2018) were the following:

Other advantages of undertaking insider research…include: having access to participants that you already have a relationship or rapport with (e.g., industry partners); ability to draw on understanding and experience when asking questions or probing in interviews; access to inside knowledge; a pre-existing understanding that assists in analysis and interpretation of data. (p. 319)

Fleming (2018) emphasized the importance of addressing the following challenges when conducting insider research: the risk of implicit coercion of participants should be minimized; privacy and confidentiality should be protected; bias should be identified and considered; trustworthiness, transparency, and rigor should be maintained; preconceived ideas and the desire for positive results should be acknowledged and examined more thoroughly. However, despite
the inevitable challenges of insider research, based on the reflections presented in the case study of Fleming (2018), insider research provided a valuable and different perspective on the findings than that of an outside researcher.

**The Study Context**

This study was conducted in the context of Palestine, and the researcher chose this country specifically because she wanted to investigate the experiences of teachers shifting to ERT in a country that lacks the economic resources needed for effective teaching and learning in an online environment. To bring the researcher's experience as a mother of four children attending US schools, her children received support from schools and offered all the needed technological devices. At the same time, their teachers received the support and training needed from their institutions, not to mention the availability of resources that helped run their classes smoothly. However, even with the availability of resources, the educational system globally was not prepared to cope with such a situation and had to deal with several challenges. As resources can make a difference in providing an online education, it is important to address the issue of shifting to ERT in countries that were not prepared for such a shift and did not have the resources to help address the issues of delivering courses online effectively and rapidly.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This study sheds light on the experiences of EFL instructors during ERT and the integration of educational technologies and online platforms in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. It employed the TPACK framework to analyze Palestinian EFL teachers’ experiences through a case study approach using Zoom semi-structured interviews which were conducted in English (See Appendix B for interview questions). Participants taught online in the time period of Spring 2020 to Spring 2021 and experienced the sudden switch of the teaching delivery mode forced by the pandemic.

This chapter explored the themes which emerged from the data collected regarding Palestinian EFL teachers' perceptions of ERT. The reported data answered the following research questions: During the unexpected and sudden change in instructional practices driven by the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in the switch from face-to-face instruction to delivering courses online in Spring 2020,

1. What changes did EFL instructors make to their pedagogical practices?

2. What were the EFL instructors' self-perceived advantages and disadvantages of this change to ERT?

3. If any, what are the EFL instructors' recommendations regarding future promising teaching practices that came out as a result of the switch to ERT?

This chapter discussed the changes that participants implemented as a response to the shift to ERT to answer research question 1, including different strategies utilized by participants, such as technology integration strategies; pedagogical strategies which included changes in
classroom materials, lesson planning, assessment, and teaching styles; communication strategies; and classroom management strategies. To answer research question 2, this chapter discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the shift to ERT as perceived by participants. Among the disadvantages discussed were communication issues; technology integration issues; assessment issues; students' engagement; classroom management; and planning and course delivery issues. The chapter also covered the reported advantages to moving the F2F classroom to online, such as increased innovation and creativity; enhanced technological knowledge for both teachers and students; improved communication; newly developed learning resources; and positive institutional changes. To answer research question 3, this chapter analyzed participants' opinions regarding the support that they received during the pandemic and their expectations regarding the future of education in the post-pandemic era.

The total number of teachers who participated in the study was five, and to protect their privacy and adhere to ethical protocols, names were changed to pseudonyms. Participants' background information, gender, age ranges, titles, along with their years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language were reported in this section as they were collected during the Zoom interviews. The researcher asked participants to share their demographic information orally. The participants work in two different institutions. Throughout the following sections, the first institution will be referred to as institution A, and the second institution will be referred to as institution B. Participants 1 and 2 work as English instructors at institution A, whereas participants 3, 4, and 5 are English teachers at institution B. All participants' quotes will be presented exactly as transcribed, even if there are issues with English language or grammar.
and when participants would repeat certain words in their responses. During the interviews, only English was used to maintain the original meaning and avoid losing it during translation.

**Demographics**

**Participant 1**

P1 is a 45-year-old female English instructor. She has a Master's in Education with a specialization in second language acquisition in culture and society. She has been teaching for 20 years, and she is currently teaching English as a foreign language for institution A in Palestine. Additionally, she teaches other courses, such as the TOEFL preparation courses, business English courses, and access programs. Institution A offers English classes at eight proficiency levels, and Participant 1 described her students as those whose proficiency levels fall under levels 5, 6, 7, and 8, and who can be described as intermediate and upper-intermediate EFL students.

**Participant 2**

P2 is a 36-year-old female English teacher who has a BA in English Teaching Methods. She has been teaching English as a foreign language since 2009 for both public schools and private institutions. She is currently teaching tenth graders at a public school in Palestine, and she teaches English as a foreign language in institution A. She mentioned her experience teaching English for specific purposes for chefs during the pandemic.
Participant 3

P3 is a 61-year-old male English instructor who holds a master's degree in British and American literature from Michigan State University. He has been a university English teacher for the last 30 years, and he is currently teaching in institution B. He teaches English writing, literature, editing, and reading courses. He described his students as freshmen whose ages range from 18 to 20 years old.

Participant 4

P4 is a 32-year-old female English teacher who has a master's in Theory and Practice of Translation. She has been teaching English for eight years, and her title currently is an English instructor in institution B. For about seven years, she mainly worked with the Department of English Language Literature major, but recently and for the last two years, her teaching efforts have gone into the minor in translation. She described her students as those whose ages usually range from 17 to 18 freshmen all the way to fourth-year college students. She taught main English skill courses like conversation, writing, reading, grammar but mainly focused on conversation, writing skills, and some translation courses.

Participant 5

P5 is a 30-year-old female English instructor who works at institution B. She is currently teaching at the Department of English, but she used to teach English 1 and English 2, which are part of university requirements in Palestine, for different faculties and colleges at the same institution. She has been teaching since 2016, and her teaching experience is in teaching English
2 as a foreign language for medicine students in addition to teaching major courses for English students.

Table 1 summarizes participants' demographic characteristics.
Table 1: Participants Demographic/Informational Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Years Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. All participants teach English as a foreign language.

Implementation of ERT in the Amidst of the Pandemic

All participants reported that they experienced the shift to ERT for the first time, and despite the limited use of technology tools before the pandemic, they reported that using technology was in the form of teaching aids, such as using PowerPoints as a tool to display materials in the classroom, and their classes did not heavily rely on them compared to the digital surge and the use of technology during the pandemic. Participants described the shift to online as being chaotic, and they believed that the switch to classes fully controlled by technology was a forced experience. P1 summarized the difference between the use of technology prior and during the pandemic as follows: "We have been using technology in the classroom, but we did not rely on the technology in the classroom, and the problem with online teaching is the technology is the one in charge, not the teacher." She further stated that "We are trying to incorporate more technology in the traditional classroom, but this is a forced thing in the online classroom."
The study revealed how unprepared institutions were for the massive shift to digital education, and how the poor integration of technology led to disruption in educational practices. Participants reported that they had to stop teaching when the pandemic first happened for a period of time as institutions never expected to switch to ERT, and teachers were unprepared for such a hasty shift. After that period, participants were asked by their institutions to shift to delivering their classes online and use any online platforms or technology tools they could use. It was described as an open-source education, so participants found themselves in the middle of an experiment when it came to using new teaching tools. P1 described it as running a trial-and-error experiment. Participants in institution B reported that they started offering live classes through Facebook, and after the end of the Spring semester, they switched to Zoom as P4 stated, We were all locked in our houses. There were no classes, nothing whatsoever, and then the announcement was made that we were switching to online, and the response like the university response was a bit chaotic at the start because no one was prepared. Yes, we do have an online portal, which is the Moodle that everyone uses. Aside from… and BigBlueButton, no one really, you know, very, you are talking percentages wise, maybe 5% or 10% of teachers ever used it before COVID. It was a bit of a shock, and we were encouraged to use whichever form of technology we wanted.

In order to help with the shift, participants outlined that they had to attend different intensive online training seminars during the first few weeks. Then they had to immediately shift to online instruction. Participants believed that although they received training sessions, those sessions were not helpful as the technical issues that they encountered after they switched to online were different, and they had to address them quickly. They mentioned that the tech-support was the
responsibility of the teachers themselves. Furthermore, because those sessions were conducted via Zoom, the participants reported that they were not helpful compared to F2F seminars.

Participants indicated that they were learning how to deal with technology, training students to use it, and teaching at the same time. Moreover, they stated that they were caught in the middle of a pandemic from one side and high administrative expectations from another side to smoothly shift and successfully run their classes online despite being a novel experience for them, which added more pressure on the teachers. However, even though all participants experienced the sudden shift for the first time, they showed their determination to embrace the challenges that they encountered to create opportunities for their students and themselves and learn from this experience for future scenarios. P1 stated that "I am not a fan of online teaching. I am a willing participant in it because I am in the teaching field for the students."

Participants categorized their shift to ERT into two eras; P4 described them as the insane era and I just got used to it era. They described the first era as the first few months when the pandemic first hit and was the most challenging part of the switch to delivering courses online. Participants had to experiment and learn how to deal with several challenges, and they had to record classes and post them for students, which took them long hours of work. They described this time period as brutal. However, in the second era, when they got used to integrating online technologies in their teaching, and students adapted to the new change, that time period went smoothly. P4 reported that time management during the second era was easier as she was no longer required to record lessons. The terms the first era and the second era will be used throughout this study to reference the two time periods that participants experienced switching to ERT.
Changes to Pedagogical Practices

This section discussed the changes that participants made to their pedagogical practices amidst the shift to ERT with the objective of answering research question 1: What changes did EFL instructors make to their pedagogical practices? Among the changes presented as a response to the challenges encountered were strategies implemented by participants to create a successful virtual experience for their students during the pandemic: technology integration strategies; pedagogical strategies that included changes in the classroom materials, lesson planning, assessment, and teaching styles; communication strategies that discussed how communication between participants and their students changed in and outside the classroom, and classroom management strategies.

Technology Integration Strategies

The shift to ERT for these participants was facilitated by the integration of online technologies and platforms into the classroom, and among the reported platforms used by the study participants were Zoom, Moodle, BigBlueButton, Google Classroom, and Microsoft Teams. Participants reported that they had to utilize Facebook to offer live classes and at the same time record and upload them to YouTube at the beginning of the pandemic. P4 expressed this: "We ran classes on Facebook Live just to get classes done to deliver to students. We relied a lot on recording classes and uploading them to YouTube because the Moodle the servers could not handle the videos themselves."

Later during the pandemic, among all study participants, Zoom was featured as the most popular tool used to accommodate the shift to online, and among the most commonly used Zoom
features were the chat, the whiteboard, and breakout rooms. P1 and P5 expressed that despite having access to BigBlueButton, they chose to use Zoom and Google Classroom to build their classrooms. As the basic Zoom used by participants in institution B did not cater to the number of students assigned to courses, P5 reported that she used to send PowerPoint presentations with her voice integrated into each slide to students during the first era of the shift to ERT. Other participants reported the use of Social Media tools to keep communication with students. One participant stated,

I did the whole Instagram account just for the class, and I asked the students to send a 32 second story every single day, just talking English about their day, what they were doing, life in quarantine, the favorite movie or whatever, just to get them to continue to speak in English as much as they can. (P4)

**Pedagogical Strategies**

Because of the shift to ERT, participants reported that they had to rethink, revise and readjust their pedagogical practices to suit the new situation. Moreover, they reported that they had to take several courses prior to teaching online to familiarize themselves with technologies and online platforms used to deliver courses online. The following quote shows how P1 prepared for the shift to ERT: "I had to take courses in how to use all these different meeting platforms like Zoom, BlueButton, Google Classroom, my ELT on the National Geographic pathways like present classroom presentation tools." They made several changes to the material used, content delivery, lesson planning, and assessment methods.
Classroom Materials

One change that participants had to make to their pedagogical practices was related to classroom materials used. Participants emphasized the importance of increasing the use of visuals in the classroom in order to compensate for the loss of F2F interaction and reduce teachers' talk as much as possible throughout the lesson in order to keep students engaged with the course content. One participant described the change to the material used in the classroom: "I guess the material had to change from anything hands-on to everything virtual. That is the only real difference." (P1). She further said,

So it is important that the students have a visual at all times when you are in the online classroom because that is what is going to keep them engaged. If you just talk with them, they will tune out really quickly. (P1)

P4 and P5 stated that their classroom relied heavily on PowerPoint presentations and using visual aids: "so I heavily now relied on using PowerPoint presentations, for example, or slides or presenting some visual form of information so students can keep track." (P4)

Participants had to offer soft copies of all materials used in the class time and share the screen throughout the class time. They stated that if no online materials were used, the teacher would take photographs of the books' pages and share them on the screen. In addition, they reported that they had to offer more engaging assignments, activities, and games compared to the F2F classroom to keep students engaged and motivated despite the different distractions surrounding them. One participant shared her experience taking students on virtual field trips all over the world:
I found it fascinating to go on virtual field trips, so I found websites that offer virtual. I took them to the White House. I took them to Buckingham Palace; I took them to the palace of Versailles; They wanted to go to Mars, but I said Mars is too far! (P1)

Two participants had a different experience. P2 and P3 stated that they had to reduce games and interactive activities to meet the class objectives, cover the required material, and focus on the fact that technology used and the online atmosphere were not as close to the traditional classroom environment. P 3 answered when asked about using interactive activities in her classroom: “When you are going to teach. It is not just about games...what about the teaching part?”

**Lesson Planning**

Participants had different comments regarding lesson planning and how much time they spent planning for their classes, but they all agreed that the first era of teaching online when the pandemic first hit required most of the time when it came to lesson planning. P1 argued that lesson planning and meeting classes' goals and objectives did not take more time compared to planning for the F2F classroom, but the integration of technology and learning how to use online tools were the aspects that took the most time. P2 stated that lesson planning was an experiment for her, and she had to change her lesson plans several times due to unexpected issues related to internet connection and technology tools. P 5 described lesson planning during the shift to ERT:

We're spending much time prepping for the material, prepping the content, organizing the material for students, even the exams, the level of the exams, the level of the questions,
everything has changed. So basically, I think we now devote more time and efforts to preparation.

Assessment

As assessing students during the shift to ERT was considered one of the most challenging aspects of the shift to ERT, participants reported a different methodology to assessment and focus more on rubrics for assessment purposes. Participants revised their assessment methods which used to be in the form of exams and quizzes offered during class time and included others to suit the online environment as stated in this quote: "so with online assessment, it went from let us do exams into let us do tasks." As there was a persistent need to evaluate students continuously and offer them constant feedback, participants prioritized formative assessment in their pedagogical practices. They reported that they had to convert assessment methods such as exams and quizzes to online submissions and projects to ensure academic integrity, and when they had to offer exams and quizzes, they were minimal and timed:

You tell them it is a timed question. It is a timed test. You only have like 10 minutes to answer or 30 or 20 minutes to answer the question, so they do not really have time to answer and then send the answers to their friends to cheat. (P1)

Participants disclosed that they used the Moodles platform to conduct online timed exams that were mostly limited to multiple-choice questions. One participant explained this in the following quote: "With formative assessments, ongoing assessments I had, I had to give them open-ended questions and higher-level thinking." (P1) Google Classroom was among the most used tools by teachers as a means to post assignments, feedback, quizzes, and homework for students. P3
reported that feedback happened in three directions. He offered students feedback on their learning process, and at the same time, students were required to offer the teacher feedback regarding his teaching during the pandemic and to write feedback for each other. Several participants reported that they relied extensively on peer review to keep students engaged socially and responsible about their learning. In the context of the classroom, students used breakout rooms to discuss their work and exchange feedback. One participant described engaging students in their learning process:

    I am not a teacher anymore, or more as a trainer, as a coach. I do not spoon-feed them; I give them hence to the answers; I give them hints to the solution; do this do that, and now students are more independent, and they are partners with me in the teaching and learning process. (P5)

All participants mentioned that they used the chat tool in Zoom to help continually assess students. After posting questions on Google Classroom, students were required to answer the questions and send them individually to the teacher through the chat. In addition, teachers focus on offering individualistic and collective feedback. Some participants reported that they had to focus more on collective feedback because of the high number of students who attended their classes. P4 shared the way she offered collective feedback to her students:

    I did not have enough hours in the day to provide individual feedback to students. That was not possible. What was possible is I read through everyone's work, and I would accumulate or like come up with a list of common mistakes, things that people got wrong, got right. Make my own spreadsheet of examples of, okay, this was a really common mistake.
Teaching Style

Participants reported that their teaching styles did not change due to the shift to online except for the material used and interaction with students. P3 reported that the only change that he made to his teaching style was adding more emphasis on students' interaction with the teacher and with each other to help the flow of the lesson and keep students motivated during that tough time. The following quotes described one participant's teaching style during the pandemic:

1) I tried to replicate the traditional classroom in the online classroom as much as I could. The biggest disadvantage is I am not the one in charge, and I have to accept that. Deal with that the technology, the internet, and the technology is the one in charge. (P1)

2) The strategies I used in the classroom, and I tried as much as possible to use them in the online classroom. The only thing that was different is they would be working with hands-on material in the classroom, but I have to turn all that into a visual to the materials. (P1)

3) But in terms of teaching style, no, I kept it the same as much as I could. I, I probably would probably say, in an online classroom, I do more games than I do in a traditional classroom. (P1)

Participants reported that their focus during the switch to ERT was to keep students highly engaged in the content of the class and to make sure that they are not passive receivers anymore. One of the common pedagogical practices used by participants during the shift to ERT was the use of a mixed approach of teacher-centered and learner-centered: "My pedagogical strategies are to adapt both teaching teacher-centered for time and student-centered and alternate between
the two of them." (P1). Only one participant reported that her classroom was mainly teacher-centered, and she did the talk most of the time only for the first part of the pandemic: "I had I had to be the core of the classes most of the time because there were like fewer interactions. But after, after a while, no, they were the ones who were presenting." (P2)

Additionally, as classes heavily relied on students' involvement in the second era of the pandemic, both individual and group work with a focus on the latter were emphasized. Participants reported the importance of always engaging students with different tasks to work individually or with each other to limit teacher's talk during Zoom live classes.

Participants reported that their main goals were to urge students to think critically and engage in their learning process, focusing on developing more than one competency, such as critical and creative thinking, technology literacy, and language competency. Some of the reported strategies used by teachers to facilitate their online classes were the use of mini recorded lectures, game-based teaching, project-based teaching, problem-based learning, and research-based methods. Participants described the shift to more innovative ways of teaching and the integration of Competency-Based Education approaches (CBE) in the second era of the switch to ERT as stated in the following quotes: "We use the problem-based learning approach to engage students like we do not, I do not use the deductive method in teaching or learning. Instead, I am using that inductive method." (p5) She further stated, "My students are teachers just like me, and and I am, you know, only a trainer or a coach, who supervises and monitors their performance."

In order to provide all students with access to learning, teachers offered asynchronous and synchronous learning opportunities during the shift to delivering courses online. Participants
reported that they had to record the lessons each time they offered Zoom classes so that students would have access to class content later.

**Communication Strategies**

As the pandemic changed the way teachers connected with students in and outside the classroom, participants reported that they used different online platforms to maintain ongoing conversations with students, such as Zoom, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Google Classroom.

**Communication in the Classroom**

Participants highlighted the lack of visual cues, which are the concrete objects that help learners better process information through seeing, in the online class compared to F2F which made it hard for teachers to keep students engaged. For that reason, they emphasized their strategies of keeping strong connections with students and maintaining the level of communication with them as open as possible. Teachers reported the importance of discussing how and when communication occurred with their students:

I always kept it visual, like outside of classes. Students have Facebook groups. We have Facebook groups. The students message through Facebook groups. We have Google Classroom; they can send messages through Google classroom as well. Yeah, so I tried to maintain a strong connection with the students through Google Classroom through Facebook, Facebook Messenger. (P1)

Participants believed that starting the classroom was the most important part that determined students’ engagement. Starting the classroom with a communicative activity like peer discussions
and assigning some authority to students in the classroom to start discussions helped prepare students for the rest of the class time. One of the most common means of communication used by participants in the context of the classroom was the Zoom breakout rooms. Teachers used breakout rooms to facilitate interaction between them and students and among students themselves. One of the participants stated,

You can still have the students engaged; the students love breakout rooms; you put them in breakout rooms; they get more chatty; they talk; they have a goal, and you pop in without an announcement. You see what they are doing. (P1)

Creating a welcoming environment, continuous conversations between students and teachers, and involving them in discussions were important according to participants. Keeping the trust between teachers and students and having them feel they are appreciated being in the classroom helped teachers maintain ongoing communication with students. P1 discussed the ongoing discussion that has to be maintained between teachers and students:

I think it is important to be transparent with your students and to tell them you know, it is, this is a different environment, but we are still going to have fun. Get them involved as much as possible. Try to add some humor into the classroom where where it is acceptable.

As most participants shared their concerns regarding the mental well-being of their students, P2 reported that she invited guest speakers to her online classes and allowed students to engage with students from other communities to discuss their feelings regarding the pandemic.
Communication Outside the Classroom

The study highlighted that communication was not only in the context of the classroom, but participants and their students continued to communicate after school, which helped in maintaining strong connections. Similarly, students engaged with each other outside the classroom through working on group projects. P 3 shared the way he maintained communication with his students outside the classroom:

I used to give them, you know, my mobile number. They used to communicate with me on Messenger on Facebook, and they used to send me you know, emails. I give them my Hotmail account or address, and they used to send me you know, their questions, to share with me their problems, and I would, you know, respond to their emails immediately.

P4 expressed how she stopped using social media, specifically Facebook, to communicate with students and established other means to keep the interaction with them outside the classroom:

I was forced to use social media at that time and again, Facebook Messenger like direct messages, etc, but it was the second that semester ended, and we had like spent three months establishing means other means of contact like heavily Moodle and an email. I just logged out of like, I am done. I have been asked all my students, I am no longer on Facebook. That is not a place where you can contact me.

Class Management Strategies

Participants highlighted the importance of discussing classroom rules and expectations with students during the shift to ERT to create an effective virtual experience:
It is important that when you have online classroom in terms of classroom management, you still expect 12345 from the student. Say I expect this kind of behavior. Just because we are online does not mean you can do what you want when you want. There have to be rules as well; there have to be routines as well so the students know what is coming. (P1) Participants reported that they had to consistently remind students of classroom rules and expectations as the online environment is different from F2F in terms of how students think of classroom rules.

**Disadvantages in the Shift to ERT**

This section discusses the challenges that participants encountered amidst the shift to ERT with the objective of answering the second part of research question 2: What were the EFL instructors' self-perceived advantages and disadvantages of this change to online teaching? As most participants were not versed in integrating technology in the classroom before the pandemic, they reported several disadvantages connected to the shift to ERT. This section discussed the following disadvantages as reported by participants: communication issues which included teacher-student interaction and parents' expectations; technology integration issues, including concerns related to technology in control, digital divide; and the use of social media platforms online; assessment issues, such as academic dishonesty, feedback, and teachers' low expectations; students' engagement; classroom management issues; and planning and delivery challenges.
Communication

Teacher and Student Interaction

One of the main shortcomings of the abrupt switch to ERT was communication. Participants indicated their preference for F2F communication over online interactions. The results of the present study showed that delivering courses online during the pandemic negatively impacted communication between students and teachers due to the lack of F2F interaction and the absence of body language. P3 stated, "you know how important body language is when it comes to communication, so I had, you know, to repeat myself a number of times." Similarly, P5 stated that "It was a one-sided communication. Only the verbal part of communication was there. The nonverbal was not there."

What made the interaction more challenging was the fact that both teachers and students were not required to turn on their cameras during classes, which was due to privacy issues, distracting environments, lack of physical place, poor internet connection, cultural restrictions of a conservative society, or simply because of the discomfort created by the Zoom camera as reported by participant 4 and 5. This led to a lack of interaction during the class time, and participants felt that they lost control over their students as they had no way of knowing whether they were on task or not. At the same time, they expressed that keeping cameras off with many students in the online class sometimes helped with a faster internet connection. P1 stated,

Some students do not feel comfortable showing themselves on camera. Girls who wear hijab did not want to be on cameras. They felt like they did not really have any privacy in their home, so they did not want to be on camera, so the lessons mainly go
without turning on the camera, which in one case, we found makes the internet connections faster.

Another communication issue encountered by participants was the feeling of isolation that they experienced due to the physical disconnection between them and their students that resulted from moving the F2F classrooms to online caused by the pandemic. P 4 described this disconnection:

I think the biggest disadvantage is that the fact that it created a disconnect between the students and I don't want to say the teacher as a person, but as a source of information: I had my students, so I am thankful for zoom because I got to talk to them every single day. I didn't go insane. You know, I was thankful for that quite a lot. But I don't know, like that disconnect was real and was troubling and was traumatizing.

P1 described her feeling of isolation by differentiating between teaching online and F2F when it came to communication. She defined it in terms of energy:

There is a difference, and I have summed it up in the terms of energy. There is a different energy that comes with teaching online than when you are teaching in the classroom. Because in the classroom, you feed off of the people's energy that face to face you see them. With online classroom, if the cameras are not on, you feel like you are talking to yourself and it is, it is a bit of an isolating feeling.

**Parents Expectations**

Despite the importance of maintaining strong communication among teachers, parents, and students during a crisis like the pandemic, participants found themselves caught in the middle of parents' and students' high expectations when it came to communication. Participants
in institution A reported several cases of parents and students who expected teachers to be online 24/7 to answer their emails or WhatsApp messages, which disrupted the privacy of teachers' personal lives. Similarly, participants in institution B reported that they had to be available online round the clock to answer their students' messages. P5 reported that she had to be available online 24 hours a week as students had the habit of contacting her any time of the day. In the same way, P 2 stated,

I did not have any privacy, and I had to be 24/7 alerted and online. I had to answer all these students ... It was a really difficult time for most of us, especially for teachers. We were working 24 hours."

**Technology Integration**

As teachers found themselves in a completely different teaching environment compared to what they used to have, the shift to ERT imposed technological challenges on both teachers and their students. Participants in institutions A and B reported that they were technologically challenged as they had to learn how to integrate technology and teach at the same time, which made it a challenging experience. Additionally, they shared that their students were unprepared to use technology in their learning process, and at the same time, it was not a desirable experience for them.

**Technology in Control**

As online classrooms replaced the F2F mode of instruction during the pandemic, P1 summarized how technology controlled the classroom during that time:
But the technology is not going to help you. If you do not learn it, it is not going to help you. The classroom is a space for you to be who you are. But being online, the technology forces you to problem solve. It forces you to communicate forces you to be organized.

Participants described the complete reliance on technology in the classroom caused by the sudden shift to ERT as being tough and causing them to lose control over their teaching as technology was controlling every aspect of the classroom. This caused them to feel insecure about their positions as teachers. P1 said, "At the beginning we felt that technology controlled our classroom. We are no more in charge." In addition, participants stated that despite the hours of preparation and planning for the lessons, technology determined whether the class would run smoothly and successfully as P1 reported, "If there is no internet, there is no classroom."

Poor internet connection was among the most reported challenges related to technology integration in the classroom among all participants. The struggle of teachers' and students' frequent disconnections and leaving the classroom at the beginning of the pandemic due to internet connection issues was another challenge of technology use. Participants reported how hard it was to keep students on task with internet connection issues. P1 described her experience with frequent internet disconnection:

    I actually ended up starting each class by saying, guys, if I leave the meeting, it is not on purpose. I did not mean to leave the meeting. Give me five minutes, and then if I cannot come back, I will call my supervisor to let you know that I cannot. We cannot have class today, so because sometimes you would hear where did she go?
As all participants had no previous experience in using technology tools in online teaching, this lack of knowledge regarding using technology in the classroom was another hurdle. The stress of quickly learning how to use technology efficiently and navigating different programs and online platforms, and at the same time helping students who did not have experience using technology in their learning process to learn how to use those tools and navigate new platforms caused a sense of frustration. P1 stated,

So you kind of have to also give them techniques, technology technology support. Well, they do not know how to open their microphone. They do not know how to open the video. They do not know what to do if they cannot log in, so these are the frustrations that come up with online teaching.

What made integrating technology in the classroom more challenging was the fact that teachers were primarily responsible for the tech support. Teachers had to troubleshoot students' technical issues all the time. P1 claimed that "using online platforms was challenging because that you have to become experienced in using the platform like really quickly and learn how to troubleshoot the students' problems as well."

P 4 reported how using technology to prepare material for students was time-consuming and challenging. She described how uploading recorded materials to students when the pandemic happened was challenging as follows:

Because I had to upload this to YouTube, and it would take seven hours to upload the five minutes because of the internet in Palestine, so it took about seven an average of six to seven hours for five to six minutes YouTube video each one, so recording I would
sometimes sit down and allocate an entire day to record maybe like five six videos, and then just spend the next week just uploading them.

**Digital Divide**

The study revealed the digital divide caused by the pandemic which was reflected in the cases of many participants’ students who did not have access to internet connection and technology tools due to socioeconomic factors and living in large households of more than five siblings. P4 reported that some students were unable to attend their online classes as they had to offer the available devices to their siblings who were in more need than them, like students in their last year of high school or graduating siblings. P2 reported that siblings in large households had to split the days, and each one would attend on a specific day. This caused to reinforce the digital inequality resulting in widening the gap of education inequality during a global crisis, so some students were successful in learning online, but others, who came from low-income families, were struggling. P2 reported that the number of students who attended the courses was 20 to 25% of the students' total number, and even with those attending, it was hard to make sure if they were engaged with the class content. She stated that "so it would be the same as in the past, and not all of the kids are going to be privileged enough to go to school. Now, only the rich people will have the chance to go to school and to learn." P4 described how the socio-economic status of students affected their engagement in the classroom:

Our students come from various socio-political backgrounds, especially economic backgrounds as well, so when you consider that you have multiple people living in the same house, maybe siblings sharing the same room, the fact that one person, you might
have two university students sharing the same room or university student in a school like school-age student sharing the room, you cannot really expect them to open their camera.

P1 reported the reason behind the decrease of enrollment and the frequent absences of students in institution A during the shift to delivering courses online:

It is the online classroom. They felt felt like they were not going to benefit from anything. They did not have the technology necessary. If you had three. if you had students from the same family, and they only had one computer who was going to be on the computer at the time, so unfortunately, resources made it hard for them. Most of them were using their phones and Zoom on the phone is different than Zoom on the computer.

**The Use of Social Media in Online Delivery**

Participants reported how they were not in favor of using Facebook and other social media platforms as a means to communicate and offer live classes during the first period of teaching when the pandemic started due to privacy issues and their beliefs that they were not the best tools to be used in teaching. Two participants reported that their phone numbers were distributed on Facebook pages. Furthermore, although participants in institution B were asked to switch to Zoom later, teachers experienced the issue of the limited meeting time of Zoom basic. P4 reported that "and it did not use to cater like a huge number of students only up to 50 or maybe less."
Assessment

Among the most frequent challenges experienced by participants in this study was the issue of assessing students during the pandemic.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty was the most reported challenge with online assessment. When using the traditional assessment methods of quizzes and exams online, participants reported that they struggled to prevent cheating. Consequently, they experimented with different virtual tools to help ensure better assessment. P3 reported his struggle to control academic dishonesty in his classroom:

You know, it was really difficult for me, especially in reading and writing courses, it was difficult for me to control cheating… It is always, believe me, you know, I always felt helpless when it came to, you know, to exams. I could do nothing, you know, to control cheating. So difficult!

P4 described how she managed academic dishonesty in writing courses:

I had to come up honestly, with the weirdest tasks just to make sure that if it is, if it is a writing course, then I would give them weirdest possible topics, just to make sure that it is not really something that can go just and copy paste, they can feel free to like research and learn more about it, or like, do whatever you want.

Even after integrating new assessment methods to suit the new situation, participants reported that students struggled to stay on track with the new methods of evaluation.
**Feedback**

What is worth mentioning is that institution B allowed large online classes when it switched to delivering courses via Zoom. With more than 40 students in one classroom, continued evaluation of students and offering feedback was a daunting and sometimes impossible task for teachers. P5 expressed her experience of providing feedback to students in a writing class: “The main challenge, Eman was the huge number of students. Like I used to be clinically depressed when I used to give students feedback, like huge number of students, huge, huge number of students.” Additionally, some aspects of learning were impossible to evaluate, like evaluating the accuracy of students’ writing tasks when using Microsoft Word to submit their work. P4 described this issue:

But then there is the mechanical accuracy aspect of how to construct a sentence accurately, how to combine sentences together, even down to spelling mistakes, and grammatical mistakes, intensive consistency. You eliminate all of those when you use Microsoft Word for some students.

**Low Expectations**

Participants reported that they had to be unusually flexible with students when it came to deadlines because of the pandemic issues, and they believed that this was a negative aspect of the switch to ERT. They explained that they gave students more opportunities to submit, revise, and resubmit their assignments. P3 described his experience allowing students to retake tests: "I had always to give them an extension because they would just complain that they did not finish answering the questions, so I had no choice, but you know, to give them more time to finish."
Additionally, participants had to support their students during exams if anything went wrong or they needed any technological assistance.

**Students' Engagement**

Another disadvantage to the shift to ERT encountered by participants was the challenge to engage all students in the online classroom amidst the pandemic, making sure that students who joined live sessions were paying attention, engaged, and staying on task. Participants in institution B reported that in each Zoom session, they had between 40 to 70 students, which meant that engaging everyone in the classroom was not possible due to the large number of students. Additionally, participants stated that some students either did not participate during the class time or engaged less compared to the F2F class. They believed that this lack of participation was due to several factors related to students' differences, their personalities, social life, and their learning styles. Some students felt left behind, and others preferred not to participate. Likewise, keeping students engaged with so much distraction around them and with the absence of teachers being on the stage was an impossible task. P2 said, "They might be like online. They seem to be online, but they are not really there with you." P1 described the differences between students: "It is hard being in an online classroom, especially for students who you know enjoy the energy levels the classroom brings like the like the extroverts of our worlds. They prefer the traditional classroom."

**Classroom Management**

With the myriad challenges that teachers faced because of the transition to ERT, other issues related to classroom management were raised which were considered an obstacle to
achieving classroom objectives. Teachers reported that they were unable to create a classroom environment that replicated the normalcy of F2F, and what made classroom management issues more challenging was the number of students. Teachers in institution B reported an increase in the number of students attending their classes as their institution allowed more students to join online classes, which caused them to lose control over their classes. P1 stated, "It is important with the online classroom to remind students of the classroom rules there are there are rules in an online classroom that they have to pay attention, pay attention to, as well."

Participants also reported discipline issues and the loss of control over students. P1 stated, "that is the problem with online classrooms. The teacher loses control of classroom management, in one sense of the word." Because students' attendance and participation in classes were optional, students became less interested in learning online. Additionally, Participants said that it was challenging to keep track of students online and ensure they were engaged and on task. According to them, it was hard to make sure that students who joined the Zoom class were paying attention and engaged instead of playing video games.

**Planning and Course Delivery**

Participants reported several challenges related to lesson planning and course delivery during the shift to ERT. Planning for courses was challenging for all participants. P4 and P5 reported that they were planning their lessons during that time as if delivering courses online would become a permanent issue, and they would be using Zoom forever. They described their experiences as *Planning for something, and then other things would happen*. Participants in both institutions stated that planning for online classes took them more time compared to F2F during
the first era to the shift to ERT. P4 reported that she used to spend about 14 hours every day preparing for classes as follows: "There was few days where I spent legitimately 14 hours in front of a laptop, just preparing classes, shooting videos, coming up with PowerPoint presentations, etc." Similarly, P5 shared the following:

We were spending much time prepping for the material, prepping the content, organizing the material for students, even the exams, the level of the exams, the level of the questions, everything has changed, so basically, I think we now devote more time and efforts to preparation.

As technology controlled the classroom, the challenge was to offer different types of educational resources to be used in the Zoom live class and be prepared to have more if one platform failed to operate. The unavailability of technology tools and educational resources was a common reported issue among participants. P4 stated how she had to type a textbook of 50 pages to send it to students due to its unavailability. She said, "I had to type it by hand on Microsoft Word to get I think maybe I would say about 40 pages 50 pages worth of textbook. I had to print like just type on Microsoft Word and divide them into units."

Another issue was related to the focus on using more extracurricular activities to keep students engaged. Participants reported that they had issues organizing all these extracurricular activities and managing to cover the textbook material at the same time. Participants highlighted that in most classes, there was not enough time to cover all materials planned. P5 described the issue of covering the class content because of the focus on integrating extracurricular activities online:
We did not cover the materials as we should, okay, because we have like a list of topics, we have got to cover it. Sometimes we used to cover it without expecting anyone to engage, anyone to communicate or to ask questions.

**Other Reported Disadvantages**

Participants also reported issues related to motivation and social life. They stated that they were not motivated to teach when they had to shift to online, specifically, during the first period of the pandemic as stated by P2: "to keep them motivated. I was not motivated myself because it was so weird at the beginning."

Participants' personal lives were affected, too. P2 reported how she had to monitor her children taking classes online, and at the same time teach her own classes full-time. She said, "my son is in fifth grade, so I have to watch him taking classes, and I have to give my own classes, so it is getting harder in life."

The study revealed how students' social well-being was affected due to the pandemic. Moreover, participants highlighted the different roles teachers had to have. P3 stated, "I was like a therapist. I remember one student in my class asking me how to survive, you know, you know, during the pandemic, and it was my responsibility as a teacher to help her."

In sum, this section discussed participants' reported disadvantages to the shift to ERT. Among the most reported were challenges related to communication, technology integration, assessment, students' engagement, classroom management, and course planning and delivery. Other disadvantages related to motivation and social life were outlined. The study revealed that participants were not motivated to teach online during the first era of the pandemic, and they
struggled to survive teaching online with their children being at home. Additionally, participants reported their concerns regarding their students' well-being and teachers’ evolving roles.

**Advantages in the Shift to ERT**

This section discussed the advantages of the shift to ERT as perceived by the participants with the objective of answering the first part of research question 2: What were the EFL instructors' self-perceived advantages and disadvantages of this change to online teaching? The following reported advantages to moving the F2F classroom to online were outlined: innovation and creativity, enhancing technological knowledge for both teachers and students, maintaining communication, diverse learning resources, and institutional change.

**Innovation, Creativity, and Flexibility**

Although participants were not ready for the shift to online and faced varied challenges, they reported that this experience was rewarding. P3 described his experience as follows: "I think it was a high technology experience, but at the same time, it was very challenging because I did not have the skills, you know, of using these technologies or platforms, so I was discovering them firsthand." This experience opened doors to more flexibility when it came to their teaching practices and experimenting with new modes of instruction, communication, and assessment. P3 stated her opinion regarding the advantages to the shift to online teaching,

Advantages is that now teaching or learning approaches and methodologies have become versatile. You can reach out to students. You can use a variety of ways and sources, and I think now the content of the course has become richer."
Participants reported that they had to be creative to make the teaching process more enjoyable for students despite the social disconnection.

Unlike the traditional classroom, teachers were able to work from the comfort of their homes, and this saved their time. Additionally, the online classroom gave teachers more freedom to record sessions so no students would miss classes. P1 stated:

But I saw it as an advantage to recording the class, so if a student missed a class, they can see what they missed. Whereas in a traditional classroom, it is almost like we would feel offended if there is a camera on the classroom.

The change of the assessment methods used amid the pandemic has opened doors for students' critical thinking as described in the following quote:

It was very robotic. Very mechanical. Students now they are not doing that, just like they are memorizing, and they are studying for the exam and having the Mark. No, they are working more, thinking creatively, critically. They are creating something, okay. They are not memorizing something, and then they put it down on paper. (P5)

Other participants highlighted the advantage of planning and course delivery after they were used to integrating technology in the classroom as stated by P4:

1) But it swiftly changed into something a bit more comfortable, which means I did not have to plan out that much in advance like weeks in advance. I had the liberty and the luxury of just doing the like planning out the exercises, in class tasks, whatever they are. Just prepare them. I am just going to share the screen, I am not going to go out and print them and photocopy them and, you know, do a lot of
logistic efforts, so I did have the luxury of that. I felt it allowed me to, I do not
know, be more comfortable, let us say timewise.

2) Everyone's work is in front of me. It was super easy, just to display everyone's
work and critique them and go over them together. So yes, while there were a lot
of shortcomings of online learning, that was really helpful

Teacher participants described their experiences as unique in that they successfully
responded to the challenges they encountered as described in the following quote:

   I think COVID has made me a better teacher, like personally speaking, in terms of that
tools I used and the methodologies of teaching and learning as well. And not only that, in
terms of the assessments, like the assessment methods. Before we use like to set for
exams, now, no, we have assignments, we have presentations, we have projects, we have
versatile scope of the assessment methods. (P5)

**Enhancing Technological Knowledge**

Moreover, participants expressed that although they had no experience teaching online
before the pandemic, they successfully enhanced their technological knowledge and shared it
with students:

   The personal advantage of online teaching is you make the effort to learn more about
technology. I have learned well, become well versed in Zoom, well versed in Google
Classroom, well versed in how to use educational tools like Quizlet and Kahoot, to keep
the students excited and energized, and going on virtual field trips is something I highly
recommend teachers take their students on. (P1)
P3 described how the pandemic helped him to master technology despite the prejudgments that he heard regarding his ability to integrate technology successfully in his classroom at his age:

I am really proud of what I did despite the difficulties. I now have more confidence as a teacher, and I can use most of the technology in teaching. I am still learning I think. I have the motivation to learn despite my age, see, perhaps sometimes people think that, you know, old people learn slowly, maybe they have nothing to do with technology, but I think, you know, I have improved. I have proved them wrong!

Participants also shared that their students' technological knowledge was enhanced due to the experience shifting to ERT as stated by P1, "so I taught the students about sharing with Google Documents, Google Slides, and so now they are very well versed in it, and they like it, and they feel that it is an advantage. It is an advantage to them."

**Maintaining Communication**

The study revealed that during the shift to online ERT, participants believed that despite the challenges they encountered, online teaching helped in maintaining communication with students and kept the learning process alive as expressed by P3:

That was the best way to communicate and not to lose, you know, the contact with the students and to have them in track, and to be, you know, it was, it was the best way, we could not ask for more.

P 4 stated, "The best possible thing that came out of it is the fact that we could sustain the learning process and educational process throughout the pandemic."
P3 pointed out that the pandemic has created a new opportunity of communication for both the students and the teachers.

**Diverse Learning Resources**

Among other advantages reported by teacher participants were the variety of learning resources available for students with more access to online classrooms and the interactive tools available as P1 stated, "What is what is nice about the online classroom is that the presentation tools we use are very interactive. Like you have ready access to everything through technology."

The following two quotes highlight the variety of resources available to students through online access:

1) Advantages are that now teaching or learning approaches and methodologies have become versatile. You can reach out to students. You can use a variety of ways and sources, and I think now the content of the course has become richer. (P1)

2) I introduce them to what to Google Scholar, and to, for example, to JSTOR to EBSCO to Springer and all these websites, like fancy websites for scholars.

Without online teaching or learning, I would not be able to do that. I could maybe I could give them the names, but I would not be able to train them how to use them, and that was advantageous for me. (P5)

Due to this availability of learning resources, participants reported that when students got used to technology integration in the classroom, they were responsible for their learning process, and their interaction with each other increased. In the second era of the pandemic, they were more engaged than in the normal classroom. P4 described how her students' engagement and
interaction changed when they became familiar with the use of technology in their learning process:

Students were really engaged…Everyone wants to share and read their work, and we can like individually talk about it and dissect it, and if someone had written something similar to them, they could observe the mistakes, they could see how we fix it together, etc.

**Institutional Change**

Participants highlighted drastic changes related to how institutions used to perceive education, assessment, and the use of curricula before and after the shift to ERT. P5 described how teachers did not have the freedom to teach without the unreasonable interference and control of her institution before the pandemic and how the shift to delivering courses online changed that:

1) We have first second and final examination, and we were not supposed to do anything, like anything different, okay. Do not go against the flow. Do not be a Salomon. Be a dead fish and walk with the flow and do first second final examination.

2) "I think the university now has a better grasp and understanding of the teaching and learning process. It was it is not about quantity anymore. It is more about quality."

3) And not only that, we started to change the material per se. Okay, before we used like to use the same textbook for two three years or more, but now, like, we started to change them, I think, each year or each three, four semesters.

In sum, teacher participants reported several advantages to the shift to ERT although they did not have previous experiences integrating technology in their classrooms. Among the most
reported benefits were enhancing technological knowledge for both teachers and students; maintaining the communication with students and keeping the learning process alive; using variety of interactive tools and resources available online for students; creating a comfortable environment for teachers working from their homes; and integrating changes to curricula and institutional expectations.

**Support from Colleagues and Institutions**

This section and the following one aimed to discuss the future promising teaching practices that resulted from the shift to ERT as perceived by the participants with the objective of answering the first part of research question 3: If any, what are the EFL instructors' recommendations regarding future promising teaching practices that came out as a result of the switch to online teaching?

Four participants reported that they received continuous support from their institutions when the pandemic first hit in the form of Zoom meetings where they discussed difficulties they encountered and learned new technology tools, how to navigate platforms, and how to enhance those experiences. Participants in institution A reported that their institution offered attendees to observe their classes and help with any issues encountered. Although participants agreed on the support that they received from their institutions and the training sessions that they received, they believed that the support was not helpful as the difficulties encountered on the ground were different. Additionally, they had to quickly troubleshoot the issues encountered to smoothly run their classrooms. On other occasions, the help offered from institutions was minimal due to the large number of instructors compared to the number of those who work for tech support. The
following quote explains the issue encountered in institution 2: "We have 10 engineers in the E-Learning Center, and we have around, you know, I think more than 1000 instructors." (P4)

Consequently, most of the time, participants had to work as tech support to solve their classroom issues quickly instead of waiting for a long period of time. Participants agreed that the help they received from their colleagues was beneficial as they were sharing the experiences and difficulties they encountered and trying to learn from each other. One participant, on the other hand, stated that communication between colleagues was very poor (P3).

When participants were asked if they are still receiving training until this moment, all of them confirmed that their institutions are still offering training sessions for those who would like to improve their online teaching practices and technological knowledge. P5 expressed, "This support was not available before Covid, but now it is available around the clock."

All teacher participants believed that they succeeded in enhancing their technological knowledge through exchanged knowledge with their students as explained in the quote below:

"I learned, you know, from my students on how to use, you know, technology, but also my students learned, you know, from me on how to use this technology. (P3)

The Future of Education

Teachers reported that they are currently utilizing Zoom and other technology tools in their classroom, and institutions urging them to do so despite their return to normal. The pandemic has shown universities a new way of dealing with natural threats such as severe weather. For example, instead of closing schools and universities because of a bad storm, institutions now can use the online platform to continue teaching. One participant reported a time
when universities in Palestine had to announce the switch to online due to inclement weather:

"and for the universities, our university, I noticed that if we are having a bad weather, they would immediately shift into online, so for our universities, we are heading towards this method."(P2)

Consequently, according to the participants, online learning and teaching will persist in the post-pandemic era:

1) Well, I think the pandemic has opened up our eyes to the fact that learning online is something here to stay. It's something that students now are getting more familiar with. We have had online learning for many years before the pandemic college students have taken. Now everything is going to be done electronically, and I think our world in general is moving to an online platform. People are spending more time online and so students. (P1)

2) E-learning online or online teaching or learning and the new assessment methodologies that we have been using since Covid are not the next big thing. They are the now big thing, and they won't go anywhere, anytime soon. (P5)

According to participants, the pandemic is the first step toward a change to the traditional classroom through the integration of more creative and up-to-date ways of teaching practices as described by P5:

COVID-19 has caught our attention to the fact that if we want to remain in like remain effective and efficient teachers, we have got to use like, an orthodox way of teaching, learning, and assessment. We cannot, you know, use old school methods anymore. We have to adapt to change, or we will be left behind.
P3 claimed that "Teaching any teaching you can say is no longer confined to the classroom now. And the students now are learning from their teachers outside the class."

Despite their successful experiences shifting to online teaching, teachers reported that they still prefer F2F classrooms over online classes as they expressed their loss of control over their classrooms during that time. Additionally, participants reported that online cannot replace the traditional classroom, including the physical connection between students, their peers, and teachers is impossible, but blended learning will become part of the new normal. P1 and P4 summarized this idea:

"I believe that we can have effective learning in the classroom. But it does, in online classroom, but it does not replace the learning that can go on in the traditional classroom." (P1)

So most recent endeavor in the university was to have seminars and workshops and training programs to qualify teachers to help them adapt their classes to become kind of I don't know what they call it, but basically, they do 50% online and 50% face to face, so they are trying to do that. (P4)

Other participants expressed how the integration of technology has changed the teacher's role and students' expectations of their learning goals:

1) The teacher role is definitely changing as technology is changing. We are not, we are not the main resource anymore. We are not okay, a teacher is fighting against the internet because students can now just pull out their phone, ask Siri a question, and Siri can answer it. (P1)
2) You know, the expectations of the students before the pandemic is definitely are different from the expectations of the students now. See, you know, the students expect the teacher to be more creative, to motivate them in a different way. (P3)

As all participants agreed that education will rely more on technology integration with the exponential growth of technology caused by the pandemic, they admitted that for them to effectively use technology in the classroom, they need to develop their technological knowledge for future practices. Additionally, they pointed out that students should be trained to use technology and online platforms during their learning process.

In conclusion, this chapter answered the three research questions by shedding light on the experiences of five Palestinian EFL instructors of the integration of educational technologies during the COVID-19 pandemic. It revealed several changes that participants implemented as a response to their novel virtual experience. Participants reported incorporating different teaching strategies to encounter the challenges caused by the sudden shift of the traditional teaching mode. Among the common reported strategies used by all participants were technology integration strategies, pedagogical strategies, communication strategies, and classroom management strategies. In addition, the chapter highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of the shift to ERT as perceived by participants. As participants experienced teaching online for the first time during the pandemic, they shared several disadvantages, such as issues related to communication, technology integration, assessment, students’ engagement, classroom management issues, and planning and course delivery issues. Moreover, the chapter discussed the advantages reported by participants to teaching their courses online during the pandemic, such as innovation and creativity, enhancing technological knowledge for both teachers and
students, maintaining teachers-students communication, the availability of learning resources, and institutional change. The chapter revealed that participants expected that online learning and teaching will persist in the post-pandemic era, and they believed that the pandemic opened doors to integrating more creative and up-to-date ways of teaching practices.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

This study captured EFL teachers' perspectives and experiences during the shift to ERT in two institutions in Palestine. Among the themes revealed were the implementation of ERT, reported changes to pedagogical practices, reported challenges and advantages to the shift, and the future of education. The following research questions were investigated in the paper: During the unexpected and sudden change in instructional practices driven by the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in the switch from face-to-face instruction to delivering courses online in Spring 2020,

1. What changes did EFL instructors make to their pedagogical practices?

2. What were the EFL instructors' self-perceived advantages and disadvantages of this change to ERT?

3. If any, what are the EFL instructors' recommendations regarding future promising teaching practices that came out as a result of the switch to ERT?

As the pandemic forced the education sector to rely completely on technology to ensure the continuity of learning during that tough time, participants had to rethink and adjust their teaching practices to suit the virtual experience as the mere integration of technology and technological tools while teaching does not necessarily mean that they are going to be successfully utilized. According to the TPACK framework, technology integration must intersect with two more bodies of knowledge: content and pedagogy to effectively teach with technology (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). The results of this study showed that during the first period of the shift to online teaching and learning, most teachers lacked the technological knowledge (TK) and
how to effectively integrate it with content and pedagogy to smoothly shift to online as they experienced the total reliance on technology in their classrooms for the first time. Consequently, teachers reported that they had to stop teaching when the pandemic first hit and then described their struggle and lack of control over their classrooms when they resumed their classes online. This finding suggests that teachers lacked TK as one component of the TPACK framework, which is necessary to successfully integrate technology in their teaching practices. Although this finding suggests that teachers were not ready to shift to online teaching within a short period of time, participants revealed that after a few months of the shift, they became more confident and enhanced their technological knowledge TK. Their creativity when using the technologies that worked best for their subject matters and for their students revealed that participants effectively integrated technology in their teaching practices during the second era of the pandemic.

When it comes to the answering research questions 1 regarding changes to pedagogical, communication, and classroom management strategies, participants stated that they had to revise their teaching styles, materials used, assessment methods to better suit the online environment. Furthermore, they stated that they had to be creative, offer individual and group activities, and provide synchronous and asynchronous teaching experiences to students through offering live classes and recorded lessons. The flexibility of teachers to accommodate students' needs and their adaptability to the new situation were also appreciated by students in the study of Rippe et al. (2021).

In order to answer the first part of research question 2 regarding participants self-perceived advantages to the shift to ERT, the study revealed that although teachers were thrown into a state of uncertainty when they were rapidly forced to shift to online, teacher participants
described their experiences as unique in that they successfully responded to the challenges they encountered. They also stated that they tried their best to learn how to integrate technology effectively in their classroom and serve their students under those difficult conditions.

To answer the second part of research question 2, the findings of this study shed light on the challenges encountered by participants resulting from the abrupt shift to ERT because of issues related to technology integration, communication, assessment, classroom management, and lesson planning and course delivery. Teachers' challenges of integrating technology in the classroom have been widely addressed as in (Johnson et al., 2016; Ertmer, 1999). Ertmer (1999) stated that when integrating technology in the classroom, teachers experience two levels of barriers: first-order or extrinsic barriers and second-order or intrinsic barriers. The first-order barriers include time, tools, and support, whereas the second-order barriers are related to the teacher's personal beliefs about teaching. According to Wood et al. (2005), when understanding the technology integration challenges encountered by teachers from the teachers' perspectives, those challenges can be better addressed, and the needed support will be offered to help teachers in their classrooms.

One of the major challenges encountered by teachers was communication with students and their lack of engagement. The lack of face-to-face interaction and Zoom off-screens led to the feeling of disconnection between teachers and students due to the absence of nonverbal cues, which are considered important for effective communication. Furthermore, distractions surrounding students caused students' lack of engagement in the classroom as explained in Rasmitadila et al. (2020). This study explained how conditioning students to participate online is difficult due to internal and external factors. The internal factors are related to the students
surrounding and home environment, and external factors are distractions that happened in the classroom from other students. The lack of quality communication between teachers and students made teaching online less effective compared to the F2F classroom (Rahayu & Wirza, 2020). This finding suggests that teachers should be offered developmental training on how to effectively use online tools to enhance communication with students. Consequently, teachers reported that they used different creative teaching styles to encourage students to participate online. This finding was highlighted again in Rasmitadila et al. (2020) who stated that using different varied teaching styles helps students become more engaged in the online environment.

Additionally, as this study revealed how the pandemic revealed a digital divide, a concept widely discussed such as in the study of (Dolan, 2016), to widen which was reflected in the cases of many students who did not have access to stable internet connection or technology tools and so lost communication with their teachers. The finding of the digital divide in this study is in line with Cardullo et al. (2021). They reported that the pandemic caused digital inequity, created as a result of students' lack of access to devices or internet connection and sharing the devices with multiple siblings with families in large households. Similarly, the study of (Garbe et al., 2020) recommended that districts should address the issues of accessibility such as the lack of access to technology and technology tools.

Among the reported technology integration issues were participants' loss of control over their classrooms and the physical disconnect between them and students. Furthermore, because they lacked previous experiences in teaching online, participants described that they had to learn new technology tools quickly, troubleshoot students' technology issues, and teach at the same
time. This finding was revealed in the study of Whalen (2020). That study reported that teachers with previous experiences in online teaching reported a smoother shift to ERT; however, those with no experience were learning how to use the tools for teaching remotely while teaching.

A major challenge reported by teachers was the complete reliance on technology in teaching, which led to their feeling of loss of control over their classrooms. Poor internet connection caused teachers frustrations and was the greatest challenge encountered by teachers when it came to technology integration. What made communication harder was the fact that both students and teachers were not required to turn on their cameras and had to turn them off to achieve a better internet connection. In a similar way, Mishra et al. (2020) reported that the major challenge to the switch to online was the unstable internet connection, and in order to keep the connection more stable, students' cameras were kept off, which was described as teaching to a "blank wall."

This study revealed that participants were not in favor of using Facebook and other social media platforms as a means to communicate and offer live classes during the first period of teaching when the pandemic started. This was due to privacy issues and the teachers' beliefs that they were not the best tools to be used in teaching. However, this contradicts the recommendations of (Bond, 2020) who recommended the use of social media tools by teachers as most students are familiar with them which can help reduce issues related to technology problems. Additionally, it contradicted the findings of Schindler et al. (2017) who suggested that Facebook can be a tool to prompt students' participation in the classroom and interaction with their learning community.
Academic dishonesty was the most reported challenge connected to online assessment in this study. Participants believed that using the traditional methods of assessment online was not effective in accurately evaluating what students knew about their courses due to cheating issues. However, they successfully integrated creative ways to individualize assessments and offer students feedback using technology. This finding is in line with the study of Kaden (2020) who highlighted that the use of technology in the time of the pandemic is shifting assessments towards more individualized forms, and standardized testing may become outdated.

Another reported challenge to delivering courses online was classroom management and discipline issues. Monitoring students online and making sure that they were engaged and on task were difficult for teachers. Teachers expressed that, unlike the F2F classroom, in the online environment, they were unable to apply their expectations and classroom rules to the new situation as they had less control over the students. Similarly, setting classroom expectations in an online environment was a challenge reported in the study of Davis et al. (2019). They reported that teachers in an online context should provide enough guidance to students without overwhelming them to make sure that students understand the class expectations. In addition, participants reported that they experienced a relationship gap with their students during the shift to online due to the lack of the F2F interaction, which is in line with the study of (Zhang, 2020) who stated that "Direct eye-contact, an encouraging smile and a friendly nod does wonders for both teachers and students alike" (p.44), and those cannot be substituted in the online classroom.

Participants reported that because they used more extracurricular activities to keep students engaged in the classroom compared to F2F, covering the textbook material with all
other issues encountered with the online classroom was difficult. Planning to deliver courses online with the lack of technological resources was challenging for some participants as they had several cases of planning for the class, and then online platforms or activities would not work. They highlighted that they had to spend more time preparing for classes when they were learning how to integrate technology in their classes. Participants in Zhang (2020) reported the same challenge. According to them, creating an effective online classroom requires a lot of time, and because they were learning the tools while teaching, preparation for lessons required more time compared to F2F instruction.

In answering research question 3 regarding EFL instructors' recommendations regarding future promising teaching practices that came out because of the switch to ERT, participants believed that institutions should work more on preparing both students and teachers to use technology (Rasmitadila et al., 2020) and offer professional training sessions for teachers on how to teach online (Zhang, 2020) as those needs will persist in the future. Because support from institutions and colleagues was important to help teachers overcome the obstacles they encountered during the shift to online, participants reported that they received support from their institutions.

The study revealed that the pandemic is the first step toward a change to the traditional classroom through the integration of more creative and up-to-date ways of teaching practices, and online learning and teaching will persist in the post-pandemic era. As all participants agreed that education will rely more on technology integration with the high growth of technology caused by the pandemic, they admitted that for them to effectively use technology in the
classroom, they need to develop their technological knowledge for future practices. Participants reported that blended learning will become part of the new normal. According to the results of the study of (Dziuban et al., 2018), blended learning offered access to most students in the study, which can help narrow the digital divide that resulted from the switch to online teaching during the pandemic. Dziuban et al. (2018) also found that using blended learning improved the success rates of minority and non-minority students. Students in that study expressed that blended learning was their first preference when it came to an effective learning environment.

The researcher believed that her insider role in this study allowed for better results when it came to data collection and data analysis. When interviewing one of the participants who used to be the researcher's instructor, he showed a great openness when it came to sharing his emotions regarding his experience shifting to online and the support that he received from his institution and colleagues. He reflected on his age as being a barrier to receiving enough support from his institution and colleagues due to the assumption that old teachers would struggle to use technology effectively and rapidly in their classrooms. Although the researcher did not have any previous interaction with the other participants, they still assumed the insider role of the researcher because she belongs to their community. They articulated phrases, such as you used to be one of us, you know how it works here, you know the internet issues in Palestine, you know the education system. The researcher believes that this role increased the level of trust between the participants and her and at the same time increased the participants' levels of openness when it came to sharing their experiences shifting to ERT during the pandemic. As the researcher was familiar with the studied context, she focused on understanding the participants' perspectives and the data they shared rather than spending time understanding the specific context.
When it came to the Palestinian context, the study revealed how teachers and families were asked to participate in the shift to ERT with a minimal availability of resources as in the example of large families, where siblings had to split the days, and each one would attend on a specific day, and teachers had to utilize whatever technology and platforms to which they had access. As educators, it is important to understand the shift to ERT as a phenomenon in different contexts, especially in contexts where teachers had few resources for teaching online during the pandemic in order to have a better understanding of the post-pandemic era and utilize the best practices available to enhance online learning and teaching.

In summary, the findings of the study revealed that education will rely more on technology integration amidst the high growth of technology use in the classroom caused by the pandemic. Furthermore, regardless of their years of experience teaching English as a foreign language and demonstrating their mastery of pedagogical and content skills, technology integration was challenging in the first era of the pandemic for participants, and the transition to ERT raised several issues. However, once teachers became more comfortable dealing with technology in the classroom as the only source of education during the second era, the interaction between content, pedagogy, and technology bodies of knowledge, according to the TPACK framework, was demonstrated and led to the effective integration of technology in the classroom. Participants successfully utilized their pedagogical practices to present their content in more interactive ways using digital mediums that best worked for them and for their students’ needs to reach their teaching objectives. Educators should be aware of the fact that in order to effectively use technology in the classroom, they must think of pedagogy, content, and technology as one interactive set rather than separate bodies of knowledge.
**Impact of Study**

As this study aimed to investigate the experiences and perceptions of EFL teachers regarding the transition to ERT during the time period of Spring 2020 and Spring 2021, it contributed to the existing literature that examined and evaluated the rapid shift to delivering courses online caused by the Covid global crisis through the teachers’ lens. Understanding those experiences during such an unprecedented time will help prepare institutions, teachers, and students for future scenarios. Additionally, as this study shed light on the vulnerability of the education sectors globally and how unprepared it was for the shift to using technology in the classroom despite being in the 21st century, understanding the challenges that teachers encountered will help address those issues now. Furthermore, as the pandemic has changed the way education is perceived, a major shift towards more integration of technology in teaching and learning is ahead, and several institutions and schools are developing permanent virtual options as a response to the pandemic.

**Limitations**

This study has several limitations. The first limitation is connected to the generalizability issue. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the sampling method used, the limited number of participants, their teaching subject, and their teaching environment, the results cannot be overgeneralized. As the study included five participants who were accessible to the researcher, it cannot be determined whether the sample was representative of the population. Furthermore, the study had four female participants and one male. The unequal number of male and female respondents might influence the research results. Further research should address teachers'
experiences switching to ERT in other subjects' areas, include a larger sample, and compare different findings from different countries around the world to reveal how other factors, such as availability of resources, can affect the responses of participants and how institutions responded to the pandemic in different environments. Furthermore, as the sample of the study was selected from teachers only, further research should include students, administrations, and parents to better understand the pandemic era and post-pandemic preparation plans for better experiences.

Another limitation is related to the time in which the study was conducted. As this research studied the experiences of EFL teachers shifting to ERT two years ago, investigating those experiences now and collecting data long after they happened might impact the study results due to the accuracy of the participants' responses.

**Future Research**

This study revealed several issues related to integrating technology in the classroom forced by the Covid-19 pandemic despite being in the 21st century. Consequently, future research must focus on addressing the challenges faced by the education sector during the time period of the pandemic so that it can be prepared and improve its infrastructure to suit the new post-pandemic era where online teaching and learning is expected to persist. As of this study, the following should be addressed: technology training for teachers and students, teachers’ technology support from institutions, digital inequalities among students and different countries, and modifying the curricula to better suit the era of technology. More research should be conducted to offer teachers the training needed on how to effectively integrate technology in the classroom and train students to use technological tools in their learning process. Using
technology in the classroom does not necessarily lead to effective education. Improved content and effective pedagogy along with technology integration can add more value to education. Moreover, it is of paramount importance to address the needed support from institutions in helping students who do not have access to technological tools and offering them technological support. Studies should be conducted to examine digital inequalities in countries that lack economic resources, such as Palestine, to find the best solutions to narrow the digital gap when institutions are unable to financially support students. Institutions in countries where resources are lacking can find solutions by modifying the curricula to suit the new normal. Further research should address the challenges teachers encountered during the shift to ERT in other subjects' areas and compare different findings from different countries to address the digital inequalities among different countries. In order to have a better understanding of the topic, further research should include students, administrations, and parents to better understand the pandemic era and post-pandemic preparation plans for better experiences.

**Conclusion**

This research aimed to study the experiences and perceptions of EFL teachers on the switch to online during the COVID-19 lockdown period between Spring 2020 and Spring 2021. While applying the theoretical lens of the TPACK framework, the research highlighted English teachers' perspectives of their experiences of the shift to ERT; the several challenges imposed by such change; the benefits; and the implications of this shift were addressed. This case study examined the perceptions of five English teachers at two Palestinian institutions, and new insights came to the forefront while understanding teachers’ perceptions about the new normal.
Respondents reported that they had to change their pedagogical practices to suit the new normal. For example, they reported changes to their technological, pedagogical, communication, and classroom management strategies. Despite the challenges they encountered, which were related to pedagogy, technology, communication, assessment, classroom management, lesson planning, and course delivery, participants reported several benefits that came to the forefront as a result of the switch to online teaching.

The pandemic has taught us a lesson: the educational sector is not protected against natural threats like the pandemic. It even shed light on how vulnerable and unprepared the education system globally was during this period of time to embrace the sudden shift to online education despite being in the technology era of the 21st century. It has become urgent that educational institutions are prepared to embrace sudden changes, and the integration of technology in the teaching and learning process has become a basic need. The education sector learned to survive the pandemic and needs to be prepared for similar future experiences and understand that the transformation that the pandemic has brought to technology use in education is of paramount importance. According to Mishra et al. (2020), a shift has occurred in the way online teaching is perceived due to the pandemic experience. It is now considered a permanent need rather than an option to avoid throwing education globally in a similar experiment as the pandemic and affirm to technology demand of this century. Although taking F2F classes is possible today as the number of Covid cases is dropping globally, unlike the time period of the forced closure when the pandemic started, online teaching is anticipated to become a permanent instruction mode.
APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL LETTER
EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

February 9, 2022

Dear Eman Barri:

On 2/9/2022, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Review</th>
<th>Initial Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) Forced by the Pandemic: EFL Teachers' Practices and Perspectives Two Years Later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator</td>
<td>Eman Barri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB ID</td>
<td>STUDY00003867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant ID</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents Reviewed</td>
<td>HRP-251- FORM - Faculty Advisor Scholarly Review fillable form.pdf, Category: Faculty Research Approval; HRP-254-FORM Explanation of Research, Category: Consent Form; HRP-255 Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol; Interview Questions (Thesis).docx, Category: Interview / Focus Questions; Recruitment Email, Category: Recruitment Materials; Scheduling Email, Category: Other;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please submit a modification request to the IRB. Guidance on submitting Modifications and Administrative Check-in are detailed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,
Kamille Birkbeck
Designated Reviewer
APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Interview Questions

Demographic Information: Age, gender, level of education, title, years of teaching

After the COVID pandemic impacted education in spring 2020,

**Research Question 1**: What changes did EFL instructors make to their pedagogical practices?

Did you have any experience teaching online before the pandemic?

What changes did you make to your teaching practices when it comes to the following?

a. Technologies and platforms used
b. Lesson planning and preparation
c. Course delivery: time management and activities used
d. New methods of Assessment: What new assessment methods did you adopt? How did you track your students’ progress? How did you provide feedback?
e. Students' interaction (with teacher/ With each other)
f. Motivation, engagement, and support: How did you engage your students during and after class time? Describe any social and emotional focus in or outside of your class time.
g. Emergency tools used for communication with students: how did you communicate with students? How did students communicate with you and with each other? How did you reduce the students’ feelings of isolation?
h. Collaboration and group work (if applicable)

Describe your teaching style (strategies that you use to approach teaching) before the pandemic and after the change to online instruction. Please be specific. For example, was your teaching
style teacher- centered one-way presentations, or did you promote learner centered approach?

What teaching activities did you adopt to facilitate your teaching style?

**Research Question 2: What were the advantages and disadvantages of this change to online teaching because of the pandemic?**

As an EFL instructor, what were the advantages and disadvantages linked to teaching English during the emergency shift to online delivery both on personal and pedagogical levels when it comes to the following?

- Using technology: platform, what they used
- Lesson planning
- Course delivery
- Course Material
- Time
- Technology support: work with institution, and teachers, training
- Assessment

**Research Question 3: If any, what are some promising teaching practices that you see as a result of the pandemic?**

- How did the pandemic affect preparation programs for teachers? Did you receive any training or support from your institutions or colleagues? Are you receiving any training now when it comes to technology use?
- How will the pandemic change the future of teaching English as a foreign language in higher education?
• What are some future promising pedagogical practices for teaching English as a foreign language that came out as a result of the pandemic?
APPENDIX C
RECRUITING EMAIL
Email Subject Line: Participation in a Study Conducted in the US

Study Title: Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) Forced by the Pandemic: EFL Teachers' Practices and Perspectives Two Years Later

Researcher Name: Eman Barri

You are being invited to participate in a voluntary research study regarding EFL instructors’ experiences and perceptions of the shift to emergency remote teaching forced by the pandemic in Spring 2020. The study is being conducted by Eman Barri at the University of Central Florida. Participation is confidential and involves a zoom interview that will take no more than an hour. The interviews will be audio-recorded. The researcher will not identify you by name on any occasions when using the information collected from the interviews, and your confidentiality will be secured. The researcher will use pseudonyms and store that with the audio recordings instead of your actual name.

The population of the study will include only Palestinian English instructors who taught online in the time period of Spring 2020 and Spring 2021 and experienced the sudden shift of the teaching delivery mode forced by the pandemic. EFL instructors who did not experience the shift to online during that time period will be excluded from the study.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please contact Eman Barri through email, and the consent process and zoom meeting schedule will commence."

Thank you for your time and if you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please feel free to contact Eman Barri or the faculty advisor, Dr. Kerry Purmensky, via email.

_Eman Barri_
Principal Investigator

Eman.barri@knights.ucf.edu

University of Central Florida

Kerry Purmensky

Faculty advisor

Kerry.Purmensky@ucf.edu

University of Central Florida
APPENDIX D
EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH
Title of Project: Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) Forced by the Pandemic: EFL Teachers’ Practices and Perspectives Two Years Later

Principal Investigator: Eman Barri

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Kerry Purmensky

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

The purpose of this research is to investigate how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers responded to the emergency remote teaching (ERT). Examining these experiences will show what impact this mode of instruction has on English language teaching in general and planning for more successful teaching practices of similar possible scenarios in the future. Additionally, this study will help English educators improve online pedagogies for future practices.

The researcher will meet with you individually via zoom. You will be asked to answer questions regarding your experiences and perspectives of the sudden switch from the traditional face-to-face instruction to online forced by the pandemic.

Your participation includes a single zoom interview that lasts no more than an hour. No follow up interviews or other meetings are going to be done after that.

You will be audio recorded during this study. If you do not want to be audio recorded, you will not be able to be in the study. Discuss this with the researcher or a research team member. If you are recorded, the recording will be kept in a locked, safe place.

Only the researcher and the faculty advisor will have access to the data collected. The audio files will be secured in the faculty advisor’s OneDrive for 5 years after study closure per Florida law, and the transcribed data done by the researcher will be saved on the researcher’s laptop after installing an encryption software.

You must be 16 years of age or older and a Palestinian English instructor who taught online in the time period of Spring 2020 - Spring 2021 and experienced the sudden shift of the teaching delivery mode forced by the pandemic to take part in this research study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints: Eman Barri, Graduate Student, Teaching English as a Second Language, Modern Languages and Literature, (321) 914 - 5043 or Dr. Kerry Purmensky, Faculty Supervisor, Department of Modern Languages and Literature (407) 823-2472 or by email at kerry.purmensky@ucf.edu.

IRB contact about your rights in this study or to report a complaint: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or have concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact Institutional Review Board (IRB), University of Central Florida, Office of Research, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901, or email irb@ucf.edu.

If you have any questions about any of information above, please ask the study team:

1. Informed consent for the audio recording of this interview.
   Initial: Date: _______ _______

2. Informed consent for the processing of your personal information, including how your personal information will be used and stored.
Initial: ______ Date: ______

3. Informed consent for the transferring, storing, recording, and processing of your personal data within the United States.

Initial: ______ Date: ______

Signature Block

Your signature documents your permission to take part in this research.

Signature of Participant ________________________ Date ________________

Printed name of Participant ________________________
REFERENCES


http://dx.doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala/v26n3a12


Keegan, D. J. (1980). On the Nature of Distance Education. ZIFF Papiere 33.


Koehler, M., & Mishra, P. (2009). What is technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK)?. *Contemporary issues in technology and teacher education, 9*(1), 60-70.


https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105578


Starman, A. B. (2013). The case study as a type of qualitative research. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies/Sodobna Pedagogika, 64*(1).


