
CHALLENGES OF LANGUAGE LEARNING DURING PANDEMIC-COVID-19

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Abstract: Language learning is process that last long and needs commitment. As people differ in their nature, in the way of living, they also differ in the way of language learning. The Covid 19 caused a dramatic change in the process of education by resulting in schools closures all over the world, leaving students out of the classroom, rising e-learning, undertaking remote learning on digital platforms. Pandemic time was and is still being a process that affected our life, making us getting used to it and obeying the rules. The most important thing is the ability to not stop learning/teaching process. Even though remote learning is not easy for most of us: teachers, students and parents who have to help their children using their best practices and experience in using electronic devices, it proved to be successful. There is an evidence that language learners who frequently watch TV, movies and listen to music in their free time tend to be better at reading, listening and vocabulary, but what about pronunciation?

Is this true with the Pandemic online classes? Based on my own experience both teachers and students kill their time focusing attention on something productive, schedule lessons at times that is convenient for them and feel more relaxed to talk as they have no one in next to them, spend no time and money on travelling, clothes, make up and food. Learning and eating at the same time relaxed at home is a good feeling but what is the result?

The purpose of this study is to figure out the current situation of online language learning and teaching in Pandemic, and also to explore teachers' and students' perception about online foreign language classrooms (FLC) verses school teaching/learning. The paper implements a case study done with the students and teachers of University Fehmi Agani in Gjakova through an interview, a questionnaire and a classroom observation with four teachers and thirty students participating in the study.

Keywords: Pandemic, language learning, students, online, classes.

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis. Many countries have to close schools, colleges, universities and almost all activities. . According to World Bank (2020) the policymakers have either to close schools and other organization where people are in close contact to each other trying to reduce contact and save lives or keep them open and maintain the economy. But can we estimate how much the COVID-19 interruption will affect learning?

The COVID-19 pandemic now threatens to make education outcomes even worse. The pandemic has already had profound impacts on education by closing schools almost everywhere in the planet, in the largest simultaneous shock to all education systems in our lifetimes. The damage will become even more severe as the health emergency translates into a deep global recession. These costs of crisis are described below. But it is possible to counter those shocks, and to turn crisis into opportunity. The first step is to cope successfully with the school closures, by protecting health and safety and doing what they can to prevent students' learning loss using remote learning.(World Bank, 2020).

The global outbreak of COVID-19 is profoundly changing our lives and professional practice. In a time when educational institutions in many parts of the world have been forced to close down, language teachers and learners have been prompted to teach and learn languages online. Though technology has been advancing for years thousands of language teachers and learners are relying on the internet as the only medium for teaching and learning languages for the first time. Many of them may be **ill-prepared for the challenge of teaching and learning languages online, and they may not be well supported by their local infrastructure (e.g. internet availability) and resources.**

According to MESTI (MESTI 2020c; ASK 2019; ISK 2018) the preventive measures announced by the Government of Kosovo against the spread of COVID-19 on March 11, 2020, have affected the lives and education of approximately 450,146 students and 30,528 teachers in the country . As soon as the MESTI , together with municipal education directorates and non-governmental organizations, announced those measures, they began planning online learning and train teacher to prepare TV teaching pre-university education which was not an easy task as designing and delivering, exciting and innovative teaching/ learning needs experience. Information systems (IS) teachers deal with technology every day, yet they are sometimes the first ones to forget how to use it in the classroom. To organize a classroom using technology one should be flexible. Flexibility means offering choices in the learning environment that meet the learner's individual needs and circumstances such course basics as class

times, course content, instructional approach, learning resources, location, technology use and communication medium (Collis, Vingerhoets and Moonen. 1997).

Since COVID-19 is a truly global phenomenon motivating language teachers and learners to teach and learn languages online, means that teachers and learners must rely on the use of technology to continue their teaching and learning sometimes with limited resources.

What is an online course? What do learners expect an online course to be like?

They expect online courses to be mostly asynchronous, and they expect to be able to learn at their own pace to a much greater extent than in the regular classroom course. How can we teach speaking in this kind of environment? This is our first challenge.

Online learning provides many benefits for students who want flexibility. Some advantages include:

The ability to take courses on the schedule arranged by teachers and students, when it best suits them.

The opportunity to learn on any connected device, without having to relocate or attend class in person. No expenses on travelling, clothes or eating. No need to spend time on getting dressed perfectly or on their appearance, no shame for making mistakes, totally relaxed!

The benefits are clear, but online students may face some unique challenges compared to students who attend college or university. Here are four issues to be aware of and how to overcome them.

1. Digital Literacy

To attend class online, you'll need a certain degree of technological proficiency—including the ability to successfully log in, participate in classes, submit work, and communicate with teachers and classmates. This includes understanding online communication etiquette and knowing student rights and responsibilities in an online learning environment.

2. Technical Issues

For an online student, a reliable internet connection is key. If you plan on doing a lot of schoolwork at home, you'll want a fast home internet connection. As an online student, you can access class wherever you have a connected device, but a strong internet connection is required. Low bandwidth and weak internet can affect how quickly you can (re) connect and participate in class.

3. Time Management

Flexible scheduling is great for online students, but they often need it because they have responsibilities outside of school, such as work and family. Due to a bad internet connection you must start logging in some time in advance.

4. Motivation

Online learning requires motivation to complete tasks, stay engaged, and make progress. When you're not surrounded by classmates and instructors in a physical setting, it may be tempting to procrastinate. Some online learners may start out fully engaged and then discover that their motivation wanes. When this happens, they may fall behind. **Lack of motivation is a common challenge for all types of students.**

5. Teachers classroom management is crucial. Classroom management is about directing, organizing such learning activities to maximize the productive involvement of the student in learning. According to Wong, Rogers, & Brooks (2012), Classroom management include all the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that student learning can take place. It consists of a plan-a set of procedures that structure the classroom so that students know what to do, how to do it, and when to do it in an online classroom . If this is not well planned than the class fails. Anderson, C, M, & Spaulding, S. A (2007), state that: 'Once the rules are set, teachers should monitor students' behavior to make sure the rules are being followed (p.16). ' Many teachers try to find a way to monitor student behavior.

Emmer, Sanford, Clements & Martin (1982), in their synthesis of research on classroom management, noted that: "At all school grade levels, effective classroom management has been recognized as a crucial element in effective teaching. If a teacher cannot obtain students' cooperation and involve them in instructional activities, it is unlikely that effective teaching will take place. In addition, poor management wastes class time, reduces students' time on task, and detracts for the quality of the learning environment". While, Wlodkowski (1982) asserted that for many teacher and in many schools, the most widely and practiced interpretation of the word discipline/classroom management is control. Xochellis (2015), states that: 'The school is a social institution, which is organized to train the human beings of every society]', which is that in the time of Covid-19 every home is transformed into a school, involving both parents and the children.

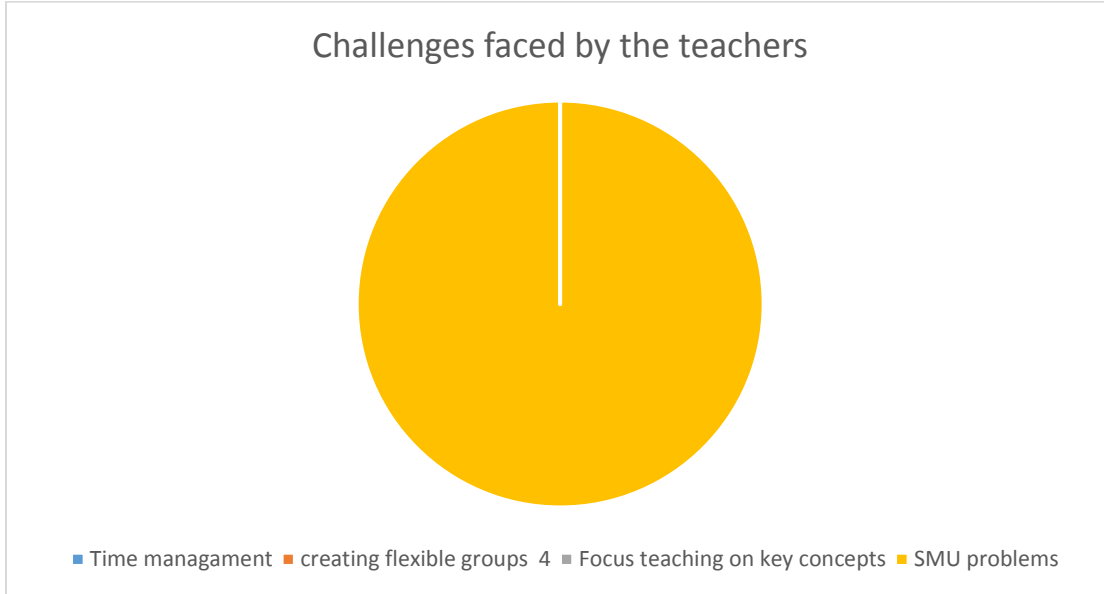
2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

As mentioned above the aim of this paper is to analyze the current situation of online language learning and teaching in Pandemic, and also to explore teachers' and students' perception about online foreign language classrooms (FLC) verses school teaching/learning. The paper implements a case study done with the students and

teachers of University Fehmi Agani in Gjakova through an interview, a questionnaire and an online classroom observation with four teachers and thirty students participating in the study.

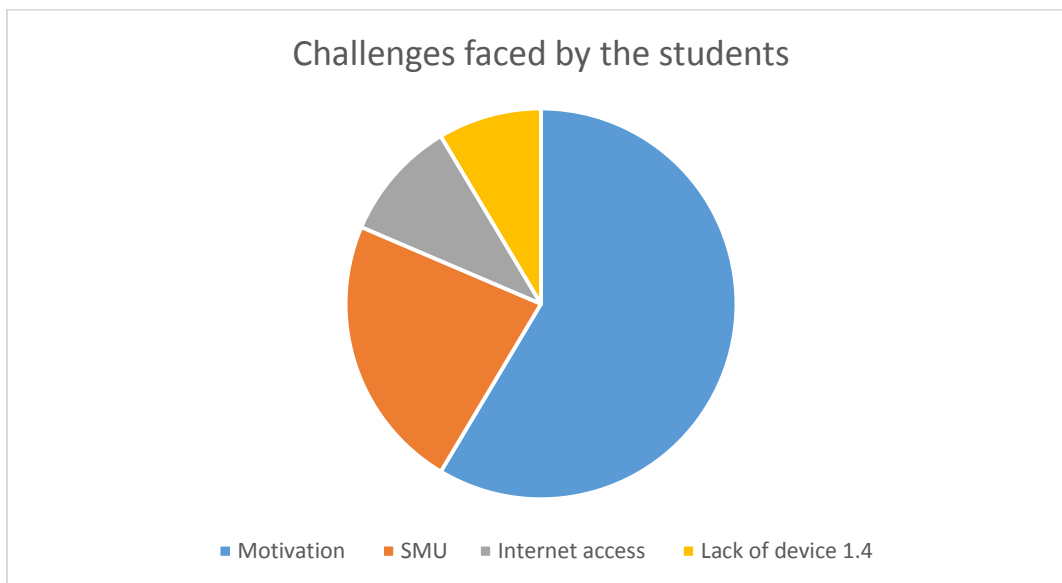
3. RESULTS

Chart 1. Challenges that you faced during online learning in Pandemic. UGJFA Fehmi Agani Gjakove , June. 2020.



Being asked about the challenges faced during online teaching in Pandemic all teachers claimed that time management was a problem since they had only ninety minutes to teach with one group and connecting to the class was problematic. The first problem causing time management was SMU. It was a new issue introduced to both teachers and students and considering the fact that a large number of classes were held at the same time the network was not always good. This took time until teachers could get connected to SMU with the help of IT officer. It means that the lack of technological proficiency equals waste of time .

Chart 2. Challenges faced by students- UGJFA Gjakove, June 2020



Concerning the challenges faced by the students they almost all faced SMU problem. It was hard to get connected as the link did not get to them. There was an option to be sent the access link via email but, then students could not get registered on the attendance list of the teacher. Another percentage of students 40% could hardly connect to the internet and another 30 % had no electronic device at home. So, these are the challenges that caused the lack of motivation to students for the online learning.

4. CONCLUSION

One of the main challenges faced with Covid -19 a worldwide health crises is Delivering quality education. As all the schools and universities had to close down, we families must understand that their children are not sent home for fun. The idea is that they continue their education at home, in the hope of not missing out too much. Despite all the challenges including SMU, Time management, flexible groups, teaching key concepts, internet access and lack of devices, the most important thing is trying to keep students/teachers motivated. Teacher/student wellbeing is key to a proper education. In such unprecedented and uncertain times, it is normal for people to experience higher levels of stress and anxiety, teachers included. Teachers need socio-emotional support to face the extra pressure being put on them to deliver learning in a time of crisis as well as support their students' emotional needs Many families are facing problems that need to be supported by the MESTI. Those living in rural areas have not internet access or any technological device. The MESTI is the one that should take care of solving this problem as many countries did. The government of Netherlands for example government has put in place measures to provide laptops and wifi for families without digital access while teachers from her school call parents on a weekly basis to keep in touch- not an example in Kosovo. Many families including teachers in Kosovo having only one device is hard to cope with the situation, necessarily one of them will be left behind. Another challenge for Kosovo is whether the teachers are ready to move instruction online? Turning teaching materials into digital format at short notice has been a challenge as few teachers have strong digital and ICT skills So while global home schooling will surely produce some inspirational moments, some angry moments, some fun moments and some frustrated moments, it seems very unlikely that it will on average replace the learning lost from school.

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