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Mgr. Silvie Kuchařová

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla veškerou literaturu a ostatní zdroje, které jsem použila.

V Olomouci dne.....

.....

Silvie Kuchařová

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Abstract

This thesis deals with online education at Institute of Foreign Languages at Palacký University Olomouc. More specifically, the empirical part focuses on online education during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. The aim is to assess advantages and disadvantages of online education from teachers' and students' point of view. To do so, we carried out qualitative research in which two teachers and two students were interviewed. Open coding method was used for data analysis. The research findings show that the disadvantages and negative impacts of online education were so significant that the participants are very unlikely to be in favour of online education in such a form they experienced during the pandemic.

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Introduction

In 2019, a new type of virus, called COVID-19, began to spread around the world. Its escalation was incredibly fast and caused a worldwide pandemic which did not leave the Czech Republic untouched either. It significantly affected industry, the health service, and also education system. The state of emergency, declared by the government in March 2020, went hand in hand with the closure of schools. As these government regulations came without warning, the schools did not have enough time to prepare for the great necessary changes of education involved in the transition to distance learning.

This thesis is focused on online education at Institute of Foreign Languages at Palacký University Olomouc. Online education is a very controversial topic, providing a lot of space for a discussion. Even though many institutions have already been using online education for some time, due to the pandemic it has become the subject matter of news and political discussions as it completely changed people's lives. Online education is an interesting topic and there is still a lot to be explored.

Although online education is criticized for its drawbacks, both teachers and students might be given certain benefits which might also enrich teaching practise. So, it is the pros and cons of online education that are the subject of this thesis, as well as the negative impacts of online education on teachers' and students' lives.

The aim of this thesis is to assess the advantages and disadvantages of online education at Institute of Foreign Languages at Palacký University Olomouc during the pandemic year from the teachers' and students' point of view.

The thesis is divided into a theoretical and practical part. The theoretical part deals with the basic terms - such as definitions and concepts of online education, its history, types, and participants. The final chapter describes the situation at Czech universities during COVID-19 pandemic. For the purposes of the practical part, qualitative research was carried out. The data was collected through interviews with two teachers and two students who have each experienced distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This data was analysed using the open-coding method and the individual codes were later used to answer the research questions. All the main results are summarized in the conclusion.

Theoretical part

1 Online education

"The Internet changes everything. Including the character of education."

Larry Ellison

Information and communication technology and electronic media entered our lives very quickly and created the so-called information society. Whether we like it or not, the 21st century is a century of information and knowledge. The movement of the information society is accompanied by hard international competition in the fight for new resources – the access to information and knowledge. The approach to education changes and so do the methods (Zlámálová, 2008, p. 127).

The education taking place over the Internet is a step forward in the field of traditional education. On-line education and e-Learning tries to connect a traditional way of education with the information technology, which is related to the needs and goals of contemporary education and learning (Zounek, 2009).

1.1. Definition

Because there is not a clear and definite definition of on-line education, it is necessary to start with defining E-Learning, which is related to it the most. There is also a thin line between these two terms and some authors consider them synonyms.

The letter "e" is an abbreviation of the word "electronic", therefore E-Learning might be called electronic education (Barešová, 2011, p. 28). There are a few options of how to write the key word: eLearning, e-learning or e-Learning, all of which are used in literature and journalism (Zlámálová, 2008, p. 127).

Barešová (2011, pp. 28-30) provides two different concepts of E-Learning: An American one and a Czech one.

The American concept defines e-learning as:

1. Education supported by the computers – CBT (Computer-based training),
2. Education supported by the technology – TBT (Technology-based training),
3. Education supported by web technology, using the internet or intranet – WBT (Web-based training).

The American concept of e-Learning also covers the most famous definition of e-Learning made by the founder of American e-Learning industry Elliot Masie, who states that

"E-Learning is the use of network technology to design, deliver, select, administer and extend learning". (Cross, 2004).

The Czech concept might be represented by the definition provided by the Pedagogical Dictionary which describes e-Learning as electronic learning/education. The term is used in this English form or is translated as "electronic education". It is a kind of education during which gaining and using knowledge is distributed and facilitated by electronic device. It may cover comprehensive training courses or smaller modular learning modules or relatively small learning topics. It may be based on synchronous or asynchronous approaches. It may be distributed from independent resources as for time and place. It interconnects external control of the individual with their self-regulation. It is used primarily in distance and combined forms of university studies, in in-company training, in retraining courses. Gradually, it is coming to primary and secondary schools (Průcha, 2013).

Kopecký (2006) says that e-Learning is understood as multimedia support of educational process with the use of modern information and communication technology which is realized by means of a computer network. Its basic purpose is free and unlimited access to education in time and space. Barešová (2011, p. 30) states that e-Learning can be characterized as an educational process connected with computers and information and communication technology. It is realized in any educational space in order to achieve educational goals.

According to Zounek (2009, pp. 37-38), e-Learning includes both theory and research as well as any real educational process in which the ethical principles comply with the use of information and communication technology working with data in electronic form. The way of use of ICT tools and the teaching materials availability are dependent on educational goals and content, educational environment and participants' needs and options through the educational process. Based on this definition E-Learning seems to be a more and more current topic and a center of ongoing research. It is a continual evolving process going hand in hand with the needs of teachers, students and public society.

Compared with e-Learning, on-line education is a more specific term. There are two basic forms of e-Learning: on-line and off-line e-Learning. On-line learning (or education), unlike off-line learning, needs a computer network, either the Internet (global network) or the Intranet (local network) (Zlámalová, 2008, p. 130).

There is an interesting American point of view of the difference between e-Learning and on-line learning: E-Learning covers a wider set of applications and processes and includes any electronic media, like the Internet, the Intranet, the Extranet, satellite broadcasting, audio and video cassettes or CD-ROMs (Technology-Based Learning). On the other hand, on-line

learning, as one part of Technology-Based Learning, is education which takes place over the Internet, the Intranet or the Extranet. (Barešová, 2011, p. 29).

1.2 Brief history of online education

Because online education is connected to the Internet, e-Learning is dated much earlier. In the late 1960s the precursors of computers – teaching machines, were used to educate people. They were invented by S.L. Pressey in 1924 and later, B.F. Skinner created another type in 1954 (Keegan, 2021). One of them, developed in the Czech Republic, was named Unitutor. The subject matter was distributed on pages ended with a multiple-choice test question. But these machines were rather complicated and inefficient (Barešová, 2011, p. 25).

In 1960 PLATO – the first computer-based training, was introduced by the University of Illinois. It was supposed to assist in teaching and in the 1970s this programme spread around the world (Keegan, 2021).

In the middle of 1980s, the introduction of electronic devices in schools started as well as the first production of school microcomputers named IQ 151, with the implemented programming language Pascal. Unfortunately, this project was pushed out by personal computers expansion. But this period was very revolutionary because computers spread to households and educational institutions tried to improve their computers, which also started to be used to make and verify different theories improvable for the time being (Princlík, 2013).

The World Wide Web was invented by the British scientist Tim Berners-Lee in 1989 (CERN, ©2022). During the 1990s it developed a lot and enabled fast data transfer. The Internet started to play a big role in the communication field and possibility of easy access to information. Since then, online education itself has also been used in schools, where, for example, email communication or discussion groups became common (Princlík, 2013).

Another important point of e-Learning history is the development of Intelligent Tutoring Systems within scientific teams at universities. The aim of these systems was to create applications to gain control over the educational process. They connected the subject matter explanation, practising, and testing. These elements were connected into single lessons and whole courses (Barešová, 2011, p. 27). They were the precursors of LMS – Learning Management Systems and their classic representative Moodle (Princlík, 2013). LMS was used to track student records, attendance, exams, grades etc. (Keegan, 2021).

In 1999 e-Learning got its name thanks to Elliot Massie who first used it on a conference on CBT systems. Since then, the term "e-Learning" has impacted the lives of millions of people around the world (Keegan, 2021).

At the turn of the 20th and 21st century the e-Learning development at universities was very fast. Library sources and content of the lectures was step by step placed on multimedia resources and local network. Virtual universities on the Internet, offering to attend special courses or gain different certificates came into existence. On some of them, people can get a degree without having to be present in the classroom (Barešová, 2011, p. 27).

In 2020 the COVID-19 outbreak was another important milestone in the history of e-Learning. Due to the lockdown many people got stuck at home and had to educate themselves online. Students started attending live online classrooms and teachers started using teaching software working from their homes. Because of the pandemic, people can see a lot of benefits of e-Learning and the overall education has made a great step forward. (Keegan, 2021).

2 Basic forms of online education

There are several basic forms of e-learning. They differ in technologies used and their accessibility. Simply, we talk about online and offline education (Dvořáková, 2008):

Offline education is typical with no need for connection to another computer through a computer network. Learning content is available on a storage medium and is set directly on a computer, which realizes the education itself. Students are dependent on information contained in materials that do not enable the advantages of hypertext. From this reason offline education is on the decline, but nowadays it is often combined with tutorials as a combined form of education – blended learning (Zlámalová, 2008, p.130).

As has been said, online education uses a computer network, teaching is performed through different websites or via a Learning Management System (Marešová, Klement, 2012, p. 54). Kopecký (2009, p. 126) states that online education needs a computer network – either the Internet or the Intranet and can be practised in two ways: synchronous and asynchronous.

2.1 Synchronous communication instruments

Synchronous education is practised in a real time, requires constant connection and immediate communication between a teacher and student (Marešová, Klement, 2012, p. 54). Everybody may participate elsewhere but at the same time, assuming that they are connected to the Internet (Barešová, 2011, p. 36).

This type of online education does not enable one of the most important qualities of distance learning – independence in time (Zlámalová, 2008, p. 130). Safety belongs among other disadvantages of synchronous education, for example, a certain risk of being attacked by viruses, illegal material propagation etc. Finally, the technology itself is always dependent on the quality of Internet connection (Zounek, 2009, pp. 117-118).

On the other hand, the course participants may freely communicate through chat, video conferencing etc. (Zlámalová, 2008, p. 130). They may cooperate, create different projects, and motivate each other (Podlahová, 2012, p. 120). According to Zounek (2009), there are other advantages such as ease and accessibility of this education and moreover, the communication is not limited by the distance. Therefore, it may take place among students all around the world.

Online courses, audio/video conferences, Internet calling, virtual classroom or chats are common examples of synchronous communication (Barešová, 2011, p. 36).

2.2 Asynchronous communication instruments

Asynchronous education is real education anytime and anywhere. Students work whenever they want and are completely independent. Teachers prepare the course before it is realized and students decide when they use it (Barešová, 2011, p. 36). Klement and Dostál (2018, p. 44) state that asynchronous form of e-Learning is conducted by self-study most of the time. Students independently go through a prepared educational program, which also means that much greater demands are placed on them (Klement, Dostál, 2018, p. 44).

Students spend time on self-study; thus, they are more self-reliant. On the other hand, cooperation and social situation experience are suppressed. Students cannot use their natural competitiveness and they are less motivated to gain new knowledge (Podlahová, 2012, p. 119).

Self-study courses, educational CD-ROMs, study of web presentations, e-mails or chat forums are examples of asynchronous communication (Barešová, 2011, p. 36). Learning Management System (LMS) is a revolutionary tool of online education. It enables the creation, administration, and distribution of learning content, students can communicate with their teacher and their results are evaluated easily (Podlahová, 2012, p. 119).

3 Participants

In the last decades all areas of social life have changed due to new technologies, as well as everyone's life. (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, p. 16). We live in an information society which goes hand in hand with e-learning development. According to Jonák (2003), it is a society based on the integration of information and communication technology into all areas of social life to such an extent that social relations and processes are changed. Increase in information resources and communication flow is growing to such extent that it cannot be managed by current information and communication technology.

The term e-learning participants can be defined as all people being involved in the preparation and subsequent realization of a learning process. Overall, they can be named as an e-learning implementation team, which consists of administrators, managers, development specialists, tutors, and others. On the other side there are the students themselves. (Nocar, 2004, p. 235). So, it is not only students who play key role in e-learning, but also their teachers. (Zounek, 2009, p. 58).

Besides e-student and e-teacher, the term e-learning participants may also cover e-manager or e-developer. (E-learning portál, [on-line]). For the purposes of this thesis, we will only deal with the e-student and e-teacher.

3.1 E-student

There is a new generation entering the educational process. These are children of the new digital era, often called the net generation. (Tapscott, 2009). "*Net generation learners are students who were born in the 1980s and later.*" (Oblinger, Oblinger, 2005, p. 1). Prensky (2001) also describes the new generation and calls it Digital Natives. He states that "*Digital Natives are native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games and Internet*". On other words, they are people who, from a young age, grow up in an environment rich in omnipresent modern technology, such as computers, digital music players, video or web cameras, mobile phones etc. For these people computer games, emails, the Internet, or text messages are common parts of life. (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, p. 16)

Oblinger, Oblinger (2005) have described some defining characteristics of net generation members:

1. They have no problem when solving several problems at once or go from task to task,
2. They prefer learning through visual or audio materials to learning from text materials,

3. They have acquired visual-spatial skills,
4. They prefer interactive activities or activities done through the Internet to individual or individualized activities,
5. They like learning by discovering.

It follows that net generation's life and learning have moved a lot. This movement may be characterized by three dimensions creating complex of related metacognitive skills (Brown, 2002):

1. "New" literacy – currently does not only apply to text materials but also to visual materials and audio-visual media. It is the ability to read multimedia information and understand it,
2. Difference in learning – learning itself is often based on accidental discoveries (discovery-based learning). Students can do tasks which would, under normal circumstances, require more advanced knowledge,
3. Preference of practical activities over passive learning – students learn from how things work or observe how others interact with them. The learning process becomes more situationally conditioned, and oriented towards solving specific tasks.

Although some experts claim that the learning process does not change much, it is the context of learning, the expectation connected with learning, and the results of learning that change due to the possibility of using digital technology. (Ellis, Goodyear, 2009, p. 18). So, it is very important to pay attention to the students, their characteristics, habits, needs and learning styles, and for the teachers it is necessary to take a completely different approach. In this context it is important to think about learning styles which may affect e-learning success in a fundamental way. (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, p. 19).

Students may personalize technologies so as they meet their needs. The thought of personal learning environment (PLE) is based on this principle. According to Attwell (2007, p. 1) PLE is “*a new approach to using technologies for learning*”. It is not only which tools students use but also how they use and adjust them, so they comply with their learning style. Students may create their own learning environment or co-create it together with the teacher. On one hand it brings higher independence, on the other hand they become more responsible for learning (Attwell, 2007).

Conole (2008) introduces eight factors capturing the essence of learning style changes:

1. Pervasive: Students use digital technologies in all aspects of their study. They use them to search for information, to organize and create content, they are members of different communities, share materials etc.,

2. Personalised: Students adjust modern technologies tools, so that they meet their needs. Their study is interactive because they use computers, the Internet and books at the same time,
3. Adaptive: Students use technologies in the way they match their learning styles, and they use them for a specific purpose,
4. Management: Students search for and organize information very thoughtfully, and a computer is the key tool for these activities,
5. Transferability: Students use acquired skills for learning as well as for other activities,
6. Time: It is not important when or where students learn because they may communicate with the teacher in many ways and may get immediate feedback. They are then prepared for work in a constantly changing environment; they can do several tasks at once and use more technological tools at the same time,
7. Changing working patterns: New ways of working based on use of modern technology arise. They require highly developed skills in information evaluation and synthesis,
8. Integrated: Students combine different tools so that they meet their individual needs. They can use technology and traditional educational resources at the same time which makes them flexible because they can learn anytime, anywhere, and use any resources.

3.1.1 Disadvantages of online education from the student's point of view

When speaking of all the great changes in students' learning and thinking, it is necessary to take into consideration the weaknesses of the net generation. Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) mentions these: short-term concentration, a lack of reflection, uncritical approach to source quality, and insufficient skills in evaluation of online information.

These problems might root in students' overload, which occurs when the lessons are improperly prepared and realized. On one hand, it seems easy to provide information sources constantly but not all students are able to manage all the work that is expected. They might feel even lost in the huge amount of data available on the Internet (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, p. 136).

Another disadvantage of online education is social isolation. In the time of online education during pandemic year pupils and students were influenced by the fact that they were educated through the computers most of the time. This social isolation is a great mental strain which might lead to sadness or even mental illnesses such as depression (Švubová, 2021). On the other hand, social isolation might have a positive impact on the students, as well. Thanks to certain anonymity, shy students might be more courageous to share their opinions, contribute to discussions, or present their projects more easily as they are not confronted directly.

Moreover, in asynchronous communication there is more time to think deeply and word the questions and answers (Barešová, 2011, p. 49).

The feeling of isolation, as one of the disadvantages of online education, is mentioned in a study of Ali, Uppal and Gulliver (2018, p. 159), who identified 68 different barriers that can negatively affect e-learning education.

Regmi and Jones (2020, p. 7) state that negative feelings, such as high levels of anxiety and stress, might accompany online education and decrease its efficiency.

Next, there is a high risk of technology addiction which is a growing health risk in the child and adolescent population. There is no standard definition of technology addiction because of the many types of available technology, but it is said to be overuse of technology to the point at which it interferes in daily activities, school, and relationships with family and friends. The most typical physical symptoms are sleep problems, depression, headaches, loss of appetite, and stomach complaints. Decreased concentration and self-reflection belong among the most common psychological strains (Halupa, 2016).

As for health risks connected to online education and technology overuse, students spending too much time working on a computer might suffer from various difficulties. They can be divided into several categories – problems related to the electromagnetic field generated by the display unit, visual difficulties, musculoskeletal problems, and psychosomatic problems. These problems are manifested by visual tiredness, eye pain, dry and burning eyes, blurred vision, headache or back pain (Hlávková, 2006). *“Extreme case of excessive use of technologies can even cause disordered and unhealthy eating leading to obesity and overweight and later Type II diabetes, and the early onset of heart disease”* (Halupa, 2016).

Although online education can be adapted to the student’s requirements and needs, this form of education does not have to fit all students using it. The reason is, for example, that some users miss interaction with other students or have problems transferring their thoughts and practical tasks into word form. Online education is also not suitable for auditory and movement type of students (Barešová, 2011, p. 46) as well as for target groups with lower educational attainment, with a lack of computer skills, and elderly people who are more likely to have made a strong barrier and suffer from technophobia (Zlámalová, 2008, p. 133). Some students reject new technologies because it is difficult for them to learn to use them (Drtina, 2011, p. 125)

Another factor influencing online education efficiency is learning style, which does not always have to be compatible with tools or content processing, insufficient motivation, inability to work independently, and organized learning. In fact, independence and engagement play a

key role in online education, and the expectation of being led and guided might be rather frustrating (Zounek, 2012, p. 136).

Finally, acquiring social interactive skills, such as teamwork, social communication, or group problem solving might be a problem in distance learning. (Průcha, Míka, 2000, p. 6)

Dabaj (2011, p. 12) says that missing digital skills of students, internet costs and its availability, rejection and fear of technology, or wrong digital tool settings are some of the possible technical barriers that might occur during the online education.

Finally, communication difficulties, like opportunity of access to the communication medium and accepting the fact that it will be used for communication, delays between messages or the lack of social interaction, are some of the barriers in online education described in the study of Berge (2013).

3.1.2 Advantages of online education from the student's point of view

One of the most important strengths of online education is the unlimited access to information and education. Students can easily download all learning materials, share them, look up needed information, or edit them so they meet their needs. The study process is highly individual and flexible. Students can study at their own pace, whenever and wherever they need. They proceed in accordance with their own abilities and skills (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, p. 134). This advantage goes hand in hand with learning efficacy. Students only get the information they need, interactively and more quickly, so they absorb it more easily. This is amplified by the possibility of discussing the issues with other students or the teacher. The knowledge is later recollected and applied better (Barešová, 2011, p. 41).

There are also more options of testing the gained knowledge. Answers in tests are more informative due to anonymity, which allows the shyer students to express and assert themselves. Either internal or external assessment is freed of the negative human factor usually presented when evaluating (Zlámalová, 2008, p. 132). The ability to influence the results connected with personal contact and mutual dislike is therefore eliminated (Barešová, 2011, p. 42).

Furthermore, online education represents a possibility for students to take part in content creation and development. Unlike the traditional model of education, students can evaluate and add their own materials as well as comment on them. They easily share information, cooperate with other students and with the teacher, confront with each other. As already stated, anonymity and self-reliance during online education provides a self-confidence increase to even shyer

students, who then take responsibility for their study better (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, pp. 134-135).

Online education might be even more efficient than traditional education. Kopecký (2006, pp. 14-15) states that the efficiency of e-learning-supported education is at least comparable to full-time education. We can also say that, generally, distance materials which are implemented in the form of online text allow the improvement of perception and memorization of information. In general, well-made distance materials with multimedia elements, which are provided to the students in the form of an online course, allow students to improve the quality of receiving and remembering information (Drtna, 2011, pp. 123-124).

Online education is also very economical. Despite the high initial investment, costs are gradually reduced, and technology-supported study becomes economically beneficial (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, p. 146). Kopecký (2006, p. 18) agrees and says that in the short-term e-learning education is time and money consuming. The benefits appear after a long time.

Saving money and time generally belong among the advantages of online education. Students can learn and participate in the lessons at home, whenever they need and can combine the study with work (Markova, Glazkova and Zaborova, 2017).

3.2 E-teacher

The form of teaching and learning is changed due to the entry of technical equipment into education. The teacher does not communicate with the students face-to-face anymore, their contact takes place through a technical device, which also changes the way of managing students' learning. The form of discussion between the teacher and student is different as the participants do not need to be physically present in the same place. All these aspects influence the current roles of both participants, especially the role of the teacher (Mareš, 2016, pp. 179-180).

Efficient online education places high demands on teachers, who must strengthen their role of facilitator, encourage students, motivate and activate them. They need to focus on active and friendly communication with students, which also includes responses to discussion posts, homework, tests, or essay assessment. In addition to their knowledge, teachers should use life experience, too (Barešová, 2011, p. 49).

E-learning has changed the role of a teacher a lot in terms of both title and content. Mareš (2016, pp. 183-185) states two basic types of terming the teacher in e-learning situations.

Firstly, conventional terms "educator", "teacher", "co-teacher", "instructor", "tutor" and "moderator" that are distinguished from specific terms "educator in e-learning", "e-teacher", "e-tutor", "e-moderator", "online teacher", "online instructor" and "online moderator". He also says that terminology is not unified and there are great differences between authors with regards to a number of roles listed. The most common terms are "administrator", "facilitator", "evaluator", "coach", "manager", "adviser", "designer", "schoolmate", "technologist", "tutor", "researcher", most of which fit with traditional education, as well.

Another approach to the role classification is the consensus model of eight roles of the teachers, including following roles: "content facilitator", "technologist", "designer", "manager (administrator)", "process facilitator", "adviser (counsellor)", "assessor", and "researcher" (Goodyear, Saimon and Spector, 2001, p. 69).

Berge (1995) differentiates four roles of teachers during online discussions: pedagogical (the teacher is a moderator or tutor, asks questions and probes for student responses focusing discussions), social (creates a friendly atmosphere, encourages cooperation of students and maintaining the group as a unit), managerial (the teacher is an organiser of the conference, sets procedural rules and objectives of the discussion) and technical (makes technology transparent and participants comfortable using it).

Shaikh and Khoja (2012, p. 27) present five basic roles of teachers in personal learning environment: planning and design ("planner", "designer", "instructional/learning designer", "programmer"), instruction and learning ("lecturer/instructor", "demonstrator", "theorizer", "master artist", "learner", "critic", "agitator", "motivator", "mentor"), communication and interaction ("coordinator", "facilitator/partner", "connector/communicator", "moderator", "convener", "salesperson", "collaborator", "participant", "collector"), use of technology ("alchemist", "sharer", "network administrator", "technician", "technologist", "media publisher/editor"), management and administration ("leader/change agent", "administrative manager/bureaucrat", "curator", "coach", "guide", "concierge", "goal setter", "evaluator/evaluation specialist").

According to Květoň (2007), the e-teacher is the author of a computer program, course or materials (an e-author) or a user of a ready-to-use program encouraging students' learning (a tutor).

E-teachers can also be classified by types of e-learning. It is the role in off-line education (discussion groups, message boards etc.) and the role in on-line education (chats, sharing of applications, virtual classrooms etc.) (Bednaříková, 2012, p. 145).

Zounek (2009, pp. 73-74) has a completely different point of view of the teacher's role in online education. Unlike other authors, he considers a teacher to be an active factor influencing the use of technology and co-creating the form of e-learning. He emphasizes the roles that a teacher wants to play and divides teachers into three groups: constructivist teachers (teachers trying to apply e-learning), intuitive teachers (teachers intuitively following some constructivist principles without studying specialised literature), and technology users (teachers not being concerned with e-learning courses).

As already stated, the role of the teacher has changed a lot. The number of the roles is increasing due to the fact, that, apart from the pedagogical role, the teacher has to handle all the technological tasks which, among other things, can lead to extreme mental strain. Unlike traditional education, the teacher's role moves to following roles: actor of change, creator of a friendly atmosphere, facilitator, coach, advisor, or even schoolmate. The dominant role as a class manager recedes into the background and roles of a designer, developer or technical expert newly appear. The teacher encourages students to be more active, and this results in an increase in time needed for the lesson. There are also different roles regarding different types of education, social situations and technical conditions of learning (Mareš, 2016, pp. 189-190, 195-196).

Incorporation of ICT into teacher's courses is influenced by many factors, which include teaching concept (reflecting teacher's individuality or experience), teaching style, the possibility to study the latest technologies and try them out in lessons, or teacher's skills when using ICT (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, p. 29). Mental age is not less important (Švaříček, Zounek, 2008).

Morón-Garcia (2006) describes another factors influencing e-learning which are connected with the teacher: technology (its usability and functionality), students (their skills, approach to technology and general approach to study), environment of institution (management support, organization culture), situation in tertiary education (e-learning projects support, infrastructure development at universities), pedagogical issues (sense of use of digital technologies recognition, new ways of work etc.).

According to Solvie (2005, pp. 2036-2037) today's teacher's vocational skills should cover three key spheres: to know the student (their needs, interests and experience and take these into account while planning and organizing classes), to know the curriculum (to monitor new things and incorporate them into classes), and to know the tools (to choose suitable tools and use them for different types and need of students). Because modern technologies do not

form an isolated area, they need to become an integral part of students' lives and a common and useful didactic tool of the teachers.

Teacher should follow some basic principles when teaching online. These principles include promoting contacts between students and tutors, developing cooperation between students, use of active learning methods, providing fast feedback, emphasizing the time needed to complete the tasks, expectations of success, and respecting diverse talents and different ways of learning (Veselý, 1999).

Barešová (2011, p. 50) points out the importance of communication between the teacher and students, which should be equal. The teacher should use an appropriate choice of words and avoid irony towards students with the aim of creating a friendly atmosphere. They also need to appreciate students' work and success, be interested in their opinions, and provide space for open discussion and proper feedback.

3.2.1 Disadvantages from the teacher's point of view

Firstly, because online technologies develop extremely quickly, people might get disoriented easily. It is therefore necessary to have sufficient skills for work with them. Some teachers are not interested in technologies or are even afraid of them, which roots in inadequate education and limited knowledge about how to incorporate technologies in their courses (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, pp. 141-142). Kalibro Project (2020) data show that 42,6% of teachers struggled with insufficient knowledge in the field of IT and 33,3% of them did not have sufficient technical equipment.

Secondly, online education is not suitable for all courses. A human factor is sometimes necessary and might be missing during certain types of studies. These are, for example, courses requiring a practical approach, quick decisions, constant cooperation, or direct sharing of experience with others, constant communication, information or material objects exchange, or body language perception (Barešová, 2011, p. 45).

All the weaknesses are reinforced when too many students attend the course. In this situation it is much more difficult to observe and manage the educational process of all attendants. Communication, feedback, and the lesson itself becomes problematic. There is a disproved notion that thanks to online support more students can take part in the course while maintaining the same quality of teaching (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, pp. 141-142).

Another problem concerning both students and teachers is the dependence on technologies. E-learning users need to have permanent access to both hardware and software to

be able to use all the functions of e-learning fully. During online lesson a problem, such as lower bit rate or inability to use multimedia add-ons, might occur. These technological barriers are rather demotivating, on the other hand, they can be removed quickly as technology development is fast and its prices decrease. (Barešová, 2011, p. 44). However, it is essential for all potential students and teachers to know what computer equipment they will be required to have available (Zlámalová, 2008, p. 133). Some teachers do not even have sufficient technical equipment, which is one their great concerns (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, pp. 142-143).

Zounek and Sudický (2012, p. 141) state, that some teachers consider modern technologies useless or even school threatening because they might replace the regular face-to-face communication or create environment suitable for social pathology.

Teachers also complain about tiredness accompanying online education. Kalibro Project (2020) data show that a half of the respondents struggled with exhaustion, 38% of teachers were often exhausted during the distance learning, 7% of them felt exhausted all the time.

3.2.2 Advantages from the teacher's point of view

Online technologies might help the teacher to prepare for the lesson a lot. The Internet is full of free and ready-to-use tools, presentations, and teaching materials which can be easily distributed, updated, innovated or archived. Teachers can prepare for lessons and attach other teaching sources or reflective notes from the lesson to them (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, pp. 138-139).

There are some strengths of online education for a student as well as for a teacher. It is the fact that the information is more up to date compared to printed texts. Technologies enable constant synchronization of available information and changes are made very easily. The content then remains static. (Barešová, 2011, p. 41).

Online education also helps to increase knowledge of how to use information technology. Generally, it leads to the development of computer literacy on both sides – the student's and teacher's (Zounek, Sudický, 2012, p. 135).

4 Online education at Czech universities during the pandemic year

All levels of education in current society have been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Traditional face-to-face classes were suspended in many countries due to the fast spread of the coronavirus since March 2020 (Longhurst et al., 2020, p. 299). Universities had to start distance learning immediately. This was probably the fastest and the most globalized process in history. What people usually have been preparing for many years was performed within a few days or weeks (Černý, 2020, p. 33). Teachers had to face conversion of their classes into electronic form, change the curriculum, and adjust education to online technologies (Krátká, Zemanová, 2020, p. 249). E-learning courses seemed to be the most acceptable solution, many teachers chose synchronous education through platforms like Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Adobe Connect etc. (Fritzová, 2020, p. 257).

Czech universities created an open document containing recommendations for providing distance learning during the period of emergency measures. This document shares information concerning appropriate teaching setting strategies. It was necessary to reconsider the concept of classes, ensure optimal communication (requiring, for example, creating opportunities for interaction with students), plan educational activities, or choose proper methods and tools. This document contains recommendations from foreign universities like (Harvard, University of Sheffield) and other institutions such as UNESCO or the International Society for Technology in Education (Rohlíková, et al., 2020).

The University of West Bohemia has also contributed by making ten principles for university teachers to follow. These principles focus on possible problems that may occur when teaching online. Teachers should set rules for their classes and pass them on the students. It is necessary to prepare the materials in advance, cooperate with colleagues and share their experience. Used tools should not be changed, and students should not be overwhelmed by the large number of tasks. It is also important to give instructions on how to work with the materials. Synchronous online classes should not replace self-study. Students should be provided with forms of communication as well as online office hours. Teachers should maintain their own mental health and that of their students, consider proper rest, and be tolerant and lenient (Stará, 2020).

In April 2020 Klement, Šobáňová and Kopecký (2020) worked out some tips, recommendations, and instructions for distance learning at Palacký University Olomouc. These

recommendations include tips for offline and online communication (including LMS Unifor), advice how to work with Office applications from home, and how to teach and communicate via video conferencing (Skype, Microsoft Teams, ZOOM and Big Blue Button). In addition to LMS Unifor and LMS Moodle, the teachers were offered two other tools to choose from – Google Classroom and Seesaw. In September 2020 the University issued the procedures and rules for the implementation of online education within full-time and part-time study programs. These procedures will also be used regardless of the reason for which it is not possible to teach in person (UPOL, 2020).

Several surveys on the evaluation of education at Czech universities were carried out. For example, in May 2020 research dealing with the quality of distance education at institutes of History was created. Many Czech students considered distance learning to be sufficient but not well organized. The study showed that only 22% of education was provided through e-learning portals. The students mostly prefer synchronous methods of e-learning because of the possibility of social contact which they find the most important (Fritzová, 2020, p. 260).

Another research was done by University of Antwerp. 6 497 students from Czech universities participated in COVID-19 International Student Well-being Study. Those students felt more depressed, faced financial difficulties, had an increase in self-study which goes hand in hand with higher mental strain. More than one third of students felt lonely even though they returned home to their families. In contrast, students at universities which started online education faster and realized their classes through digital technologies did not experience so much depression and strain (Klusáček, Kudrnáčová, 2020).

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports actively dealt with the issue of impact of the pandemic on Czech university area. During June and July 2021 nearly 28 000 university students and teachers filled out a questionnaire focused on specific influences on study and living conditions. Students were highly satisfied with the readiness of the universities and with the way of communication. They also positively evaluate the overall experience of distance learning, especially the theoretical teaching. Two thirds of students admitted that the study during a pandemic was more time-consuming than in the previous period. 45% of students experienced deterioration in physical health and 55% of them noticed a deterioration of mental health. The financial situation worsened in 27% of students, 70% of students could not see any change in financial situation. The most common types of support were adjustment to study conditions, semester extension, psychological support, or arranging contact with other classmates. As for the academic staff, nearly 90% of them were satisfied with the approach of the school. Two thirds of teachers were better prepared for distance learning than at the

beginning. Over 50% rated the work of students in distance learning as worse than in the full-time form. The school supported teachers in providing technical equipment as well as in the adjustment of working conditions. However, teachers complained about the lack of psychological and financial support, appreciation of active approach or support in the field of didactics, and in the way of motivating students. The answers of the research participants show that the schools responded promptly to the crisis and tried to provide adequate study conditions in an online environment (MŠMT, 2021).

The pandemic has completely changed the educational world, which will never be the same as before. Students have already got used to different online education elements and will expect them from the university in the future. Universities are also aware of all the benefits of distance learning and their own strategic advantages (Černý, 2020, p. 42). *"Today, the pedagogical community is actively discussing the issue of the education system in the 'post-viral era'. According to the expert assessment of the HSE rector Kuzminov, there will be a total transition of University education and office work to an online format."* (Bakanova, Javorcikova, 2020, p. 7)

Practical part

5 Methodology

5.1 The research aim

The research aim of this thesis is to assess advantages and disadvantages of online education at Institute of Foreign Languages at Palacký University Olomouc during the pandemic year from the point of view of two involved groups. The first group is comprised by two teachers working at the Institute of Foreign Languages, teaching the same subject. The second group is comprised by two part-time students attending the lessons of the same subject.

5.2 Research questions

Research questions form the core of every research project. They help to focus research so that we achieve results in accordance with the research aim and they also show the way to conduct research. Research questions must be consistent with the research aim and the research problem. They represent a further narrowing and specification of the research problem (Švaříček, Šed'ová, 2014, p. 69).

In this thesis these four questions will be answered:

Question 1: What were the advantages of online education during the pandemic from the teachers' and students' point of view?

Question 2: What were the disadvantages of online education during the pandemic from the teachers' and students' point of view?

Question 3: What were the negative impacts of online education on teachers' and students' lives?

Question 4: What elements of online education have been found efficient?

5.3 Research method

For the purposes of this thesis we have chosen qualitative research. Qualitative methods are used to reveal and understand what is an essence of the phenomenon about which we do not know much yet. They can also be used to get new and unique views on phenomena we already know about. Finally, qualitative methods can help to obtain detailed information about the phenomenon which is difficult to get by quantitative methods (Strauss, Corbinová, 1999, p. 11). Gavora (2000, pp. 31-32) sees qualitative research as an opportunity for a detailed and in-depth look at the views of respondents. It is also a form of becoming closer with the respondents to understand their point of view. Finally, according to Švaříček and Šed'ová (2014) the meaning

of qualitative research is to discover and present human experience. This research is based on personal experience of the two involved groups – teachers and students.

5.4 Research limitations

The research findings of this theses are subject to the following limitation:

The researcher knows both student respondents personally and they have a good relationship. Another limiting factor is that the interviews were held in English so that individual passages could be used as citations in the research findings. As all respondents are Czech, it might have been more difficult for them to express the facts and feelings in English and their statements might have been less accurate.

5.5 Data collection

The data were collected using four structured interviews. Miovský (2006) considers interviews to be the most advantageous method of qualitative research. We tried to create a good atmosphere so that all respondents were able to feel relaxed enough which should also support their communicativeness and expression of their emotions. Švaříček and Šed'ová (2014, p. 76) state that the degree of trust and openness of the respondents very strongly influences the quality of the obtained data.

The online interviews were focused on collecting as much relevant information as possible. The information was supposed to cover teachers' and students' personal experience and feelings connected to online lessons during the pandemic year.

Groups of slightly different questions were used for the purpose of the interviews since students' and teachers' experience differ from each other and both groups of respondents play a different role in education. It was therefore necessary to adapt the question depending on the group of respondents.

The respondents were interviewed online through the MS Teams video conferencing service. This way of interviewing was used because online communication has become a regular part of students' and teachers' work and MS Teams was commonly applied during the pandemic year. We also find it very practical which is the main reason for doing the interviews online.

All respondents were open and co-operative. It was also very easy to observe signals of non-verbal communication as all respondents were using the web cameras.

At the beginning of the interviews, an informed consent to provide the interview and its subsequent use for the purposes of this thesis was signed by each respondent. All of them were informed of the intention of the research, voluntary participation and maintaining anonymity. The author of the thesis undertook that the recordings would be deleted after the interviews were processed. The sample informed consent can be found in the appendix.

All four interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcription can be found in the appendix.

5.6 Selection of respondents

The research on this thesis was carried out at The Institute of Foreign Languages at Palacký University Olomouc. The aim was to make an interview with two teachers and two part-time students. Individual times for online video calls were set. Because the interviews were extensive enough, they serve as the only source of information for the research.

5.7 Data analysis

After all data were collected, open coding method was applied to process the data. Švaříček and Šed'ová (2007, p. 211) describe the open coding method as an operation during which individual data are analysed, conceptualised and then compiled in a new way. Themes emerge that help us to answer the research questions. At first, we divide the transcribed text into units. The unit can be a word, word sequence, a sentence or a paragraph. The boundaries are made according to importance, it means that the units are of a different length. We assign a code, i.e., a name or a sign to each unit created in this way. A code can be a word or a short phrase describing a type and distinguishes it from others. According to Strauss and Corbin (1999, p. 39) the text is broken into units, these units are given names and then we continue to work with these fragments of the text.

In this case we have read all interviews carefully several times, divided them into the units and made four basic categories: advantages, disadvantages, negative impacts and efficient elements of online education. After that all these categories were divided into subcategories that are closely related. Using these subcategories we created four texts answering all research questions.

6 Answers to research questions

6.1 Advantages of online education during the pandemic from the teachers' and students' point of view

One of the things that suited the students and teachers about the online education, and which was mentioned by three out of four respondents was convenience. The fact that they were able to take part in the lessons from home was probably the greatest benefit for both sides. Students especially appreciated working from home as they did not need to travel anywhere which resulted in another benefits, for example time saving and lower costs connected to the studies which are a considerable part of study costs. *“Well, of course, I was happy that I didn't have to travel. Nevertheless, twice a month it is not a big deal for me. I don't live far from the university. I believe that those students who live further appreciated it.”* (R 3, Q 3), one of the questioned students said. Another student stated that the online lessons during the coronavirus crisis eased his situation as he did not have to arrange babysitting for his children in the days the lessons were planned from morning till evening. Naturally, this benefit is appreciated by only some of the part-time students who have their own families and the study is much more demanding for them as they have to arrange everyday logistics of their children and therefore solve the problem of babysitting in the days they spend at school morning to evening.

Thus, the convenience of online education provides students with more space for peaceful studying or preparation for work if the students are already in work. The time spent commuting from home to university and from classroom to classroom, as well as the breaks in the corridors and assembly halls full of other students can be used more effectively according to the wishes and needs of individual students.

The question of the personal convenience does not necessarily have to be understood as an advantage though. One of the students said: *“Online education also made my personal life more convenient. When I have to go to school, I also have to organize things, move somewhere, commute and so on. Many people might have found this convenient. But I considered this a disadvantage. There was no change of environment.”* (R 4, Q 3) It is clear from this statement that each respondent felt differently about the convenience and the thing that seems to be a benefit for one student might not fit another student at all.

One of the greatest benefits of online teaching is gaining digital competencies. Despite the initial displeasure of some participants in online lessons when they were forced to use digital technologies increasingly more, they gradually gained new skills. They learned, for example,

to present themselves in front of the video camera, speak into the microphone or to share various documents. Some respondents just deepened the skills they already had. *“I don’t really think I learned anything that new. The skills that I had maybe deepened. There is a wide range of skills. For example, with the camera.”* (R 1, Q 10) On the contrary, another respondent said that he was grateful for his personal growth. He learned how to use the platforms and he enjoyed discovering the ways how to make the lessons more effective and more attractive, even with the limited sources. Students and teachers alike admit that thanks to the online lessons they are now more confident when working with digital technologies and overall, we can say that the digital literacy has improved.

The interviews with the respondents also showed several other benefits of shift to online education during the pandemic. We can include these benefits in interpersonal relationships. In particular, we can include in this category the change in the communication between teachers and students. One of the teachers said that thanks to the fact the communication became more common, it also happened to become more relaxed and less formal. *“I had a better relationship with the students. I got to know them in a different way.”* (R 2, Q 6) one of the teachers said. This improvement in relationships between people implicitly stems from the replies of the other respondents who exchanged documents with each other and tried to cooperate and help each other more despite the complicated circumstances.

It is paradoxical though that online teaching might have suited to the types of students who are more introvert and do not like speaking in public. *“Some people found the online education more convenient because they don’t show much. For these introvert people it must be better. They are more active in the class.”* (R 2, Q 6), as one of the teachers evaluated the situation. For such students online teaching is very beneficial and represents a great advantage when communicating with others.

During the beginning of transferring to the online lessons it probably did not seem that this type of education could bring any advantages or benefits. As one of the teachers said though: *“Although the contact was not optimal, at least it was maintained. Thanks to online lessons we could work with the students at least indirectly, not only through sent materials. At least something.”* (R 2, Q 6) Obviously, we cannot consider this as an advantage above classic teaching. It is more the fact that there existed at least some options how to teach and the students did not lose the chance to study. One student expressed the gratitude that the online lessons enabled him to take part in the lessons even during the lockdown. That is without doubt one of the greatest benefits of this type of teaching – the possibility to take part in the lessons no matter

the inside and outside obstacles standing in the way of participants in the teaching and learning process.

6.2 Disadvantages of online education from the teachers' and students' point of view

It was clear from the interviews that the disadvantages of online teaching were perceived quite differently by individual respondents. The downside seen by the teachers was not seen by the students and vice versa which is, logically, caused by the different position of these participants in online lessons. It is, for example, the problem of time requirements which was mentioned by the teachers only. *“Overall, it was really time-consuming, a lot of effort and energy and it was really exhausting.”* (R 1, Q 6) That is an example sentence which we heard several times during the interviews. So why were online lessons so time consuming? The same respondent said that when he sent a message to a student for example, it took longer time before he reacted to it while during face-to-face communication the reply would be instant. Another teacher saw the large time consumption in the preparation for the lessons which required a different approach than preparation for classic teaching.

These teachers connect the time-consuming nature of online lessons with lower effectiveness of the teaching. *“Online education is much less efficient. It takes more time and is more demanding while there is less return.”* (R 2, Q 7), this teacher said. It was necessary to look for ways how to increase the effectiveness of the teaching. That went hand in hand with increasing the time spent on preparation for the lessons, sharing materials and tips that proved successful. One of the teachers aptly assessed the effectiveness of online teaching this way: *“I would say it is less efficient but, you know, it really depends on group of students. In the end we found a way to make it work. Some lessons were efficient enough, I think. But still, in comparison with face-to-face teaching I don't think you can really compare it. Face-to-face teaching is more efficient.”* (R 1, Q 7)

Finally, the teachers missed the feedback during the lessons. During the classic face-to-face education you can read the feedback from the facial expressions and reactions of the students. Although the students were on cameras, the teachers rarely had the chance to see them all in once and not always the students reacted to the questions of the teachers the same way as they would in the classroom. Despite the fact that not always the students used cameras and therefore it was not possible to see their reactions at all. Talking about the feedback in the form of replies, according to one of the respondents, was often done in writing because *“online*

transmission didn't allow to communicate everything and not always did the students have the right opportunity to ask, so they chatted.” (R 2, Q 4)

Contrarily, the students noticed decreasing attention and problems with concentration. *“Every student is easily distracted and is doing other things during the lessons. The attention is falling down by the screen, when the teacher is monotonous and doesn't change intonation, it's making me asleep.” (R 3, Q 3)*, one of the students admitted. If the lessons are dull and do not require students' interaction, it is very easy to find oneself doing other activities that they would not dare to do during classic lessons as another student says: *“During some classes I was doing some other activities as the teacher didn't force us to communicate. I just had the sound on and listened. I didn't have to pay attention at all.” (R 4, Q 3)* At home students are often distracted by the circumstances and let their attention drift to different activities. Naturally, one of the teachers noticed this lack of attention and tried to eliminate the problem by various motivation ways.

Moreover, the respondents admitted they missed the personal contact, both the contact students with teachers and with other students. The communication via computers becomes impersonal and brings less joy. *“One is more isolated. Face-to-face communication is much more pleasant. One reacts better when he can see the facial expressions, gestures and so on than through the camera.” (R 4, Q 2)* If online lessons as a replacement for classic lessons take longer time just like with the coronavirus crisis, the lack of personal contact becomes the vital reason for dissatisfaction and therefore it can be considered a disadvantage of online teaching. The lack of personal contact which, in the case of the respondents, led to the feeling of isolation, belongs to one of the greatest impacts on the mental condition of the online teaching participants and it is dealt with in more detail in the responses to the third research question.

Another negative aspect of online learning is dependence of a person on technical equipment which we cannot do without. Individual parts of the interviews showed that the equipment was a source of problems especially right after the shift to online lessons. The most common problem was low-quality internet connection and non-functioning individual components. Technical problems accompanied the students and the teachers alike and as one of them said, they *“make the situation much more complicated.” (R 2, Q 12)* It shows that at least at the beginning it was probably another cause of low effectiveness of online lessons as the respondents had to face many problems connected to the technical equipment. We can draw the conclusion that it was not only about these four respondents but also about many more participants in online education from the fact that the teachers spoke about students' technical problems in general.

When we look at the list of disadvantages that online education brings, it is clear that its common consequence is lower effectiveness of the education which was perceived as the weak side of the online education by all four respondents. In these cases the respondents probably meant the effectiveness of individual lessons, the chance to pass the content to the students and the ability of the students to understand the topics. The question is what the effectiveness of online education is as a result, that is if online teaching was to be implemented permanently and comparison of the level of their knowledge with the knowledge of the students attending classic lessons.

6.3 Negative impacts of online education during the pandemic year on teachers' and students' lives

The transfer to distance learning during the coronavirus pandemic in spring 2020 meant a dramatic change for teachers and students alike and it left its marks on their work, study and private lives. All four respondents described the beginning of the distant learning as an utter surprise. *“At the beginning we were all shocked.”* (R 3, Q 7), one of the respondents stated. That characterizes the newly occurring atmosphere when the standard beaten track turned instantly to distant form of education. *“Such uncertainty. One didn’t know what will come and what we will have to deal with. That was critical.”* (R 4, Q 7)

As schools switched from the classic form of education to distant form practically overnight, teachers and students had to cope with a whole scale of problems whose common denominator was unpreparedness. *“It seemed to me that there was probably no training. Everybody had to deal with it on their own”* (R 4, Q 1), one of the student respondents said. The teachers had to react very quickly to the immediate situation and change their access to the teaching completely which for them was an unprecedented challenge. It wasn’t possible to transform classic teaching methods to the distant learning for a hundred percent. *“As for the methods, obviously it was different from face-to-face classes, so I had to adjust the materials I used somehow to work with them during the online classes.”* (R 1, Q 1)

Teachers had to decide what particular form the communication with students would have and how the teaching itself would be organized. They continued naturally with communication via e-mail and they also used education system Moodle which has become established in education at Palacký University Olomouc. *“I communicated via Moodle, I can send messages via Moodle or I post information in Moodle so this is the main way but I also used emails for individual communication with students.”* (R 1, Q 3) System Moodle is also

popular with students who say that it is well arranged and reliable. *“I can find all information about each subject, submitting works and testing on Moodle. All materials are there and I’m very happy with this.”* (R 4, Q 2) The question was, though, what form the video transmissions would get in individual lessons. Several platforms were taken into consideration. As both teachers said, the school management recommended three platforms. *“I think there were several of them we could use, especially the video platforms, it means either the Big Blue Button or MS Teams or Zoom. I used Big Blue Button which can be actually accessed via Moodle”* (R 1, Q 1+2). Contrary to this, the other teacher stated: *“I used MS Teams. I looked for a platform which would allow to communicate, organize online lessons and that would allow students to submit work and collect documents. A platform that can do it clearly and efficiently.”* (R 2, Q 1) This variety of platforms proved to be a problem. One student stated that he would have preferred if all the lecturers had used the same platform. *“But what I found hard and chaotic was the transition between platforms, which were used for different classes. The platforms weren’t unified. Teacher skipped from MS Teams to Zoom or Big Blue Button and so on. So, I mean we had to find the platforms, where to access, with what password...This was all unnecessarily complicated and chaotic.”* (R 4, Q1)

Apart from the variety of the used platforms this student also felt negatively about the lack of unified rules during online lessons. That, according to him, contributed to the overall level and effectiveness of the lessons. *“At first, they didn’t set any rules for the classes. I mean, one wanted the cameras on, on didn’t. The same with the microphones. One required communication, one didn’t and he just presented something, for example. This influenced the quality of classes and the quality was different subject to subject.”* (R 4, Q 3) These different rules in individual lessons of course follow the fact that the content of the lessons at a university is significantly different with individual lecturers. As the same respondent implies, the solution would have been if the lecturers had been better prepared and trained for the situation and if there had been unified rules regarding cameras, microphones and active participation in the lessons.

As the question of technical background plays the crucial role during online lessons, during the shift to the distant learning it became clear that teachers and students alike would be facing technical problems which complicated the whole situation especially at the beginning of the distant learning period. The most important problem was low quality of internet connection. Some respondents stated that connection broke, they had to join the lesson repeatedly and some of them actually had to change internet connection provider to be sure the transmission during the lessons would be sufficient. One teacher stated: *“Because the internet connection plays very*

important part, it was usually something like cameras didn't work or the microphones didn't work. Sometimes the students couldn't connect to the platforms for some reason." (R 1, Q 5) One of the students pointed out though that these problems were gradually solved and the lessons continued more or less without any hiccups.

Although nowadays a computer or a laptop form an integral part of studies and work not only at universities, some students and teachers also had to invest in technical equipment, buy a high-quality camera, headphones or even a larger screen. *"At the very beginning, some of my lessons were conducted via chat only because for some reasons I had to conduct my lessons from my home and I didn't have the proper, you know, computer at that time at the place where I was so I could only use chat, not the video."* (R 1, Q 4) Still, the necessity to invest into high-quality equipment was understood as a plus-side by one of the respondents. He admitted that he had to invest a large amount of money into technical equipment, on the other hand though he would use it later to do his work. Another student stated in the interview that he had a computer with integrated camera and microphone but for some reason they did not work so he had to have his computer rebooted to get the camera and microphone working. That was naturally also linked to investments although these were much lower.

Apart from the initial costs related to technical equipment, some respondent also faced the issue of digital skills. *"I was surprised that some teachers were not prepared technically. We could see they had problems with the internet connection, they couldn't control the device, microphones and cameras"* (R 4, Q 10), one of the students stated. Another teacher also claimed that although the general public hold the opinion that Czech education system is not digitalized enough and the teachers fall behind students, the teachers proved they were able to learn how to move around the digital world. Of course, some had to work their way towards that goal in the course of time because as the same teacher and another student said, *"they threw us in at the deep end, and it was sink or swim."* That led naturally to the necessity to implement the distant form of education very quickly so that the students were able to continue with their studies.

In connection with shift to the distant form of learning a significant negative impact on teachers' and students' psychics appeared. The interviews showed that the mental endurance of respondents was declining in the course of time and with the poor prospects of returning to classic learning. At the beginning everybody had to get used to the new situation and to adapt to the circumstances. As the time went by, they seriously suffered from the social isolation. All four respondents claimed that the lack of social contacts was the most serious impact on their lives. One of the teachers said: *"We also felt incredibly isolated, the lack of social contact was*

terrible. We missed the students a lot. This kind of work completely depends on social contact.” (R 2, Q 6) Another lecturer mentioned that he felt the loneliness also in his private life. *“It is not only connected to online classes, of course, the overall atmosphere in the country. All those limitations, there was basically nothing to do, you couldn’t go anywhere.”* (R 1, Q 8) Apart from the lack of personal contact with the lecturers, the students missed the contact with their classmates, they had no chance to have personal discussions, neither about the issues connected to their subject itself nor about other study and personal matters. The level of loneliness was different with individual respondents but from their answers it was clear that this was the most common psychological impact of online education. As one of the students stated, *“the isolation must have been tiring for everyone.”* (R 3, Q 4)

One of the teachers felt the negative impacts of distant learning so intensively that he gradually stopped enjoying his work. He complained about the feeling of insufficient amount of work which would have been done well and also the lack of energy he did not get back. He found himself in greater and greater tension and actually started to think about changing profession. *“At the end of the year I felt I would like to quit. I was wondering whether I really wanted to stay there and continue teaching, if I was able to get over these feelings after the pandemic finishes.”* (R 2, Q 9) This teacher still has not overcome his negative feelings which he compares to the burnout syndrome. As he says, *“I’m working but I’m not enjoying it”* (R 2, Q 9)

A very common result of distant learning was exhaustion. On the side of teachers the tiredness was especially connected to the time demanded by preparation for the lessons and creating materials so that it would have been possible to use them during online lessons. Students attributed the exhaustion to long sitting in front of the computer and looking at the screen. *“I spent plenty of time by the computer. So, I needed to relax, sometimes it was just too much. I was much more tired than during traditional lessons.”* (R 3, Q 4)

The transfer to distant form of learning also left its mark on physical health of almost all the respondents. They all agreed that the main reason was minimum physical activity and long sitting in front of the computer in a non-physiological position. *“I also saw a change in my physical condition because there was a lack of exercise. There was very little exercise and it affected my health, my muscles, I put on weight.”* (R 2, Q 8), one of the teachers said. Another physical problem connected to the passive lifestyle are naturally back problems. The same teacher complained about backache that several times a year ended up in severe intensive pain because she kept sitting in the same position. Similar maladies were also mentioned by the other lecturer and one of the students who later described how he tried to prevent such problems:

“So, I put some exercise on my daily routine. I normally go running so I did every day, for an hour at least to be on fresh air and to relax a bit. Or we went for walks with our dogs.” (R 3, Q 4)

Another impact on physical health was sight deterioration, probably as a consequence of regular and long work in front of a computer screen. *“My eyesight deteriorated because I was just staring at the computer screen”* (R 2, Q 8), one of the teachers and one of the students said. These problems meant one of the greatest negative impacts on physical health as we can presume that these changes are irreversible. Other student then mentioned another unpleasant effect of the blue screen light, which was sleep deprivation. *“What really complicated by life was the problem with sleeping. Whenever we had lessons from dawn to dusk, and I spent all day at the computer screen, I couldn’t go asleep. It took a few days to make it better. And when you have online lessons every Friday, you don’t sleep at all.”* (R 4, Q 6). One of the teachers also struggled a lot with headaches.

The pandemic situation made most of the people change their lifestyle completely. This new lifestyle turned out to be mostly stereotypical and grey, all as a consequence of the distant learning. *“God knows how many hours a day at the computer. There was no change of routine. Normally, I do some work at the computer, then I go to teach in classes so the change of activities. It was like from 8 o’clock in the morning till, you know... I was teaching in the morning and the I had to prepare the materials so it was practically all day just sitting at the computer.”* (R 1, Q 6) It is clear from this answer that the teaching work which used to be lively and creative was confined into sitting by a computer and distant communication. Another student respondent mentioned that he comes from Olomouc and usually goes to school on foot which is a pleasant walk he lost because of the distant learning. *“There was no change of environment.”* (R 4, Q 3)

Finally, it is important to emphasise that during distant learning the cost of living of the teachers and students alike probably increased. This impact was mentioned by only one respondent but we can assume that it affected a lot more participants in the distant learning who connected to lessons from home, both students and teachers. *“When we were all at home, we had to heat up all the time.”* (R4, Q 3) Considering the length of the pandemic situation and the time the schools were closed, the amount of extra money that families had to spend compared to the standard situation must have been considerable.

6.4 Elements of online education that have been found efficient

Looking at research questions 1-3 we can easily deduce the probable dominance of disadvantages and impact of online education over possible benefits. In spite of that it is important to emphasise which aspects of online teaching would be possible to use in the future. As one of the teachers thinks: *“It will keep coming back. If not this kind of pandemic, there will be another one, you know. People got used to it, so I think, people expect that there will be some level amount of online communication.”* (R 1, Q 13) The question is whether this prediction will be confirmed. If so, it is suggested what elements of online teaching were successful and can be used further on.

Regarding the technical means needed for online lessons, the satisfaction with individual platforms differed greatly. One of the teachers was happy with platform Big Blue Button, another with MS Teams. One of the students was very satisfied with Zoom. Leaving aside the disunity of the platforms widely criticised by students, we can say that they all proved successful and can be used as a tool in further online education, just like system Moodle which has been working for students and teachers reliably for years as a supplement of the studies even within classic lessons.

Another interesting point to think about is the possibility of so-called hybrid teaching which was used for a certain period of time at the Institute of Foreign Languages and both students would prefer this option for their further studies. *“Some lessons can fully be substituted. Others can’t. As for learning foreign languages, it’s important to get in touch with people and the interaction. So, it’s better to work in one classroom. As for theoretical subjects, long lectures, frontal teaching and huge number of students, online lessons should be really more efficient.”* (R 4, Q 8), one of the students said. Another student would also accept this option gladly and he even admitted having been disappointed when this type of lessons finished at the Institute.

What was effective and is still used, is the possibility of online consultations. *“Now, sometimes if students ask me for a consultation, we can do it online, which I wouldn’t have done before the pandemic. Everybody came here and we talked.”* (R 1, Q 11) After the shift to online lessons both teachers and students got used to making use of the above-mentioned platforms so much that they included individual meetings in the portfolio of online options. Today it is quite common that any consultation can take place online and it appears to be an elegant and convenient solution which could be kept in the future.

Both students then state that online testing also suited them. This is clearly a quite controversial issue as somebody could object that online testing is not objective, students can cheat easily and therefore the effectiveness of the studies is threatened. One of the students claims though that *“the test can be created in the way so that the students can’t find the answer on the internet or in a textbook.”* (R 3, Q 10) It offers the possibility to do tests at home which would mean saving time and sources for the students while keeping the objectivity of testing at the same time. Another student appreciated the option of so-called “take-home-tests” which he defined as *“kind of cross-sectional questions which I can answer on my own, whenever I like and submit the answers on Moodle until the deadline. Or a test that is based on self-study that makes the student find information and work with it, then write what he or she is asked and submit it.”* (R 4, Q 9) Similar rules apply for handing in essays which was positively assessed by one of the students because it brought him the same advantages as online testing. It can be presumed though that handing in essays via e-mail or Moodle will be a part of the studies further on anyway as it was used long time before the shift to online lessons during the pandemic.

An interesting idea for further online education which is also used during classic lessons is making presentations available before the lesson itself. This possibility was mentioned by both students. *“It would have been more useful to upload the presentation beforehand, to make the content available so the students could play the presentation whenever they liked, and the lesson could have contained different things.”* (R 4, Q 3) On one hand it would mean extra work for the teacher, on the other hand students would be able to get back to the presentation during their preparation for the exam and therefore sharing such content of the lessons might contribute to the effectiveness of the teaching itself.

Recording the lectures themselves and saving them in Moodle works in a similar way. This should also be maintained as a part of studies in the future, one of the students said. As a positive side effect he states the art of self-presentation in front of the camera and other students. He claims that *“some teacher can’t present themselves and don’t give a good impression when talking on a screen. So, this could push them forward.”* (R 4, Q 9)

Regarding particular methods used during online lessons, one student appreciated using so-called break-in-rooms. *“What I liked in one lesson was that the teacher made discussing groups of students and opened the break-in rooms where we could discuss things. In each group there were three or four students talking.”* (R 4, Q 4). This method at least a little substitute for the lack of personal contact and enables the students to cooperate while solving individual tasks. At the same time, it is time saving as all the teams work at the same time.

7 Discussion

Within this bachelor thesis we investigated what advantages and disadvantages the online education introduced during the pandemic of COVID-19. We assessed the whole period of closing universities, that is from spring 2020 until the return to the classic way of teaching in autumn 2021. We concentrated my research on the complex perception of the online education situation from the view of teachers and part-time students.

The aim of this qualitative research was to learn more about the perspective of both mentioned groups about the new blanket form of online education. We also aimed at finding how the given period was perceived and what feelings they shared or did not share.

Four interviews were conducted. Two with part-time students and two with the teachers working at Institute of Foreign Languages. During these interviews all the respondents were asked a number of questions related to these research questions:

1. What were the advantages of online education during the pandemic from the teachers' and students' point of view?
2. What were the disadvantages of online education during the pandemic from the teachers' and students' point of view?
3. What were the negative impacts of online education on the teachers' and students' lives?
4. What elements of online education have been found efficient?

Open coding was later applied on the gained data. We reached specific findings at each of the research questions.

Regarding the fact that only four respondents were involved in the interviews, we cannot generalize given findings on all participants in online lessons. It would be interesting though to conduct similar research among full-time students who could perceive the online lessons differently and then compare these two studies. It implies that it could be one of the topics for further research in the field of online education at Institute of Foreign Languages at Palacký University Olomouc.

8 Findings

Although it might seem that online education offers a great number of advantages, the interviews with the teachers and the students show a different view. In the flood of disadvantages and impacts of online education during the pandemic the respondents found hardly any benefits. We can draw from the interviews that advantages of online teaching are for example:

1. Convenience, saving time and money connected to commuting.
2. Gaining digital competencies and digital literacy, professional growth on the side of the teachers.
3. Improvement of personal relationships, cooperation and helpfulness.
4. Removing the communication barrier on the side of shy and introvert students.

The possibility to get education in the place of living shows to be an undisputable advantage of online teaching. It confirms the words of Markova (2017) who considers the possibility to choose the place, time and pace of one's education one of the most important benefits of online education.

Thanks to online education teachers and students learned a lot of new skills regarding the use of technologies. The increase in digital competencies shows to be one of the advantages and it confirms the statement of Zounek and Sudický (2017) that online education might increase the knowledge in the field of digital technologies on the side of both teachers and students.

The field of personal relationships also underwent certain changes during online teaching. The respondents admitted that the shift to online lessons and the necessity to adapt quickly led, among others, to greater solidarity and cooperation. We can include this fact to the advantages of online education, to the contrary of Průcha and Míka (2000) who consider the impossibility of social skills development to be its disadvantage.

According to the research, another advantage of online education seems to be easier communication of shy students. This finding corresponds with the claims of Zounek and Sudický (2012) who state in their publication that the anonymousness of online teaching increases the self-confidence of shy students and might remove the barrier of communication face-to-face.

On the other hand, the online teaching during the coronavirus pandemic was accompanied by a large number of disadvantages that were perceived by individual respondents

as more or less serious. The most intensively perceived disadvantage of online teaching was lower effectiveness compared to classic lessons whose main reasons might be:

1. Time consuming nature of online education based on the preparation for the lessons and the time delay during the communication between teachers and students.
2. Communication problems such as lack of feedback and lack of personal contact.
3. Difficulties with keeping attention of the students at home
4. Technical problems accompanying the lessons.

Online education shows to be greatly time consuming especially regarding the teachers' preparation for the lessons. That corresponds with the claims of Kopecký (2006) that in the short-term e-learning is time consuming and the advantages appear after long time. In this case online education lasted for a year and half which probably cannot be considered a long-term use of this form of teaching.

Berge (2013) justifies the idea that online communication spreads through the whole process of distant learning and in his study he names a number of communication barriers where we can include communication barriers mentioned by the respondents, that is delays between messages and lack of social interaction.

Some of these findings are in correspondence with the statement of Zounek and Sudický (2012) who stated that the insufficient feedback might be one of the significant disadvantages of online education.

A great complication during online education were technical problems on both sides – with teachers and students alike. The impossibility to get along without technical equipment was mentioned by Barešová as one of the disadvantages of online education in her work (2011) where she claims that technical problems might be greatly demotivating for both sides of online education.

Lower effectiveness of online education perceived by all respondents is in contrast with Kopecký (2006) who says in his publication that the effectiveness of e-learning is comparable to classic education.

The negative impacts of online learning on lives of both students and teachers during the pandemic year were enormous. Some of the problems were common for more respondents no matter the role they played during distance learning. Other problems were different and these differences naturally stemmed from the status of a teacher or a student. The most common problems mentioned by the respondents were:

1. Problems connected with technical provision of the lessons, in particular the need to invest into high-quality equipment, the choice of the platform suitable for online transmissions, the

variety of the platforms used by individual teachers, adjusting teaching materials for online lessons, technical problems with internet connection and working of the individual components, then problems connected to the human factor, especially unpreparedness for the online teaching, insufficient digital skills and differences in the rules about communication and activities during online lessons.

2. Negative impacts on mental health of the respondents, in particular initial negative feelings connected to the need to adapt quickly to the newly arising situation, exhaustion, tension, frustration and especially social isolation.

3. Negative impacts on the physical health, in particular lack of physical activity, problems with the musculoskeletal system, headache, sight deterioration and sleep deprivation.

4. Negative impacts on the everyday life, in particular the change of lifestyle, stereotype and routine and increased costs of living.

It is clear that many above-described disadvantages or negative impacts of online education mingle, complement or continue with each other. The discovered categories of disadvantages and negative impacts reflect the fact that teachers and students had to leap into the online education almost overnight, without previous preparation and in some cases without any previous experience.

The necessity to solve technical provision of the lessons and technical problems accompanying online education showed to be one of the most significant negative impacts of online education for teachers and students. These findings correspond with the findings of Dabaj (2011) considering technical problems that represent technical barriers of online education. The issue of insufficient digital skills was discovered by Kalibro project (2020) which says that 42,6% of teachers didn't have sufficient skills to use digital technologies.

Some of the findings endorse the study of Halupa (2016) which says that excessive use of technologies might lead to a variety of physical and mental problems, several of which have been mentioned by the respondents. The findings are also partly consistent with the research into the impacts of the pandemic on Czech universities done in June and July 2021 which says that 45% of students noticed the decrease in physical health, 55% of students experienced decrease in mental health. The social isolation is also mentioned in the work of Ali, Uppal and Gulliver (2018) as one of 68 barriers that negatively influence e-learning. Exhaustion as a negative impact of online education was also proven by Kalibro project (2020) which states that during online education 38% of teachers were often exhausted and 7% felt exhausted all the time.

Despite the great number of disadvantages and negative impacts of online education on the lives of teachers and students it was possible to find elements that proved successful and can be used further on, either during classic education or in case of another closing of schools. These elements can be divided into several categories:

1. Elements that proved useful and can be used in case of another closing of schools and following shift to online education, that is platforms MS Teams, Big Blue Button and Zoom to lead online lessons, using “break-in rooms” during online lessons.
2. Elements that proved useful and are still used to teachers’ and students’ satisfaction even after re-opening of schools, that is platforms MS Teams, Big Blue Button and Zoom for possible online consultations, system Moodle for communication between teachers and students, sharing tests and works, online testing, recording the lectures and their further saving in Moodle.
3. Elements that proved useful and teachers and students would like to use them further, that is hybrid education (theoretical subjects with large number of participants online, seminars attended personally).
4. Elements that were not used during online education but could be an idea for implementing them in classic education, that is sharing presentations before the lesson itself.

This research brings interesting findings that can be inspirational for following research in this field and also useful for mutual comparing to similar studies in other departments or universities.

Conclusion

During spring 2020 not only students and teachers had the opportunity to observe the form of widespread distance learning and to notice the effects that this form of education had on its participants. Online education has become one of the main subjects for debates and an interesting topic for research at all levels of education system.

This thesis is aimed at online education at Institute of Foreign Languages at Palacký University Olomouc. It consists of the theoretical and the practical part. In the theoretical part the terms such as e-learning, online education and its forms are defined, and the history of online education is briefly outlined. Another chapter deals with the participants in online education and some of advantages and disadvantages of online education. The last chapter focuses on the situation at Czech universities during the pandemic and the necessary measures that had to be taken.

The aim of this thesis was to assess the advantages and disadvantages of online education at Institute of Foreign Languages at Palacký University Olomouc from the teachers' and students' point of view. To do this, qualitative research was carried out. In this research we tried to get as much information as possible about how both teachers and students experienced this difficult period. During the interviews we tried to achieve a friendly atmosphere so that all respondents, consisting of two teachers and two part-time students, were able to talk about the whole process of online education during the pandemic openly and in a relaxed way. We tried to get as many interesting observations associated with this period as possible. The findings were finally compared with information from previous research and publications mentioned in the theoretical part. Some findings confirm the claims of the experts, some do not.

The interviews were transcribed and coded and the resulting categories were used to answer the research questions. The research led to several conclusions. Firstly, it was generally hard for the respondents to find any advantages of online education. The respondents tended to highlight the disadvantages of online education and give them more weight over the benefits. Secondly, online education during the pandemic was accompanied by a significant number of negative impacts on the lives of its participants, some of which the participants are still dealing with. Online education thus placed a great burden on the respondents, who would not like to return to this form of education to the same extent as in the pandemic. Nevertheless, we have managed to find some elements of online education that have been found efficient and might be used in the future.

This research provides a detailed insight into the issues of online education in terms of its advantages and disadvantages. The research findings might be used both in planning further online education, which can be expected in the future, and in preventing problems connected to online education so that it becomes even more efficient.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|---|------------|
| R | respondent |
| Q | question |

Appendix

Respondent 1 (teacher)

1. What platforms, tools and methods did you used for the classes during the pandemic year?

Well, we have Moodle, so I used Moodle and as for the video platforms I used Big Blue Button which can be actually accessed via Moodle. I don't think I used anything else. As for the methods, obviously it was different from face-to-face classes so I had to adjust the materials I used somehow to work with them during the online classes.

2. Were the platforms and tools unified for all the teachers?

I don't think so because there was a number of platforms that were recommended to us by the management of the faculty and the university, I think there were several of them we could use, especially the video platforms, it means either the Big Blue Button or MS Teams or Zoom. And as far as I know different teachers used different platforms.

3. How did you communicate with your students?

I communicated via Moodle, I can send messages via Moodle or I post information in Moodle so this is the main way but I also used emails for individual communication with students.

4. Do you think that the communication changed as for the formality, frequency?

It definitely changed but, you know, I can't pinpoint the exact way in which it changed, I would have to think about it more. Well, it was more complicated because it was not face-to-face so definitely everything took more time cause when you send a message, it takes more time for people to react to it. I'm just thinking...during the online lessons we used chat for communication, you know. At the very beginning, like autumn 2020, some of my lessons were conducted via chat only because for some reasons I had to conduct my lessons from my home and I didn't have the proper, you know, computer at that time at the place where I was so I could only use chat, not the video. So, I had a few lessons that were only a chatting with students. But later when it got better it was a combination of, you know, talking and, of course, sometimes the students had technical problems, so they replied via chat only, they couldn't switch on their microphones, for example.

5. Could you describe the beginnings of online education during the pandemic? What problems did you have to face?

I think, the technical problems, obviously. Because the internet connection plays very important part, it was usually something like cameras didn't work or the microphones didn't work. Sometimes the students couldn't connect to the platforms for some reason. But I think it was mostly, you know, besides the technical problems, I think it was the process of getting used to it. So, once me and the students got used to new procedures of our lessons, I think it was OK. The winter semester of 2020 was the most difficult one.

6. How would you assess online education during the pandemic?

Personally, I don't see any advantages. I would really have to think hard to find any. Everything takes more time, it's more exhausting than face-to-face lessons but you know maybe I could have my own lessons from home, sometimes it was more convenient. But if I had to choose, I wouldn't choose online classes.

Overall, it was really time-consuming, a lot of effort and energy and it was really exhausting. You have to really think about the materials that you use and how to use them in the lessons, also the communication with the students during the lessons and outside the lessons. There is still something missing. And also giving feedbacks to students, it is more difficult.

There's also, you know, this feeling of loneliness, basically, because you are sitting in front of the computer screen and you don't really see the people even if you see the faces, I still don't think it's as personal as when you see people in the classroom. In many respects it was really exhausting experience. Also physical health, because it's just sitting, God knows how many hours a day at the computer. There was no change of routine. Normally, I do some work at the computer, then I go to teach in classes so the change of activities. It was like from 8 o'clock in the morning till, you know... I was teaching in the morning and the I had to prepare the materials so it was practically all day just sitting at the computer, so I had backaches, also headaches.

7. Compare online lessons and traditional classes. Are online lessons more efficient than traditional ones from your point of view?

I would say less efficient but, you know, it really depends on group of students. In the end we found a way to make it work. Some lessons were efficient enough, I think. But still, in comparison with face-to-face teaching I don't think you can really compare it. Face-to-face teaching is more efficient.

8. How did you feel during the pandemic year as for distance learning?

The feeling of isolation. It is not only connected to online classes, of course, the overall atmosphere in the country. All those limitations, there was basically nothing to do, you couldn't go anywhere. Everything was restricted, this kind of isolation.

9. Have your feelings changed?

Well, you feel more ready, if anything like that happens again. Actually, I don't like using online technology and computers, although I have to and I am pretty efficient, I think I have a sort of a talent for that but I don't like it personally. It forced me to use it. For example, I don't like being on a camera. I wouldn't have done it before the pandemic. But if you really forced me, I would just avoid it. But now it becomes more natural. I still don't like it much but know I can do it.

10. What kind of skills did you get?

I don't really think I learned anything that new. The skills that I had maybe deepened. There is a wide range of skills. For example, with the camera. You know, operating the video platforms is not really problem for me, I learn quickly. If I don't have to, I try to avoid it.

11. Would you like to continue teaching online?

If it is not necessary, I wouldn't. But even before pandemic, I think, what we do, our department and I personally, because I use a combination, I use Moodle for my courses, whether they are for the part-time students or full-time students, I use it as a platform, as a way of communicating with the students anyway. So, partially we are online. Now, sometimes if students ask me for a consultation, we can do it online, which I wouldn't have done before the pandemic. Everybody came here and we talked.

12. What elements of online education should be kept?

I can't put it into words. Basically, I went back to what it was like before the pandemic, I use the online meetings for purposes I didn't use before. But I'm not sure if something from it should be kept. Personally, I see rather the disadvantages of online communication. It always works better, if you see a person face-to-face, whatever it is. Of course, it is convenient if you have to have a meeting with somebody who is in Spain, now I'm talking about work, not teaching. But still, even those meeting would be more efficient if we could meet and sit at one table.

13. Is there anything you would like to add?

I would like to hope that we will not need it but I don't think it is possible. It will keep coming back. If not this kind of pandemic, there will be another one, you know. People got used to it, so I think, people expect that there will be some level amount of online communication.

Respondent 2 (teacher)

1. What platforms and tools did you use for online lessons during the pandemic year?

I used MS Teams. I looked for a platform which would allow to communicate, organize online lessons and that would allow students to submit work and collect documents. A platform that can do it clearly and efficiently.

2. Were the tools and platforms unified for all teachers?

We could choose from three options, three platforms. That was MS Teams, Big Blue Button or Zoom.

3. How did you communicate with the students?

With the students we communicated via emails mostly. Then Through MS Teams, via chat on MS Teams. There is the option to assess and comment them through “zadání” or “assignment”.

4. Did the communication change?

Yes. It was less formal I suppose, because it was more frequent. And because the online broadcasting didn't allow to communicate everything and not always did the students have the right opportunity to ask, so they chatted. The relationship was less formal afterwards. Also the fact that the contact is less formal might lead to keep their attention and motivate them.

5. Can you describe the beginning of online education during the pandemic year? What problems did you have to face?

At the very beginning nobody knew how long it would last, they threw us in at the deep end. At first, we only communicated with students in written form, through email and we would send them materials. And we had the materials sent back to us the same way. Later we were looking for the possibility of online broadcasting and the best platform that would serve its purpose, allows the broadcasting for the whole group of students and communication with them. And the platform shouldn't be too difficult, but easy to use, so that everybody could use it. It should be free and safe. We were looking for the best environment that would be safe enough. Later we had to face another problem. We had to change the methods because the existing ones couldn't transform hundred per cent the traditional classes into the distance ones. So, it was necessary to change the methods and forms, that was a great challenge. It was impossible to use most of the materials we had been using. You have to learn to use the new environment as you go along... We had to look for the tools that would help the student learn and understand the content.

Another problem was with the device. Not every student and teacher had the proper equipment which allowed active participation. They didn't have microphones, for instance. Or the earphones or proper internet connection.

And it was almost impossible to provide objective testing. Sometimes the students got disconnected during the test. We had to solve the problems, be online during the whole time of testing and so on.

6. Can you assess online education during the pandemic year?

The best thing about it was the fact, that, although the contact was not optimal, at least it was maintained. Thanks to online lessons we could work with the students at least indirectly, not only through sent materials. At least something. We could orally explain what the students didn't understand and accompany the curriculum in another way.

Another advantage was that all teachers had to learn to use technologies. Because the education is said to be poor at using technologies. That teachers keep falling behind students. And the teachers had to learn quickly and they did it. They suddenly showed that they are able to use digital technologies. They acquired certain digital skills. So did the students. When I learned to use the platform, I invented the new ways of groupworks, and the ways of making the classes more efficient and attractive, although we were limited by tools.

It is very difficult as for preparing for the classes. We also felt incredibly isolated, the lack of social contact was terrible. We missed the students a lot. This kind of work completely depends on social contact. When the teacher invests great energy, time and effort, and it isn't coming back, it is frustrating. And the feeling of job well done is missing.

Online education was more time-consuming. This was a great disadvantage. Everything took longer and was less efficient. So, we were still looking for some way of making it more efficient.

I also missed the immediate feedback. So, the energy didn't come back. This resulted in great discomfort. The feeling that I wasn't enjoying the job any more prevailed. As it was going on and on, I started to think about a career change.

But one more disadvantage – the students cooperated more.

And I had a better relationship with the students. I got to know them in a different way. Some people found the online education more convenient because they don't show much. For these introvert people it must be better. They are more active in the class.

7. Can you compare efficiency of online education and traditional one? Is online education more efficient?

Online education is much less efficient. It takes more time and is more demanding while there is less return. On the other hand, there are certain elements that might increase the efficiency and that the students enjoyed. These elements proved and we continue using them.

8. How did online education affect your life?

Mental discomfort, I also saw a change in my physical condition because there was a lack of exercise. There was very little exercise and it affected my health, my muscles, I put on weight. My eyesight deteriorated because I was just staring at the computer screen. Several times a year I had lumbago because I was sitting in the same unhealthy position for a long time every day. There was no physical activity not only because everything was closed down but also because the online education was so time-consuming.

9. How did you feel during the online education?

I felt discomfort. It was exhausting and I was running out of energy. At the end of the year I felt I would like to quit. I was wondering whether I really wanted to stay there and continue teaching or not, if I was able to get over these feelings after the pandemic finishes. I still don't feel like overcoming it, I sometimes feel burned out. I had never felt this before. I'm working but I'm not enjoying it.

10. Have your feelings changed?

I'm still exhausted. I can still feel the consequences of the pandemic year. So, I'm very happy we returned to traditional classes.

11. What elements of online education should be kept?

Online education has brought something beneficial, such as digital development and some of its elements could be kept and used in the future. Some classes could be conducted online. What was working should be kept.

12. Would you like to continue in online lessons?

No. I didn't have the right feedback. And all those technical problems, they make the situation much more complicated. It was all tough and I don't even think the students would like to continue like this. I can remember the first day we met after online education finished and we met face-to-face. I could see from their faces they were really excited that they could come at last.

So, no, I would hate to continue online teaching.

Respondent 3 (student)

1. Can you describe the beginnings of online education during the pandemic year? What problems did you have to face?

As a student I didn't have any serious problems. But, for example, there was a problem with the number of students during the lectures. Because when there were 70 students, or nearly 100, it was hard to get a word. The lecture would have taken much more time if everybody had wanted to say something. It must have been really hard for the teachers to give equal opportunity for everybody to express themselves. In some lessons we could express ourselves in a chat and this seemed to me sufficient. I can't complain about the teachers at all. They really did their best.

And my attention. It was declining during the online lessons. It always happens when working on a computer.

During our first online lesson I found that the camera and microphone wasn't working. I didn't know why. But I hadn't used it for some time before. So, I had it repaired. They did something with it and it started working. So, these technical things at the beginning.

Maybe the internet connection. Sometimes it disconnected. But the mistake was usually on my side as I had a bad internet supplier. But I solved this problem quickly, I changed the supplier. Once there was a technical problem, we couldn't connect with the teacher. It was at the very beginning. Everything was completely new.

2. How did you communicate with the teachers?

I would say the same way as during the traditional classes. Whatever the problem appeared during the lesson, we could ask the teacher either immediately or later.

As for the platforms, we communicated via MS Teams, Big Blue Button or Zoom which I found the best, personally.

And we spoke on camera. We could turn it off for most of the time. And when we were asked to speak, we would turn it on. The same was with the microphone.

3. Can you assess online education during the pandemic?

Well, of course, I was happy that I didn't have to travel. Nevertheless, twice a month it is not a big deal for me. I don't live far from the university. I believe that those students who live further appreciated it. And the time savings. For me, personally, I wouldn't mind if we continue learning online as for pedagogical subjects. But the subjects in English, it seems to me that the interaction is justified. The online lesson was different. It was less interesting and varied. And the teacher couldn't draw us in the topic. This was worse during online lessons. Then every student is easily distracted and is doing other things during the lessons. The attention

is falling down by the screen, when the teacher is monotonous and doesn't change intonation, it's making me asleep. I must admit, I once fell asleep.

4. How did online education affect your life?

I spent plenty of time by the computer, so my eyesight might have deteriorated, as well as my back which hurt me a lot. So, I needed to relax, sometimes it was just too much. I was much more tired than during traditional lessons. And I felt much lonelier. I have kinds, at least, so it was a bit more fun. But what I hated was the isolation. So, I put some exercise on my daily routine. I normally go running so I did every day, for an hour at least to be on fresh air and to relax a bit. Or we went for walks with our dogs. I can't imagine to be at home all the time. I could spend some time in the garden. But the isolation must have been tiring for everyone.

5. What skills did you get?

We learned to work with all those platforms, definitely. At the beginning it was completely new but once we got used to it, we took it for granted. We also learned to share online documents. There has been an improvement as for the digital competences. But I have been used to using digital technologies in my own teaching. So, the teachers are more confident now, probably.

6. Could you compare online education and traditional classes? Are online lessons more efficient than traditional ones from your point of view?

It is definitely less efficient. No gadget can replace an enthusiastic teacher who finds his job fulfilling, enjoys it and has art to sell it. And the mutual interaction of students and teachers or interaction between students can't be replaced by online lessons.

7. How did you feel during the pandemic year as for distance learning?

At the beginning we were all shocked. During the pandemic year I was very tired, exhausted. I missed the contact with the teachers and classmates.

8. Have your feelings changed?

I am very happy that I can go to school again. Now I realize how terrible it was. The negative feelings till prevail over the positive ones.

9. Would you like to continue learning online?

I can imagine learning online in some cases. In the future, for example, some subjects or lessons could be done online. I wouldn't mind that. Those pedagogical subjects could be conducted online. Those with a lot of students participating and it is a lecture. In the subjects where there were fewer of us and we needed to cooperate, online lessons are much less efficient. But for some classmates online education must have been cheaper. Each journey to Olomouc costs them a lot, as far I know.

10. What elements of online education should be kept?

As for small groups where students do “role plays” activities or “a microteacher”, for example, it is necessary to go to school. I would also do better as for planning the timetable. If a student has a 90-minute lesson only or two lessons in a row, and there is no exam or “microteaching”, there is no reason for students, especially the part-time students, going there from my point of view. If the day is full of lessons, from the morning till the evening, it is obvious that we must go there.

The university should leave the teachers free to decide whether it’s necessary for the students to come or to conduct the lessons online. Or the education could be done as a combination of online and traditional lesson. Recently, I suggested an online lesson and the teacher rejected as there is no reason for online lessons so it must be conducted in a traditional way. I presume it could have been online. Back then we had some presentations, but it is possible to share it online. And it was a 90-minute lesson so needn’t have gone to school, it would have been less time-consuming. The teacher said it had been rejected at their Institute. The teacher should be left free in this. Or they should have the option to conduct the education as a combination of online and traditional education. Now we have the experience, and we know that online lesson is always possible. So, I find it a nonsense to insist on traditional lessons in every case. We should learn the lessons for the future.

And then online testing could be kept. The test can be created in the way so that the students can’t find the answer on the internet or in a textbook.

Or submitting essays online is perfect, no one must travel anywhere. But we have been doing this for years.

But the traditional education is much better, anyway.

Respondent 4 (student)

1. Can you describe the beginnings of online education during the pandemic? What problems did you face?

Well, the very beginnings didn't really surprise me. I was technically prepared. But the other circumstances were much more complicated than transition to online education itself. Online education made my situation easier cause I didn't have to go to school, I didn't have to get babysitting. As for technical equipment, I had it at my disposal. But what I found hard and chaotic was the transition between platforms, which were used for different classes. The platforms weren't unified. Teacher skipped from MS Teams to Zoom or Big Blue Button and so on. So, I mean we had to find the platforms, where to access, with what password... This was all unnecessarily complicated and chaotic. But it all worked out over time when university set some rules. Everybody learned to work with the platforms, each of them has different settings and is operated differently. So, this technical background, it seemed to me that there was probably no training. Everybody had to deal with it on their own.

2. How did you communicate with the teachers?

I'm not used to getting in touch with the teachers out of class. For me, personally... I can find all information about each subject, submitting works and testing on Moodle. All materials are there and I'm very happy with this. And when I needed the teacher to specify and explain something to me, I had the opportunity to ask him directly in the chat or on my microphone during the online class. But I contacted them minimally. I didn't feel there was less availability to get some information than before the pandemic.

But what I missed was the personal contact, one is more isolated. Face-to-face communication is much more pleasant. One reacts better when he can see the facial expressions, gestures and so on than through the camera. There was greater distance between us and the teachers. But I missed my classmates even more than the teachers. Online education doesn't enable to discuss things, about the subject itself or other issues. I missed it a lot.

3. Could you assess online education during the pandemic?

Well, I missed the contact with the others. And the teachers' approach at the beginning worried me. They were not prepared at all. I know, they were thrown in at the deep end, and it was sink or swim. But I like well organized work. I missed some structure during the lesson. At first, they didn't set any rules for the classes. I mean, one wanted the cameras on, one didn't. The same with the microphones. One required communication, one didn't and he just presented something, for example. This influenced the quality of classes and the quality was different subject to subject. Maybe some rules were up to the teachers but it could have been unified.

During some classes I was doing some other activities as the teacher didn't force us to communicate. I just had the sound on and listened. I didn't have to pay attention at all. This is a pity. Maybe it would have been more useful to upload the presentation beforehand, to make the content available so the students could play the presentation whenever they liked, and the lesson could have contained different things.

Online education also made my personal life more convenient. When I have to go to school, I also have to organize things, move somewhere, commute and so on. Many people might have found this convenient. But I considered this a disadvantage. There was no change of environment. Working from home seduced me to other activities. I get easily distracted. At school I concentrate and perform better.

Online education is less time-consuming. It gave me space for study and getting ready for work. I had a better opportunity to study. But I can mainly see those disadvantages. Of course, when there is no other way out, this is an acceptable alternative to traditional classes. Also, our housing costs increased. When we were all at home, we had to heat up all the time.

But generally, online education enabled to participate the lessons during the lockdown, whatever the health condition. I was happy we could do it like that and the university arranged it so quickly.

4. Can you compare online and traditional education? Is online education more efficient than traditional education?

It depends on the subject. Some of them were fully substitutable, so online education was efficient enough, I'm convinced. And during some lesson I missed the interaction a lot. I missed the team and the collective activities. What I liked in one lesson was that the teacher made discussing groups of students and opened the break-in rooms where we could discuss things. In each group there were three or four students talking. And the contact was fully compensated. It's a pity we didn't have the same opportunity in other lessons. Maybe the problem lies in the lack of skills in technology. Technologies offer these opportunities and some teacher can't make use of it.

5. What skills did you get?

I learned to use technologies better. And I learned to speak on a camera, on a computer. I have been using microphones for some meetings in my job but without the camera. This was new for me.

6. How did online education affect your life?

The impacts were not so huge. I missed the contact with the others but there was nothing else that somehow destroy my lifestyle. It was easy for me to adapt. But because I'm from Olomouc and I walk to school, I lost the morning walk.

But what really complicated by life was the problem with sleeping. Whenever we had lessons from dawn to dusk, and I spent all day at the computer screen, I couldn't go asleep. It took a few days to make it better. And when you have online lessons every Friday, you don't sleep at all.

7. Can you describe your feelings during the pandemic year as for online education?

Such uncertainty. One didn't know what will come and what we would have to deal with. That was critical at the beginning. People might have got used to it, I guess. We might take it as a new reality now. Such situations might occur again. It's all just about making some rules. Then one adapts better in case of another lockdown. The mental strain was the hardest.

8. Would you like to continue in online education?

As I said, some lessons can fully be substituted. Others can't. As for learning foreign languages, it's important to get in touch with people and the interaction. So, it's better to work in one classroom. As for theoretical subjects, long lectures, frontal teaching and huge number of students, online lessons should be really more efficient.

9. What elements of online lessons could be kept in the future?

For example, online testing. Time setting and speaking on cameras when taking a test was quite unpleasant but on the other hand, it was almost impossible to cheat. So online testing could continue. I also find take-home test convenient. It means, kind of cross-sectional questions which I can answer on my own, whenever I like and submit the answers on Moodle until the deadline. Or a test that is based on self-study that makes the student find information and work with it, then write what he or she is asked and submit it.

OK and recording presentations should be a part of the usual study. For repeated listening and self-study but also as a side effect of self-presenting on a camera. Not only for a student but also for a teacher it could be really useful to see what he or she looks and sound like on a camera. Because some teacher can't present themselves and don't give a good impression when talking on a screen. So, this could push them forward.

10. Would you like to say anything else?

I was surprised that some teachers were not prepared technically. We could see they had problems with the internet connection, they couldn't control the device, microphones and cameras. That their employer hadn't got them ready. They could have been trained better. This could have been done better.

Informovaný souhlas s poskytnutím výzkumného rozhovoru a jeho následným využitím pro účely bakalářské práce Online výuka na Ústavu cizích jazyků Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci

Podpisem vyjadřuji souhlas s následujícími body:

1. Byl/a jsem informován/a o účelu rozhovoru, kterým je sběr dat pro potřeby výzkumu bakalářské práce Mgr. Silvie Kuchařové s názvem Online výuka na Ústavu cizích jazyků Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci.
2. Bylo mi sděleno, jak dlouhý bude rozhovor a jaký bude mít průběh. Jsem seznámen/a s právem odmítnout odpovědět na jakoukoli otázku.
3. Souhlasím s nahráváním rozhovoru a jeho následným zpracováním. Zvukový záznam rozhovoru nebude poskytnut třetím stranám a po přepsání bude vymazán. Transkripce bude součástí bakalářské práce. Souhlasím s tím, že části rozhovoru mohou být citovány v textu práce, který bude volně dostupný online.
4. Byl/a jsem obeznámena s tím, jakým způsobem bude s rozhovory nakládáno a jakým způsobem bude zajištěna anonymita respondentů. Nikde nebude uvedeno moje jméno či jiné osobní údaje, díky kterým bych mohl/a být identifikován/a.

Datum:

Podpis respondenta:

Podpis výzkumníka:

ANNOTATION

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Jméno a příjmení: | Mgr. Silvie Kuchařová |
| Katedra: | Ústav cizích jazyků |
| Vedoucí práce: | Mgr. Barbora Bačíková |
| Rok obhajoby: | 2022 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Název práce: | Online výuka na Ústavu cizích jazyků Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci |
| Název v angličtině: | Online Education at Institute of Foreign Languages at Palacký University Olomouc |
| Anotace práce: | Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá online výukou na Institutu cizích jazyků Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci. Hlavním cílem je zhodnotit online výuku v době pandemie COVID-19 po uzavření škol co do výhod a nevýhod z úhlu pohledu zúčastněných vyučujících a studentů. |
| Klíčová slova: | Online vzdělávání, e-learning, digitální technologie, internet, pandemie COVID-19, účastníci, univerzita, výhody, nevýhody |
| Anotace v angličtině: | This bachelor thesis deals with online education at Institute of Foreign Languages at Palacký University Olomouc. The aim is to assess online education in the COVID-19 pandemic as for advantages and disadvantages from teachers' and students' point of view. |
| Klíčová slova v angličtině: | Online education, e-learning, digital technologies, internet, COVID-19 pandemic, participants, university, advantages, disadvantages |
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