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Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání completus

**English lessons during the COVID-19 pandemic at
two selected Czech lower secondary schools**

Prohlášení:

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen prameny uvedené v seznamu literatury.

V Olomouci

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List of abbreviations

EFL teacher	English as a Foreign Language teacher
PES	Protiepidemický Systém České republiky (Anti-epidemic System of the Czech Republic)
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Abstract

The aim of this bachelor's thesis is to explore the opinion of two EFL teachers towards English lessons during the COVID-19 pandemic. The theoretical part of the thesis includes a definition of the key terms concerning online learning, a brief chapter about the history of online learning, and a chapter describing the pandemic situation and online learning in the Czech Republic and other countries. The practical part of the thesis introduces the selected research method and analyses two semi-structured interviews conducted with EFL teachers. The opinions of the two teachers were not significantly different and their experience mostly matched. However, the results of the analysis are specific for the two EFL teachers and cannot be generalized.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in 2020 brought unexpected challenges to the whole world. Education was one of the fields that had to accommodate greatly to the new situation. Since it was not possible for teachers to educate their students face-to-face, all learning had to be moved to an online environment and teachers taught their students remotely in the form of online learning. This bachelor thesis deals with the comparison of English lessons and the experience of the teachers that teach English as a foreign language (further referred to as EFL teachers) in two selected lower secondary schools. The schools switched between face-to-face and online learning based on the current situation. This thesis focuses on the period between September 2020 and June 2021, as that was the school year in which education was mostly completed online in the two selected lower secondary schools.

The theoretical part of the thesis identifies the key terms, advantages and disadvantages of online learning, the crucial differences between similar terms, and specifies how the events in the school year 2020/2021 went. Lastly, there is a comparison of the online learning in other countries and comparison of studies regarding the same topic.

In the practical part, the thesis explores online English lessons through the lens of two EFL teachers from different schools. The teachers' view of the online environment seems to be just as important as other fields of research in education (Sari, Nayir, 2020). It can reveal interesting findings and show what is their stance on the topic. This study concentrates mostly on the teachers' personal views but also compares the two teachers' teaching methods and materials they used in the English lessons.

Furthermore, the practical part offers description of the chosen research method and the reasons for choosing it. Next, the analytical part reveals the findings from the two interviews, and in the thematic units compares the two teachers' stances and answers the predefined research questions.

The issue this thesis deals with is quite new, and despite having number of studies on this topic already, less explored areas still exist in this field. In addition, the author hopes to gain personal advantage by dealing with this topic, as there is possibility that online learning will become a permanent part of education.

Theoretical part

1. Key terms

Probably the most widely used and known term for this new situation of students staying home and accessing the classes online is “distance learning”. However, there are more terms in this category that originated from the term distance learning. There is distance learning, but also online learning, e-Learning, virtual learning, or online collaborative learning (Moore et al., 2011). These terms may all sound alike, but the definitions of these terms include nuances that slightly shift the meaning of each of the term. That means that these terms are not synonymous but rather describe different types of learning outside of the traditional classroom. To understand this issue, it is necessary to be familiar with the first three terms mentioned.

1.1 Distance learning

During the COVID-19 outbreak, distance learning was the first form of remote learning that was used in the spring of 2020 when the country was under general quarantine (MZČR, 2020). Shelley, as cited in White (2003), understands the term distance learning as:

“(...) an educational system in which learners can study in a flexible manner in their own time, at the pace of their choice and without requiring face-to-face contact with a teacher” (Shelley, as cited in White, 2003, p. 11).

Another definition, that is rather similar, is by Roffe, as cited in Kentnor (2015):

“Distance education is defined as a method of teaching where the student and teacher are physically separated. It can utilize a combination of technologies, including correspondence, audio, video, computer, and the Internet.” (Roffe, as cited in Kentnor, 2015, p. 22).

The first differentiator of distance learning is an asynchronous form of interaction; the educator and the student do not interact in real time, but rather in form of letters, e-mails, discussion boards (Curtain, 2002). As the name of the term suggests, one of the main aspects of distance learning is the physical distance itself. As previously mentioned, it is a flexible form of learning, as students can choose their own pace for studying and adapt it to suit their schedules. It is essentially a self-study option. If needed, students can contact the tutor and vice versa and interact with each other in real time. Generally, the educator is not as involved in the learning

process itself, however, educators are still essential, as they review the students' work and test them on their knowledge (White, 2004).

Distance learning is used less nowadays, as it is being replaced with the more convenient online learning:

“Today’s version of distance education is online education, which uses computers and the Internet as the delivery mechanism with at least 80% of the course content delivered online” (Allen & Seaman; Shelton & Saltsman, as cited in Kentnor, 2015, p. 22).

This quote explains that distance learning was a predecessor of online learning, which is a medium used more frequently in the recent years. There would not be online learning without the distance learning form first.

1.2 Online learning

Maddison et. al (2017, p. 13) define online learning as an “(...) instruction that is delivered electronically through various multimedia and Internet platforms and applications” (Maddison et al. 2017, p. 13).

Singh and Thurman (2019) propose three definitions of online learning, with one of them being:

“Online education is defined as education being delivered in an online environment through the use of the Internet for teaching and learning. This includes online learning on the part of the students that is not dependent on their physical or virtual co-location. The teaching content is delivered online, and the instructors develop teaching modules that enhance learning and interactivity in the synchronous or asynchronous environment” (Singh, Thurman, 2019, p. 302).

Probably the most frequent element that is repeated in most definitions is that there is a type of technology needed for learning to be described as online learning. Technology is the medium that enables learners to gain access to the materials and to interact with their educator/instructor. The Internet is the learning environment in this case. Another important element to online learning is time – unlike distance learning, it usually takes place synchronously through online video meetings, or group chats (Singh, Thurman, 2019). However, as mentioned above,

the learning process does not have to be always synchronous. Still, it is the most common definition.

Lastly, it is important to mention that the student and the educator almost never meet face-to-face, and all learning takes place virtually in the online environment, whereas with distance learning, the educator meets with the student on a regular basis; the educator gives the student new materials, and they can consult results in a specific area, or the student's progress in general.

1.3 E-learning

E-learning can be understood as an online learning support. Other forms of learning, such as distance or online learning, utilize computers, multimedia technologies, and the Internet as a supportive element and this process can be defined as “e-learning” (Eger, 2004). Basak et al. (2018) define e-learning similarly as Eger:

“E-learning is the use of Internet technologies that can provide a wide range of solutions to enhance knowledge and performance. It facilitates and enhances the learning through and based on the computer and communication technology” (Basak et al., 2018, p. 196).

Thus, e-learning does not stand on its own as a form of education, but rather as an aid, or a process of utilizing the digital tools.

However, Nazim and Mukherjee (2016) define e-learning as “a modern form of distance education, in which training or educational material is delivered via the Internet or an intranet to remote learners” (Nazim, Mukherjee, 2016, p. 136). This reveals that some definitions view the terms “online learning” and “e-learning” interchangeably. Still, there is a difference between the two terms.

Interestingly, a study by Singh and Thurman (2019) found that the term e-learning “was used in 11 publications when defining online learning” (Singh, Thurman, 2019, p. 293). This only further confirms the suggestion that online learning leans on the support of e-learning and that the two terms are closely tied together.

1.4 Difference between distance learning and online learning

Benson (2002) suggests that online learning is a modernized version of distance learning. The concept might be confusing at first: as already mentioned, distance learning can take place

synchronously or asynchronously, with or without the use of technology, and the location of the educator and the student is different. Online learning usually takes place synchronously (but it can be asynchronous as well), with the use of technology.

The definitions are not drastically different, however, since it is more common (and convenient) nowadays to use online learning rather than distance learning, and online learning takes place at different locations and with the use of technology exclusively, there was probably the need to separate the two terms.

For clarity and purposes of the study the author of this thesis had decided to use the term “online learning” during the interviews, as it best represents the learning method and the situation in which the two chosen lower secondary schools were during the school year 2020/2021.

1.5 Difference between education and learning

When searching for academic papers and articles regarding the topic of online education and online learning, interestingly, it seems that there are more relevant search results for the term “online learning” than for “online education”. This subchapter will briefly define the terms “education” and “learning” and attempt to explain the reason behind the more frequent use of one term over the other.

The two terms – education and learning – interconnect. Learning could be viewed as a part of education. Education is the process of controlled learning, typically realized in a school or other educational environment. Learning is more of a psychological process and lasts throughout a person’s whole life (Průcha, Veteška, 2012). Moreover, formal education is a structured system, led by professional educators; learning can also be a part of a system – however, it is rooted more significantly in a personal experience – it is a continuous process (Beneš, 1997).

That is why it is interesting that when speaking about the process that was happening during the pandemic, the term “online learning” is used more frequently. The situation of the COVID-19 pandemic was entirely new to accommodate to, and even the process around understanding how to use the technology for the online meetings and other activities could be labelled as learning, as it was not actually systematic, but rather based on the trial-and-error approach. Thus, probably the easiest and most logical answer is that the term simply gained acceptance in the academic field and the public and is now used most frequently.

1.6 Difference between synchronous and asynchronous form of learning

It might be complicated to decide whether synchronous or asynchronous form of learning is the better way to participate in a distance learning environment. Both forms play an important role and have its place in education. This subchapter aims to compare the two forms that are closely connected to distance and online learning and highlight the advantages and disadvantages of both.

1.6.1 Asynchronous learning

Asynchronous learning means that the students and the educator do not meet in an online learning environment live for an in-time class. Asynchronous form is mostly connected to distance learning, as students get materials and handouts beforehand and they can manage their own work time, plan their learning schedule, learn to manage their own motivation to do tasks and develop their own systems. Essentially, it is believed that this form gives students the space to individualize their learning process to a greater extend (Neumajer, 2020). Asynchronous form is also the one that is perhaps viewed as the more traditional one regarding distance learning. Communication occurs through e-mails, letters, discussion boards, sometimes it can be through phone calls or even videoconferences (Watts, 2016).

A disadvantage connected to this form of interaction is that the student does not get direct feedback on their work in real time. This can cause that when a student makes a mistake, and the feedback from the educator is not instant, they unnecessarily memorize the mistake. That means the asynchronous course must be created with great precision, so that misunderstandings are avoided (Marble, Fulcher, Toman, 2016). However, the study by Watts (2016) shows that the students themselves reported that they feel they learnt the materials given to them effectively and that they were satisfied with their results. This is further supported by a study by Chou (2002) that reports the students engage by asking questions and discussing with their peers more than during synchronous interaction.

1.6.2 Synchronous learning

Bower and Kenney (2014) define synchronous learning as a tool for students to interact in real time by the means of advanced technology, to participate in classes live and to partly simulate a real face-to-face class environment. This can be further supported by this quote, as cited in Watts (2016):

“Research in distance learning has suggested students view synchronous interactions positively because of instantaneous feedback, being able to see their classmates, and because they report feeling more engaged in the online experience” (Falloon, 2011; Hrastinski, 2008; Stein et al., 2009; Strang, 2013, as cited in Watts, 2016, p. 27).

However, synchronous learning is organized very similarly to face-to-face learning, in the sense that the educator, or the teacher, manages the class, gives the instructions to the students in real time and continuously checks their progress (Neumajer, 2020). This gives the students less opportunity to manage their workload and learn to plan.

In conclusion, both asynchronous and synchronous forms of learning have their advantages and disadvantages, and they are both suitable for different situations and learning environments:

“The goal of either type of interaction is to ensure students are engaged with the learning process, so they perceive they are part of the learning process and, as a result, retain the material and feel engaged in the distance learning environment” (Watts, 2016, p. 24).

Neither is completely bad nor good. It is believed that the synchronous form – with online videoconferences, is a great addition to online or distance learning, however, it should be just that: an addition, as it is probably not sustainable for a longer period.

1.7 Advantages and disadvantages of distance and online learning

This chapter is an overview of already stated facts regarding the advantages and disadvantages of distance and online learning and will also reveal information that might not have been mentioned in the previous chapters.

The first advantage of distance learning is the asynchronous form. This form is flexible for both the students and the teacher, as the student can choose their pace and time when they complete the assigned work, and the teacher does not have to hold traditional lectures for the students, so they are not time-bound to a set schedule. Another advantage could be the financial side. Černý et al. (2015) comment that students save money on the purchase of textbooks or other aids, as most materials can be obtained in the electronic form (Černý et al, 2015). This, of course, is meant in general, as lower secondary students borrow the textbooks needed for the school year from their schools.

As already established, online learning requires the access to technology, mainly to computers and the Internet. However, the computer should also be equipped with working camera and microphone. Ideally, the student should have the access to working headphones as well. In households with multiple children the parents might not be able to supply all their children with such equipment. Multiple students in one household are then forced to use the same computer, and during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, this need to use the computer was occurring at the same time during the school day for all of them. However, the pandemic situation that occurred at the Spring of 2020 was extraordinary, and it is assumed that households with students that would like to study in the online environment will be equipped with the needed technology.

Another setback is the need to train the teachers properly so that they can work effectively in the online environment, which might be time and money consuming (Lozovoy, Zashchitina, 2019). In conclusion, students might have a financial advantage by not having to commute to school (as often at least), but for schools this is still a financially demanding option. Moreover, the teachers might have to prepare their lessons in advance and in greater detail compared to the face-to-face lessons.

2. History of distance learning

Distance learning (and later online learning) are not new terms, and they have not been first used in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, as some may think. This chapter will briefly explore the history of distance and online learning globally and in the Czech Republic.

Hoblíková (2005) states that the first mentions of distance learning are from the 19th century. There were education programmes formed specifically to be completed by each student individually, without the supervision of an educator (Hoblíková, 2005). Another source from the same year, Harting, Erthal (2005), dates the first version of distance education – called a correspondence education, even further back in time, to the 1800's. However, the first two courses were a distance learning course advertised in a Boston Gazette by a teacher C. Phillips in 1728 (Klement, Dostál, 2018), and a correspondence stenography course in the 1837 created by a British educator Isaac Pitman. The latter course was realized in a form of letters. (Hoblíková, 2005). Later, in the second half of the 20th century, the whole world had experienced a technology boom, the birth of the Internet (World Wide Web), and technologies such as computers or mobile phones rapidly evolved. The evolution of these technologies

happened in a short period and soon after that they started to get used for education purposes (Zlámálová, 2007).

Distance learning developed later in the Czech Republic, around the year 1989. It was mostly used as a form of studies at universities in the distance learning programme that enabled the students to work full-time while studying. The most broadly utilized learning form, or rather support, that helped the distance students was e-learning (Klement, Dostál, 2018). In relation to this, a “dual system” was introduced, which enabled students to study at the university in the distance and full-time study form simultaneously (Zlámálová, 2007).

In 1998, the Czech government had accepted a new Higher Education Act regarding the distance learning. It meant that completing studies by the distance learning form was equal to the full-time study form (or the combination of both). Before the pandemic, the distance learning was popular mainly amongst adults, which were studying in the lifelong learning programmes (“celoživotní vzdělávání”) (Zlámálová, 2007).

3. COVID-19 pandemic and education in the Czech Republic and other countries

3.1 Czech government measures regarding primary and lower-secondary education during the school year 2020-2021

The school year 2020-2021 was probably equally hectic for schools of all levels all around the world. This school year was especially hard and confusing for Czech lower-secondary students, as only some of them were able to go to school for face-to-classes, the classes were rotating and switching between distance, online, and face-to-face learning, and the government measures were ever-changing, based on the current epidemiologic situation. The second semester was almost in its entirety realized in the distance or online form, and that is also the period on which the case study is focuses.

As previously mentioned, the school year was rather chaotic. For greater clarity, the following chapter reviews the timeline of the period between September 2020 and June 2021, regarding the Czech government measures and education influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.1.1 First semester (September 2020 – January 2021)

The school year began quite normally, only with stricter hygiene measures and frequent ventilation of the classrooms, and later wearing face masks (ČTK, 2020). The Czech government had gained experience from spring 2020, when it was estimated that a tenth of primary and lower secondary school students did not participate in distance education. This was partly caused by the lack of computers in Czech households (Mach, 2020). The government wanted to prepare for the inevitable comeback of distance learning and decided to fund the schools' purchasing of computers and tablets for students (and teachers) to be able to participate in distance and online learning (Klimešová, 2020).

On 12 October 2020, Czech government had decided to close all schools with effect from 14 October, after the epidemiologic situation had worsened once again. Students were supposed to return to schools by 2 November 2020 (Beranová, 2020). However, due to the situation not getting better, the schools had to remain closed (STA, 2020).

This continued until 18 November, when the students of first and second year of primary school were allowed to return to face-to-face education (Kottová, 2020). On 30 November 2020 the rest of primary school students were allowed to come back to school to face-to-face learning, as well as the ninth year of lower-secondary school (Kottová, 2020).

However, a new form of education was introduced – alternate teaching (“rotační výuka”) – students from each class were divided into two groups. Students from the first group were in school in-person for five days, after that the groups switched and the students from the first group learned in a distance form for another 5 days (one week). Firstly, the group that stayed home received distance learning materials, later they got to log in for the class via online meeting applications synchronously (Macura, 2021b). This was done mainly to prevent the spread of the virus, as, according to the Ministry of education, youth, and sports (2021), the dividing of students into smaller groups decreased the risk of getting infected by 80 %. Schools across the Czech Republic functioned in the “alternate teaching” in some form throughout the rest of the school year.

On 16 November there was also a new plan for dealing with distance and face-to-face education during the COVID-19 pandemic introduced, called “Protiepidemický systém ČR” – or, in abbreviated form, “PES”. PES was meant to track the epidemiologic situation in the Czech Republic in a point system and to clarify the way schools should proceed in times of the situation worsening (or bettering) (Holíková, 2020).

During the 2020 Christmas holidays, the epidemiologic situation had gotten worse and the then minister of education, youth, and sports Robert Plaga decided to extend the Christmas holidays and close the schools earlier – students went to school 18 December for the last time of the calendar year instead of the planned 22 December (Beranová, 2020).

On 23 December, the government had decided that all schools will be closed and function in distance or online learning mode, excluding the first and second year of primary school (and other), which were able to continue in face-to-face learning. The online learning was supposed to last until 10 January 2021 (Vláda ČR, 2020).

3.1.2 Second semester (February 2021 – June 2021)

On 7 January, the government had decided to extend the state of emergency and all regulations in effect until the 22 January (Vláda ČR, 2021a), and then again until 14 February (Vláda ČR 2021b). On 26 February, due to the worsening situation, the government had decided to extend the state of emergency again, as well as the regulations mentioned above, now including the first and second year of primary school, until 21 March (Vláda ČR, 2021c).

This meant that the schools were now completely closed, and all learning was happening via distance or online form. The state of emergency was extended until 11 April, and on 12 April, primary school students were able to go back to school. The ministry of education, youth, and sport had decided to take cautious measures and get students back to school in several phases, so that the schools would not get overwhelmed, and so that it would be as safe as possible regarding the COVID-19 virus spread (Macura, 2021b).

It was fundamental to get all the students back to school for face-to-face learning as fast as possible, especially the ninth year lower secondary students (who were preparing for their entrance exams for secondary school), but also to do it in a secure and reliable manner (Macura, 2021b). For this reason, the schools returned to alternating form again. The specific plan for rotating the classes was different at each school. The students and teachers were also being tested for COVID-19 two times a week and everybody had to wear face masks (Chum, 2021).

Online learning, together with rotation form, functioned until May. All lower secondary students (along with primary students, who were already back in school) were able to come back to school for face-to-face learning without any rotations on 24 May (Macura, 2021a). Schools remained in the normal face-to-face form until the end of this interesting and confusing school year.

3.2 English lessons in other countries during the COVID-19 pandemic

It is difficult to track how education in other countries went exactly. For example, on 10 April 2020, students in South Korea were learning via online education, while the teachers sat in empty classrooms in front of a computer (Bicker, 2020). Simultaneously, in Denmark, young children were already returning to school for face-to-face learning (ČTK, 2020). However, it is visible from the schooling situation at the Czech Republic that the measures were often changed several times a month, so it should not be surprising that the pandemic affected other countries in a comparable way.

The Commonwealth secretariat had stated:

“The World Bank Education Global Practice (2020) observed that while the world was already going through a learning crisis indicated by ‘high levels of learning poverty’, with the pandemic, more than 160 countries had closed schools, affecting about 1.6 billion children and out-of-school youth” (Osman, Keevy, 2021, p. 53).

This means that most of the world’s recognized countries had closed schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and it could be said that most of them experienced similar difficulties.

That is further supported by research by Sari and Nayir (2020) in Turkey, which reports that EFL teachers faced quite the same challenges as the rest of the world: problems with the Internet access – the Internet being slow, or connection, audio, and video difficulties. Whole rural areas had problems with the access to the Internet and lack of technology – specifically the equipment needed for sufficient distance learning. These issues influenced the students who did not have the mentioned sufficient equipment nor Internet access, ultimately creating inequality.

3.3 Studies regarding EFL teachers’ view on online learning

Multiple studies were found regarding similar topic as this thesis’ research – the teaching of English via online learning during COVID-19 pandemic, preferably from the EFL teachers’ point of view.

Research at a German university conducted by Drucker and Fleischhauer (2021) reports that both students and teachers benefited from the online English lessons. The teachers combined synchronous and asynchronous forms of teaching, even used the elements of both

simultaneously at times – they logged in with the students for a videoconference and assigned work in the asynchronous learning environment called Moodle. Teachers reported that they felt the students collaborated to a greater extent, often staying logged in long after the online instruction. The students were able to record their pronunciation, send it to their teacher and receive feedback, and in synchronous classes the feedback was instant, leading to improvements in the area. However, it was noted that the students were visibly fatigued if the synchronous classes were longer than an hour at a time, but overall were receptive to the online learning environment.

Interestingly, based on the study by Tümen-Akyıldız et al. (2021), the Turkish schools have experienced more difficulties trying to adapt to online learning during English lessons. The teachers were adhering to the course books recommended by the school's curriculum and did not use many online interactive materials. Moreover, the teachers preferred pencil-paper assignments and the students did not receive much of technology-based homework. A great majority of participants, both teachers and students, reported that they prefer face-to-face education. This might be due to the slow adapting to the online learning of the teachers and not accommodating the lessons to the online environment.

Lastly, research by Mardiah (2020) from Indonesia reflects on English lessons during the pandemic via e-learning. The study found that the lessons in the online environment were received positively by the students, as they viewed it as something new and unconventional, and the e-learning form offered both teachers and students the opportunity to work with new online learning materials and sources. However, it is visible that all mentioned studies report one common issue: the students and the teachers experienced technical difficulties during the lessons, such as the students' Internet connection being slow. The importance of educating the teachers regarding the online environment and continuously improving the teachers' technological competencies is highlighted as well. Mardiah (2020) then comments that online learning was the only accessible form of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, however, according to the research, "it cannot replace actual classroom interactions as in conventional classes" (Mardiah, 2020, p. 55).

Practical part

4. Research method

The aim of the practical part of this thesis is to analyse the experience of two lower secondary EFL teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Czech Republic. The research aims to reveal the obstacles the teachers have encountered during the online learning period, and to answer several questions regarding online education. The data obtained from the two conducted interviews will be analysed, and the analysis should offer a comprehensive outlook on the issue. The teachers were asked to elaborate their thoughts on various topics concerning online education and the English lessons; they were asked to express their honest opinions, and they were encouraged to talk about anything they considered interesting or important for the research.

The received data will be analysed and assessed into a comprehensive output and compared to the already existing studies regarding the same topic as this research. This might offer a better view on the issue. Moreover, most studies dealing with this topic are completed by a quantitative method, and thus it could be interesting to compare this qualitative study's outcomes with the quantitative counterparts.

Originally, the method selected for this topic was a case study. That means the researcher studies one or few respondents in detail, from whom a large collection of data is received. It is meant to analyse the relationship, similarities, and problems between given cases (Hendl, 2016). According to Dörnyei (2007), one of the main characteristics is its “emergent nature”:

“(...) no aspect of the research design is tightly prefigured and a study is kept open and fluid so that it can respond in a flexible way to new details or openings that may emerge during the process of investigation. This flexibility even applies to the research questions, which may evolve, change, or be refined during the study” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 37).

This represents a kind of freedom for the researcher, as the process can be individualized, and the researcher does not have to conform to strictly given procedures or norms. This type of research analyses various sources of data, such as texts (diary entries, documents, field notes), recorder interviews, or images. It is advisable that the recorded interviews are transcribed into textual form (Hendl 2016).

After careful consideration, it was decided that for a case study, it would have to be completed on a larger scale, which was not in the author's capability and within the range of the bachelor's thesis; thus, the research should not be fully considered a case study. However, some of the methods are still applicable. Finally, it was decided to analyse the data in the form of a comparative study and the analysis method will be an interpretative phenomenological analysis – further referred to as IPA.

4.1 Research aims and questions

Topic:

English lessons during the COVID-19 pandemic at two selected Czech lower secondary schools

Main research question:

How do EFL teachers view teaching English in an online environment?

As this main research question is quite broad in its matter, a set of sub-research questions was further proposed:

Sub-research questions:

What materials did the teachers use in the online lessons?

How did the teachers handle motivation of the students during the online education?

How does having cameras on affect English lessons held in an online environment?

What changes did the EFL teachers feel after experiencing online education?

Would EFL teachers prefer online or face-to-face education?

The data collection and the interview structure are set to target the information that will help answer these research questions.

4.2 Research tools

4.2.1 Semi-structured interview

The qualitative method selected for this study was a semi-structured interview, as it combines the good qualities of both structured and unstructured interviews and is also the recommended method in an interpretative phenomenological analysis (Řiháček et al. 2013). In this case, the interviewer has a prepared set of questions, but at the same time the interviewee is

encouraged to elaborate further on certain topics that interest them, and the interviewer can ask other unprepared questions as well (Dörnyei, 2007). According to Dörnyei (2007), the interview should last anywhere between 30-60 minutes. Both interviews lasted about 45 minutes, which is consistent with Dörnyei's advice.

It was crucial for the interviews that the questions were consistent and remained the same for both participants. However, this does not mean that the questions were asked in the same order or manner, as, for example, one participant answered two questions in one. Another difficulty was when the participant did not understand a question, and either answered differently than anticipated or asked for the question to be rephrased. In these moments, the researcher must improvise and steer off the script, and it is vital for the researcher to be flexible, understand the new situation, and be able to react to it accordingly (Švaříček, Šed'ová, 2007).

4.3 Research ethics

To protect the respondents and their working environment, including the schools' principals, the respondents' colleagues, and other indicia, complete anonymization was carried out, so that they would not be traceable even under their given pseudonyms.

According to Hendl (2016), a study should be conducted in a way that does not require any concealment of facts to the respondents. Thus, it was necessary that the researcher introduced the case study topic and their intentions with the received data. The researcher also told the respondents in what manner the information will be processed. After this, the researcher asked the respondents if they agree with their voluntary participation and the use of the received data.

Dörnyei (2007) states that getting the respondents' agreement is an essential principle of every research. This agreement should be documented in some manner, however, Švaříček and Šed'ová (2007) argue that the best way is to have an oral agreement recorded, as a written agreement with the respondent's signature could be violated to reveal the respondent's identity. The respondents' agreement for this case study was obtained by the method of an oral agreement and later transcribed into text.

This case study was conducted with two respondents. The two teachers were given different names for anonymity purposes. **Teacher A** will be called **Michaela**, and **teacher B** will be called **Jana**.

4.4 The selection process and description of the respondents

Švaříček and Šved'ová (2007) state that selection of the sample is meant to represent the given issue, not an entire population. IPA research usually analyses a small number of respondents, as it is supposed to be a “detailed analysis of an experience” (Řiháček et al., 2013, p. 13). It is not unusual to use only one respondent. The important criterion is that the sample is homogenous and a good representation of given phenomenon (or topic). For this reason, the sample is not constructed randomly, but with an exact theory and intention in mind (Řiháček et al., 2013). Smith et al. (2009) recommend three to six respondents for a diploma thesis. As this research was completed for a bachelor's thesis, it was decided to use two respondents.

Firstly, the two lower secondary schools were selected. It was important that the schools were both situated in the same town, so that the criteria regarding economic situation, population, and pupils attending the schools would be similar. Then the principals of both schools were contacted via e-mail and asked whether it would be possible to conduct an interview with their employee. They were assured that the identity of the schools and the employees would remain confidential, which was later done by giving the teachers and the schools pseudonyms, as well as the city where the schools are situated. Both principals agreed and gave me a list of their EFL teachers, which could perhaps be considered a snowball sampling on a small scale (Dörnyei, 2007).

The respondents were cautiously chosen so that they would be able to answer all the questions regarding the topic. Their experience in teaching was a crucial criterion. It would be logical to choose two similarly experienced teachers, however, it was later decided to select total opposites. The reason for that was to find out whether opinions of two teachers would differ based on their years of experience. Michaela is a young new teacher, she has a few years of teaching experience, however, the school year 2020-2021 was her first year as a full-time teacher at a lower secondary school. On the contrary, Jana is a middle-aged teacher with 15 years of teaching experience at lower secondary schools. Even though this sample consists of only one gender – both respondents are female, it should still be considered a representative sample, as most teachers around the world, about 70 %, are female (OECD, 2017).

4.5 The data collection

The two interviews were conducted at the end of the school year 2020/2021, in June 2021. Due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time, the respondents were given two options for the meeting; the interview could have been conducted either online via online communication platform or face-to-face.

The first interview, which was with Michaela, took place in an online environment, due to various circumstances. She was at her home during the call. However, there were connectivity issues on Michaela's side. The first half of the interview was completed via Skype, and after Michaela's Internet was disconnected, the interview was finished over the phone. The whole interview was recorded on a dictaphone and none of the answers were lost, despite the complications.

The second interview, with Jana, was conducted face-to-face. Jana invited me to her office at the school she works, and the environment probably played a part in how Jana felt during the interview. She seemed comfortable, and it might have positively influenced her answers to some of the questions, as she was at her workplace and was talking about the topic in a related place. The interview was recorded on a dictaphone as well.

As already mentioned, the interviews were recorded on a dictaphone and then transcribed into text form. Silverman (2005) states that it is necessary for the transcriptions of the interviews to be as true and precise as possible. This enables the researcher to come back to the transcriptions and vividly remember the interview even after some time – to remember the participant's intonation or pauses in speech (Švaříček, Šed'ová, 2007). Hendl (2016) describes transcription as a process of transferring speech into a text form, and the procedure is very time-consuming. The transcription is essential for a successful assessment, as it enables the researcher to highlight important passages in the text, write comments on the edge of the page, or compare various excerpts from the texts. Smith et al. (2009) does not recommend recording every pause or laughter, but to do it in moderation.

4.6 Limitations

Polkinghorne (2005) advises to hold multiple sessions to create a good rapport, which was not done during this research, and the interview with each teacher was conducted during one meeting. However, the interviewer tried to create a pleasant atmosphere by asking several simple questions at the start of the interview and having open body language. The “breaking of

the ice” is further visible in the change of the length of the answers by the respondents, as they started elaborating more on the topic as the interview progressed.

Another limitation that was clear during the interviews was that due to the problems that endured during the call with Michaela, the researcher was able to observe Michaela’s body language for only the first half of the interview. Even that was limited, as only Michaela’s face and shoulders were visible on camera. This circumstance disabled the option to compare the two respondents’ changes in body language and facial expressions.

Throughout the analysis it is visible that the quotes from Michaela are usually shorter. The interview with Michaela was conducted first and the author did not have any previous experience with conducting interviews; thus, the shorter answers might be the result of not asking the right follow-up questions. Furthermore, as previously stated, the interview was interrupted due to a bad Internet connection, which threw off the natural flow of the interview. However, even though Michaela’s answers were shorter than Jana’s, they were still concise and fulfilled the content of the research’s focus.

Analytical part

5. Interpretative phenomenological analysis

The analytical part of the thesis analyses the data obtained from the interviews. The data will be coded and presented according to the codes and thematic units. The information will be further organized in a way to answer the research main question, and the sub-research questions. The information will be supported by the respondents' answers in direct quotations – under the given pseudonyms.

The qualitative approach selected for the analytical part of the project is interpretative phenomenological analysis (henceforth IPA). IPA is a method suitable for understanding a person's lived experience. It helps us understand the way a person views certain situations, and what importance they give to the experience in certain conditions and time frame. The method is also used when the subject of the research is an unusual group or situation (Řiháček et al., 2013).

“IPA researchers are especially interested in what happens when the everyday flow of lived experience takes on a particular significance for people. This usually occurs when something important has happened in our lives” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 1).

This quote is meaningful for this research, as the COVID-19 pandemic was an extraordinary situation and each person dealt with this situation differently. Simultaneously, the EFL teachers are an interesting group to be studied in the context of the pandemic, as they often had to accommodate to different regulations and plan their English lessons in a different manner than usual.

There are three pillars of IPA: *phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiographic approach*. Firstly, *phenomenology* is based in the individual and unique person's experience. IPA emphasises the interaction between the researcher and the respondent. Thus, the matter of subjectivity from the side of the researcher is unavoidable. However, the subjectivity is not viewed as something that should be avoided which is slightly different from a strict phenomenological approach. In fact, it is crucial for the researcher to have a preconception, so that they would be able to formulate the importance in the participant's experience. That is because the analysis of the text is simultaneously also an interpretation. The reader can then see

the researcher's way of thinking about the certain topic in the text, and how the researcher concluded the data (Řiháček et al., 2013).

Second part of the research process is *double hermeneutics*, which means that the researcher tries to understand the given phenomenon with their own experience, and how the respondent understands it, which is why the analysis is an interpretation. It could be said that the outcome is joint efforts of both the respondent and the researcher. However, it should be mentioned that the researcher should not conclude final statements as something given, as there are more ways of interpreting the data. The interpretation comes from the respondents' direct quotations. They need to be analysed individually to understand how it works together as a whole (Smith et al., 2009).

The final pillar of IPA is the *idiographic approach*, which means that the researcher analyses one case of the research in detail and does so until they reach a certain understanding of the phenomenon. Only after that they can analyse the next set of data (a respondent). Each set of data is given the same importance and is analysed separately during the process (Smith et al. 2009).

IPA methodology advises that the data interpretation is constructed in a rich and detailed manner and narrated from the first person, as the intention of the data collection is to understand the world and experience of the respondent. The analysis procedure recommended for inexperienced researchers is to analyse one set of data, and then continue onto the next set independently on the first, meaning that the researcher does not consider the analysed data from the first set, but starts "from scratch" (Smith et al. 2009). This process ensures the analysis preserves the "*individual (and idiographic) approach to each case. (...) Naturally, it is not possible to avoid the influence of the previous analysis, but the important part is for the researcher to remain open to the exploration and possibility of new themes*" (Řiháček et al., 2013, p. 16).

The following set of steps was followed during the analysis:

0. Reflection on the researcher's experience with the research topic
1. Reading and re-reading
2. Initial noting
3. Developing emergent themes
4. Searching for connections across emergent themes
5. Moving to the next case
6. Looking for patterns across cases

6. Interpretation of data

As already stated, the recommended method is to analyse and evaluate one set of data and then move to the next. Thus, I started with the interview with Michaela, as that was the one conducted chronologically first.

First, I reflected on my own experience with the research topic. The reflection was done in a form of an internal dialogue recommended by Řiháček et al. (2013) and writing my thoughts down so I would be able to come back to them during the analysis. As a student I got to experience online learning from the opposite side of the screen than the teachers. However, I am studying to become a teacher, and am older than the lower secondary pupils my respondents teach, thus I believe I am capable to be more understanding towards the issues. However, I believe that some of the struggles both sides experienced are universal.

After the reflection I started reading and re-reading the text. I highlighted interesting parts in the text but did not write any potential codes yet. During the first reading of the transcript, I listened to the recorded interview again, so I could focus on the voice of Michaela and so that she would be the focus of the analysis, which Smith (2009) emphasizes as important.

Then I started making notes. I went through the transcript again and underlined any words that Michaela repeated, interesting phrases, and any parts that could have been later used for codes. I made sure to conduct as detailed of an analysis as possible, so that it would not be superficial. At this stage, I started to develop an idea about what thematic units I could be able to make and what would fall under those units. With this, the next step naturally followed: developing emergent themes. Then I followed the next step, which is searching for connections across the themes. I considered which themes could be merged or omitted.

After this process, I moved on to the second interview conducted with Jana. I repeated all the steps of the analysis and then reviewed which themes from both interviews are similar and could be considered to have the same pattern. Finally, I decided on five thematic units with several themes included in each:

- 1. Online environment and technology skills**
- 2. Black screens – the classroom atmosphere**
- 3. Teaching style**
- 4. Relationships and boundaries**
- 5. What will last?**

That brings us to the actual analysis, starting with the first thematic unit:

6.1 Online environment and technology skills

Michaela is a young teacher, she is 25 years old, and she has three years of teaching experience. The school year 2020/2021 was her first as a full-time teacher at a lower secondary school. She did not recollect having major troubles with getting used to teaching online, and she said it did not take her long to get used to it: *“It wasn’t even a month, but I mean – every time there was a problem with something new.”* She then continues that there were sometimes problems with the Microsoft Teams platform, Internet connection, or other issues with someone’s computer, and she as a teacher was not able to help the pupil.

Jana is older than Michaela, she is 48 years old and had 15 years of experience teaching English language. She did not experience any major problems when her school switched to the online learning: *“I would say I have a good relationship with technologies, I don’t have a problem using a computer, searching on the internet and so on.”*

Interestingly, both teachers had already had an experience with teaching online. Michaela said: *“I had an experience with online teaching, because I was also teaching online in Helen Doron school before. But I know my older colleagues had several problems.”* She commented that her older colleagues experienced issues such as not knowing how to share their screens or share videos with sound. Jana’s initial experience with online learning was similar as Michaela’s:

“When the first wave of COVID-19 hit, I started teaching online lessons for Cambridge courses on the Zoom platform. So, when our school went into online learning, I saw it as a normal workday. (...) it was all very intuitive.”

Jana even helped her colleagues set up their lessons: *“I would set up their computer and help them. After that they got used to it and did not have any problems anymore. The fear lasted for like two or three weeks.”*

However, both Michaela and Jana added that it depends on the teacher, and not their age.

Eventually, both students and teachers got used to the online environment, and that some pupils were not happy about going back to school, as Michaela says: *“Also, there were some students who didn’t want to go back to school, because they said it was better for them online and that they could learn more that way.”*

Michaela said that those were also the students, who *“cooperated in the online chat during lessons, and in normal classes they would not raise their hand or speak on their own.”*

I would be interested in a more in-depth answer by the pupils who would prefer to continue with online learning, about why they felt that way and what influenced it. As a university student I understand that completely, as I was also happy to attend online lessons, however, I believe that lower secondary students should not be deprived of face-to-face classes, as it is important for their social skills development, which Jana commented on more:

“I knew that sometimes they did not come out of their bed; they were in their pyjamas with unbrushed hair. That is also one of the duties of a school. To teach children the importance of being put together with clean clothes. This was a bit forgotten during online learning.”

Michaela noted that she would also choose an online environment if she was to learn a language:

“If I wanted to learn a language, I would choose online. It was very convenient to be at home and to just end the session, to end the class and I could do something productive at my home right away.”

However, as a teacher, she said that she will always prefer face-to-face classes, which Jana would agree with: *“[I would prefer] face-to-face, definitely. Because I can check the progress better, (...) I can check all the skills easily.”*

6.2 Black screens – the classroom atmosphere

The next thematic unit concerns the atmosphere during online lessons and having cameras on. It surprised me that Michaela preferred not to have her own camera on. At first, she was not comfortable with seeing herself on the monitor, and she felt insecure, however, she kept her camera on. *“I knew that the students could print screen my face and photoshop it. (...) But after some time, I just felt like: ‘Why should I care? I mean, it’s just my face.’ So I got used to it.”*

Jana was not of the same opinion:

“I never switched [the camera] off. I think that especially for English lessons it is very important, because students need to see my mouth for pronunciation, for example when I introduce new vocabulary.”

As the online lessons continued, Michaela decided to start turning her camera off. She said she did not feel it was necessary for her students to see her face, she viewed it as a distraction, and that she *“was the only one with the camera on.”* Then she only turned her camera on at the beginning and the end of the lesson. However, at the same time, she admitted that it was frustrating for her to not see her students’ faces and to be *“staring at black screen.”*

Jana had similar experience, and interestingly, she used the same expression as Michaela: *“It was hard for me as a teacher to not see their faces, I talked to a computer, a black screen.”*

Michaela described how it was difficult to teach lower grade (primary level) students, and how it was vastly different to teaching the lower secondary ones:

“With the younger students I had the opposite problem. They didn’t want to mute their microphones and they would all talk over the others, and I had to mute them manually. It was really time consuming.”

By “the opposite problem” she meant that the older students reportedly did not want to work, as they were gradually losing motivation. She said: *“In normal face-to-face classes, they would shout out the answer, raise their hand and so on, but online – no reaction.”* Jana felt the same:

“In face-to-face classes, the pupils are all together in one room, they see each other and motivate each other. In online learning, they all see just a screen, they don’t see each other’s faces, because they switch their cameras off. And even the pupils that used to be very motivated started to lose their motivation. (...) Sometimes I asked a question and there was a silence. It was like they weren’t even there.”

Furthermore, the teachers sometimes felt annoyed, because students logged in to the lesson but were not actually present, or they did not log in at all. Both teachers expressed their frustration about not being able to intervene in the behaviour:

Jana: *“Online, teacher does not have the same power over the pupils. They will write in the chat something like ‘sorry my microphone doesn’t work’ and I cannot do anything about it. I don’t have the proper control.”*

Michaela: *“The excuses started to get repeated – some student said that he couldn’t connect, and the next day another two students said the same thing. I knew they were probably lying, but I couldn’t do anything about it.”*

Lastly, Michaela and Jana added that they could understand why the students did not want to have their cameras on. Students of both teachers reported to feel shy and embarrassed. Jana said it is *“tied to the puberty they go through.”*

Lastly, Michaela stated that having cameras on is better for the students, to: *“be somewhat closer to your classmates, but it is definitely not like being in the real classroom.”* Jana commented similarly: *“it was nice to see the faces of the students, but I could also see their room behind them, their personal space. It did not really feel like we were in a classroom.”*

6.3 Teaching style

It was not surprising to find out that both Michaela and Jana used online materials more often during online learning than before. They both reported to use the website Live Worksheets. Jana used it primarily for grammar exercises or reading comprehension. She said that *“they love this type of activity but did not want to play any games or do online quizzes.”* Michaela said that she feels like *“teaching English online is very easy, because there are so many sources [she] can use and also share it with [her] colleagues.”* Both teachers used the online materials like worksheets or online quizzes for homework or a quick activity before the end of the lesson.

Jana stopped using online games and quizzes with her older students after some time, as she said:

“They were showing me that they are bored, and that they don’t see the point in doing it. It was hard to motivate them and make them participate, so I stopped using the games and quizzes, I just did not get the right feedback. (...) I know that some students got fed up with the constant games and quizzes in all the subjects. It wasn’t as special to them, and they were tired of it.”

Michaela did not use listening comprehension exercises, especially those that required playing videos: *“It was too much for the website and the Internet connection, and it would often crash.”*

It wasn't possible." Jana felt the same: *"Students complained that they couldn't hear the recording and it was time consuming."* Jana further noted that this reflected badly on the students' listening skills: *"It was bad that they couldn't practice this skill, it was visible when they came back to face-to-face classes that they weren't as efficient in listening exercises."*

The teachers had to take into consideration that the lessons were shortened to be 30 minutes long. Jana complained that she had to go through new sections in the workbook fast and there was not enough time to check if everyone understood. *"I had to split the topic into several lessons, which would normally take only one lesson to do. I couldn't cover as much as I wanted to."* Jana then noted that before online learning she was used to utilize body language and miming in her lessons, and that she liked to use flashcards, which was not possible, as the flashcards were not visible or readable on camera.

Michaela said that she was not sure whether she had a set teaching style prior to online learning, as she is still a new teacher. However, she said: *"I think it may have changed a little bit – I am stricter, and I want my students to really follow the rules."* With this she also added that this change might have happened either way, and not only because of the online environment. Michaela also emphasized the most important thing she focused on during the online English lessons was to get the students to talk and learn how to have a conversation.

Both teachers used online materials before the pandemic, but not to the extent as during online learning. They both used online support for Oxford University Press – the student's and teacher's books and workbook, and English magazines and articles for homework.

6.4 Relationships and boundaries

Interestingly, I found several similarities between the two interviews in this thematic unit. Both teachers would probably agree that the boundaries started to get slightly omitted during online learning, specifically from the parents' side. Jana said: *"They thought that the teachers are available all the time, they would call me late in the evening and expect me to pick up and deal with some problem of their child."*

Michaela shared similar experience:

“Sometimes I was working twelve hours a day and I was really tired. But because the classes were all cut short, the public thought that teachers are slacking off. (...) And the students and their parents were still sending me messages even at 9PM. That was a problem.”

Another complication that both teachers experienced was with suspicious results in students' exams:

Jana: *“Sometimes I wasn't sure if the work was written by the student or if their parents didn't help them. (...) [The parents] were trying to cover for their children and made excuses for them.”*

Michaela: *“The parents were helping the students with the answers, even with homework and during tests. That was really hard to control.”*

After this, both teachers realized they had to re-set boundaries. Michaela expressed that she needed time to relax: *“I had to have some time for myself, to, you know, go jogging or just relax for a second, to not work into late hours.”* Jana shared similar thoughts: *“Sometimes it got lonely. I had to prioritize the time with my family and my free time.”*

Lastly, I would like to comment on the teachers' relationship with their students. Jana felt like she did not have a good relationship with the pupils after they came back to school: *“I felt like they didn't trust me as much, they didn't want to share anything from their lives.”*

Interestingly, Michaela probably handled this situation slightly better and worked on it even through online learning:

“Every Monday I spent with my class, and we talked about our weekend, we've had some time together just doing fun activities. I could see that some of the students were really frustrated, and I wanted to motivate them.”

However, it must be noted that Michaela is a class teacher, thus she spends significantly more time with those students. Jana teaches a bigger number of students across various years, which makes it harder for her to connect with the students on a more personal level.

6.5 What will last?

The last thematic unit focuses on what the two teachers think will last from online learning even after the COVID-19 pandemic is over. Jana reported that she feels an improvement in her time management during lessons: *“I can better recognize which exercises are really important, and I try to focus more on the listening and writing skills of the students.”* Michaela did not reflect on any personal improvement, however, she said that she would like for the students to keep their technology skills. She also said that it is good the students learned how to be independent: *“It was extremely helpful for them to learn how to organise their homework, how to be responsible with this.”*

Another issue the teachers matched their opinion on is the benefit of having an online communication platform, as Jana said: *“It is great that we can use the technologies to teach them virtually. Even one ill student doesn’t have to lose the progress if they have to stay home, I could send them the materials online.”* Michaela commented similarly: *“I like the idea of having a platform where we as teachers can put every homework, assignment and so on, and each pupil has access to it.”*

Lastly, I asked both teachers what their reaction to another lockdown would be, and their answers matched.

Michaela: *“Oh no. (laughs) Yes, it would be ‘oh no’. The online learning is consuming, the students without the good Internet connection would be disadvantaged again, but I mean, if we would have to do it, we would manage.”*

Jana: *“Maybe I would be annoyed (laughs). But I would be mostly nervous. I see the consequences of a long-term online learning. (...) But the schools are now prepared for this situation happening again, we got to learn how to teach online, and we would be able to deal with it.”*

Conclusion

This thesis dealt with the topic of online learning, specifically how EFL teachers view teaching English in an online environment. This field of study is still new and further research would be appropriate. The topic of the research might be helpful for aspiring teachers, as they will probably not have any experience with online teaching, and it might give them a better understanding of how students but also teachers react to long term online learning.

In the first part of the thesis, the key terms needed for better understanding of the topic were introduced, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of online learning, and differences between selected terms were presented. In a more extensive chapter, the school year 2020/2021 in the Czech Republic was explored, and how it was influenced by the government regulations regarding COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, studies that deal with similar topic as this thesis were presented and the findings were compared.

In the second part of the thesis, the selected methodology for the research was introduced and with the help of a specialized literature the reasons for choosing the method were explained. The research was conducted in the form of two semi-structured interviews with carefully selected respondents.

The results of the research were presented in five thematic units, which covered most of the topics from the interviews and answered the pre-determined research questions. In this way, the author of this thesis considers the research aim to be successfully fulfilled.

The research revealed interesting results. The following paragraphs will present those results.

Firstly, it must be emphasized that the results cannot be generalized, as they are specific for the two respondents from different schools, which are situated in the same town.

The main research question was how EFL teachers view teaching English in an online environment. From the responses recorded in the thematic units it is quite clear that neither teacher would prefer online learning as their main teaching method, however, if they were to learn a new language as students, they would prefer to do so in an online learning environment.

They both reported that they do not mind teaching online for a short period, however, they feel like the pupils' skills gradually decrease, for example listening comprehension. Interestingly, both teachers had previous experience with online learning. However, they said that online learning was "time consuming" especially when it came to preparing for the lesson, and that

they felt like the public did not realize the strain that was put on teachers. They both noted that they had to prioritize their mental health.

Another point the teachers highlighted is that having cameras on does not simulate the feeling of being in a face-to-face class. The first teacher chose to not have her camera on, the second teacher felt like it is crucial for teachers to have their cameras on during English lessons, so that the students could see the correct pronunciation of new vocabulary. Both teachers mentioned several times the phrase “staring at black screens”.

Apparently, the most popular website for acquiring online English materials is Live Worksheets. However, online games, quizzes, magazines, and articles are also frequently used in English lessons and were positively received by the students during online learning. The teachers preferred to use mostly the teacher’s and student’s books, as they are available in printed as well as online form and the teachers could clearly see the students’ progress.

The motivation of students was complicated in an online environment for the teachers to deal with, too. Reportedly, in face-to-face classes the students motivate each other, but as they do not see each other and are not present in a classroom together, they feel more isolated and lose their motivation. The teachers tried to motivate them by offering online games and quizzes and reserving time to talk with the students about their life and feelings. The teachers stated that they feel like they learnt how to be more efficient with their time and how to make the lessons more attractive for their students.

As already mentioned, the results cannot be generalized, as the analysis is a representation of two teachers’ lived experience. The study’s aim never was the intention to find out the universal truth. However, we can see that some issues regarding technologies and online teaching are not influenced by the teacher’s age nor experience. The decrease in students’ motivation was viewed the same by both teachers, although they decided to use different methods for motivating the students. The teachers reported to be frustrated by “staring at black screens” and they sensed a lack of control over the students’ performance. Both teachers felt a change in their teaching style and relationship with their pupils, and they agreed that computer skills are helpful and will be needed even in the future.

This thesis is an attempt to broaden the understanding of the issues tied to distance and online learning, and hopefully, the public will view the profession of a teacher in a better light, especially in retrospect to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Résumé

Tato bakalářská práce je zaměřena na zkušenost dvou učitelek anglického jazyka s online výukou během pandemie COVID-19. Byly provedeny rozhovory s každou učitelkou a tyto rozhovory byly následně analyzovány pomocí interpretativní fenomenologické analýzy. Bylo překvapivé, že i přes rozdílný věk a profesní zkušenost se názory obou učitelek převážně shodovaly, a během pandemie používaly stejné online materiály. Jediná oblast, ve které byl zaznamenán rozdílný názor bylo užívání kamer během výuky, kdy jedna učitelka si kameru zásadně vypínala a druhá zdůrazňovala důležitost mít kameru zapnutou po celou dobu výuky. Na závěr je nutné zdůraznit, že výsledky tohoto výzkumu jsou specifické pro dva zmíněné rozhovory a nemohou být zobecňovány. Bylo by vhodné provést další, podrobnější výzkum.

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Marie Vlčková
Katedra nebo ústav:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Barbora Bačíková
Rok obhajoby:	2022

Název práce:	Výuka anglického jazyka během pandemie COVID-19 ve dvou vybraných českých základních školách
Název práce v angličtině:	English lessons during the COVID-19 pandemic at two selected Czech lower secondary schools
Anotace práce:	Hlavním cílem této bakalářské práce je analyzovat dva rozhovory s EFL učitelkami a zjistit jejich postoje k online výuce anglické jazyka. Výsledky výzkumu vychází z polostrukturovaných rozhovorů. Kvůli povaze zvolené výzkumné metody nelze výsledky generalizovat, jsou specifické pro dvě učitelky, se kterými byl rozhovor realizován.
Klíčová slova:	Online výuka, kvalitativní výzkum, rozhovor, EFL učitelé, pandemie COVID-19
Anotace práce v angličtině	The main aim of the bachelor's thesis is to analyse two interviews conducted with EFL teachers and to find out their opinions towards online learning. The results are based on two semi-structured interviews. Due to the nature of the selected research method the results of the research cannot be generalized, as they are specific to the two interviewed EFL teachers.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Online learning, qualitative research, interview, EFL teachers, COVID-19 pandemic
Přílohy vázané v práci:	-
Rozsah práce:	44 stran
Jazyk práce:	Anglický jazyk