



BENEFITS OF ONLINE AND OFFLINE RESOURCES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AND NORWEGIAN AS FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN A POST-PANDEMIC CONTEXT

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Abstract

The study seeks to evaluate how teaching a foreign language (English, Norwegian, or both) has been influenced by the availability of online and offline resources in the post-pandemic context. It also highlights the adaptability of both educators and students alike in using such available resources and emphasizes the process of incorporating gamification in teaching a foreign language. Moreover, it is an attempt to point out to what extent such resources and practices are beneficial to students and helpful for educators. The focus groups are comprised of university students learning Norwegian as a foreign language as well as pre-university level students of English as a second language.

Keywords: *post-pandemic, foreign languages, online and offline resources, gamification, adaptability, blended learning*

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The paper focuses on presenting facts, experiences and insights based on two perspectives, namely one of a high school English teacher and the other of a Norwegian college teacher. Both teachers are based in Cluj-Napoca, Romania at Gheorghe Șincai National College respectively Babeș Bolyai University, Faculty of Letters, Department of Scandinavian Languages and Literatures. At first sight, the study might be perceived as an unfair comparison, for two main reasons. Firstly, it draws parallels between the teaching of a language that is so widely spoken worldwide, namely English, versus the teaching of the Norwegian language spoken by only several million people mostly living on Norwegian land. Secondly, the paper compares the availability of resources for English high school students versus Norwegian college students. However, in spite of the unlikely comparison, the study might offer some interesting findings based on the students' responses and could be a starting point for future research in this regard.

Undoubtedly, the Covid-19 pandemic prompted the need to make electronic resources readily available not only when it comes to the teaching of foreign languages but also for teaching various other school subjects. Almost overnight, electronic teaching resources witnessed a boom, with many websites offering a multitude of material that could be used in the classroom (including the virtual one) and publishers uploading material that could be easily downloaded for free, all in an attempt to make the transition from the physical classroom to the virtual one more smooth and, why not, more bearable for all factors involved in the teaching process. Moreover, many websites offered access to free activities that were designed to be more interactive and catchy for students, ranging from quizzes to games. In a way, one could say that the numerous electronic resources which teachers can still access at present are a legacy of the pandemic, as most teachers have learned to make use of them during the pandemic and continue to do so to this day. Thus, there has been a shift in paradigm when we speak of the teaching process altogether, and both teachers and students alike have adapted to this new way of teaching and learning. Of course, the extent to which each educator and student has adapted to this new process varies from individual to individual and is difficult to

quantify. Nevertheless, the change was, although dreaded by many at first, beneficial in the long-run.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

It is challenging to cite previous research on the benefits of online and offline resources in a post-pandemic context because generally the post-pandemic context is not largely investigated. Furthermore, among the sources we have consulted, we did not find any previous comparative study on the benefits of online and offline resources. However, several general theoretical considerations can be made:

A similar article entitled "Students' Attitudes Towards the Use of Digital Apps in Two Online Courses: An English Course and a Norwegian Course" outlines that teachers must assess the pedagogical benefits of digital apps and consider student feedback. Students managed both synchronous and asynchronous learning via various platforms, and digital apps were integrated for teaching and evaluation, though not all are suitable for didactic purposes. Apps help understand course content and develop transversal skills, though students still value textual resources and prefer face-to-face instruction (Cotoc and Pop 117-118). Along the same lines, awareness, empathy, and humanistic elements must be embedded throughout online programs to ensure their effectiveness (Dodd et al. 68-69).

A study on blended teaching and its impact on students' achievement and attitudes outlined a positive perception of blended learning - practical, supportive, efficient, and motivating, it facilitates self-directed learning and knowledge transfer (Aleb and Labeled, 101-102). Among the challenges faced in higher education in Nigeria, lecturers' perspective is similar to the ones identified by our students: lack of skills and technology infrastructure hinder remote teaching, poor internet access and digital divide exacerbate challenges (Abdullahi Abubakar Yunusa et al. 43-66).

The book *Global Higher Education During and Beyond COVID-19. Perspectives and Challenges* offers insights on how universities globally responded to the pandemic, presenting it as an opportunity to reform higher education. It highlights global similarities in the universities' response to COVID-19, emphasizing growing disparities and the resilience of university communities.

The book aims to bridge the gap between past trauma and future possibilities, offering a future-focused imagination for higher education. Authors provide clear, precise analyses of pandemic realities while avoiding pessimism, outlining the necessity and mobilization of change. The book serves as a comprehensive reference, addressing systemic issues in higher education and redefining the post-pandemic era as a new generation for global higher education (Kumar et al. 2022).

When it comes to the use of games in education, there is an ongoing debate regarding its effectiveness, with some studies suggesting lower-than-expected impacts on motivation. In education, gamification aims to integrate game design elements into learning processes to boost engagement and learning outcomes, although its effectiveness remains uncertain and there's a need for more rigorous studies to assess its effectiveness systematically. Overall, while gamification holds promise for enhancing education, further research is needed to determine its optimal implementation and effectiveness (Dichev and Dicheva 2017).

A study about perspectives in post-pandemic higher education indicates a move towards blended learning, shaped by technological advancements. It highlights expectations of radical changes post-pandemic, including increased acceptance of online education and a preference for hybrid models. The pandemic is driving structural changes in higher education, emphasizing online and hybrid modalities, stressing the fact that maintaining quality and equivalence between online and face-to-face education remains crucial (Ashour et al 219-238).

Teacher strategies in online teaching include motivation, clear explanations, and digital portfolio assessment. Both digital portfolio assessment and creative teaching methods enhance the online learning experience (Andi Julian et al. 26-27). Another study comparing the effect of online teaching during COVID-19 and pre-pandemic traditional teaching in compulsory education found that high-scoring students decreased significantly post-pandemic, with a notable increase in intermediate-level students. The findings of the study suggest that online teaching in primary and secondary schools was less effective compared to face-to-face learning, citing challenges such as technical difficulties and lack of teacher presence (Xiaoying Feng et al. 315-316).

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Our research seeks to test the following hypotheses:

1. Online resources are more readily available and extensively used by students now compared to the period before the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. Post-pandemic, teachers have incorporated more online resources into their teaching practice and continue to use the online resources.
3. Printed materials continue to be the most reliable and widely used resources in the classroom.
4. Resources in English are easily available and more numerous than the ones in Norwegian, both in print and in electronic format.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this research the following methods have been used: direct observation of students, the focus group, and analysis of documents. The research took place in the 2023-2024 school year and had two focus groups: one of students grades 9-11 studying English at Gheorghe Șincai National College, the other group consisting of college level students learning Norwegian at Babeș-Bolyai University, both educational institutions being located in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The questionnaires were compiled by both teachers who conducted the research, following certain observations (especially in a post-pandemic context) that we have had of our students and also stemming from our own teaching practices and challenges.

ONLINE AND OFFLINE RESOURCES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

When it comes to teaching English, one could say that the availability of resources, both printed and online, is bountiful. Moreover, almost all printed materials needed for teaching and learning English as a foreign language are also available in digital format, including student books that are uploaded on manuale.edu.ro as well as student books offered by various publishers, including Cambridge University Press, Macmillan Education or Hamilton House, to name only a few. In an effort to help teachers make use of digital resources in the classroom, most publishers designed the online versions of both student books

and workbooks in such a way that the teacher can access the audio material and the various other activities (be they grammar exercises, vocabulary practice, writing or speaking tasks) and provide instant answers to the students with just the click of a mouse.

Additionally, most publishers have included online separate sections that come as a bundle package for the teacher, offering a multitude of other materials, such as extra practice for each unit, test banks (with readily available tests or tests that the teacher can customize), literature links, suggested reading material for students, and even games. Some publishers (such as Cambridge University Press, for example) even allow the teacher to keep track of each student's online practice, provided that the student has a Cambridge One account and is added by the teacher to a certain class. This tool can be very useful if the teacher, for example, wishes to see where the students might need improvement; it can also be a helpful tool in case the teacher wishes to reward students for the Practice Extra completed online. Moreover, students have the option to redo the same exercise until they get all the answers right, and this feature is attractive to most students, because they like to know that even if they get a wrong answer they can redo the exercise and get the right answer on a subsequent try.

ONLINE AND OFFLINE RESOURCES FOR TEACHING NORWEGIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

When it comes to teaching Norwegian as a foreign language, the availability of printed and online resources is not that vast. However, for a language spoken by 5.550.203 million people (ssb.no, *Befolkning*), of which 931.081 immigrants per 2024, 16.8% (ssb.no, *Innvandring*), the resources are quite omnifarious, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Norway makes an effort to disseminate its culture worldwide through easing the language acquisition process for both immigrants and foreign students studying Norwegian abroad. According to the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills, there are 5000-6000 students studying Norwegian abroad at 130 universities worldwide (hkdir.no).

There are various textbooks and language websites which guide foreign learners through their linguistic path. In this study, we shall briefly analyze the textbooks that are in use at our Department of Scandinavian Languages and

Literatures, level A1-B2: *Ny i Norge, På vei, Praktisk norsk, Norsk på 123, Stein på stein, God i norsk, Her på berget*. As in the case of any basic foreign language study pack, the printed version comprises textbook, workbook and teacher's book. Students are encouraged to develop self-learning skills by going through the corresponding unit both in the textbook and in the workbook. Teacher guidance, in the form of phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactical explanations, is offered along the way. Although Norwegian printed materials are beneficial, one major drawback is that they are inaccessible to be purchased or ordered directly by Romanian students, because the resources are not sold in Romanian bookshops. Hence, our students rely on the resources provided by our library of Nordic studies.

The benefits of using the printed version go far beyond the layout. These include direct connection and interaction between students and/or teacher, the possibility to ask for and to receive instant feedback from the teacher and the guarantee that the feedback is constructive and reliable. We have also noticed among our students that there is a greater ease of interaction when working offline, doubled by an eagerness to ask for clarification. Moreover, the degree of involvement in solving task specific questions is higher, which also bursts their motivation. For example, in the case of students who work extra and get continuous and detailed feedback from the teacher (during the face-to-face mentoring classes and not only), we have noticed an increase in motivation and self-esteem, which brought about a boost in their language skills. Our observations are in line with the trend imposed by the Swedish school minister, who advocates for a return to books and handwriting rather than digital devices (theguardian.com). Taking all these into account, printed materials continue to be the most reliable and widely used resources.

Moreover, for all the above mentioned textbooks, the printed version is doubled by its online component, listed and sold separately. We have noticed that online resources are more readily available now compared to the period before the Covid-19 pandemic. The digital pack generally consists of the following: extra worksheets per unit (with answer key); evaluation tools: progress and final tests (with answer key); separate audio track for student and teacher; extra audio exercises; video with grammar explanations, speaking prompts: picture sets, thematic flashcards. Of these, the ones that we have found most useful and thus, have used most extensively, were the free digital exercises

per unit, consisting of a combination to train both vocabulary and grammar accuracy by developing reading and listening skills. The advantage was that they could both be done in class or individually, with instantaneous answer checks.

A brief overview of some of the most widely used websites by our Department leads one to conclude that they are also limited to what the Norwegian market has to offer. We could not make use of well-known language teaching sites such as *Wordwall* or *LiveWorksheets*, as they were lacking content in Norwegian as a second language. Nevertheless, sites like *NoW*, *grammatikk.com*, *moava.org*, *ndla.no*, *tv.nrk.no*, *kublakan.no* have proved to be reliable for our needs of teaching students both during the pandemic and now. As a matter of fact, post-pandemic we have incorporated more online resources into our teaching practice and continue to use them - we have been using these sites extensively both for practical language courses and for language or literature courses and seminars.

All in all, the benefits of online resources are multifaceted: first, the resources are still being offered free of charge; second, they are complex enough so as to train all skills; third, they offer catchy audio and video materials which are appealing to the young generation; last but not least, they are well designed so as to fit to different teaching and learning styles.

QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

In our attempt to highlight the benefits of online and offline resources in teaching both English and Norwegian, we have asked students to complete a questionnaire comprising ten questions, the first six questions requiring answers on a scale from 1-10, the following two being multiple choice answers, and the last two being open-end questions. The high school students who filled in the questionnaire are freshmen, sophomores, and juniors enrolled in an English bilingual programme. The university students who filled in the questionnaire are enrolled in the first, second and the third academic year of learning Norwegian, either as major or as minor specialization (in combination with another language). We should also mention that not all respondents have the same English or Norwegian teacher. For high school students learning English as a foreign language, the questionnaire asked them to refer to their experience in learning English, whereas university students learning Norwegian

were required to answer the same questions but in regards to their experience learning Norwegian as a second language. Thus, the two questionnaires that we have distributed among students were identical, the only difference being that the high school group of students provided answers related to the benefits of online and offline resources in teaching English, while the college level students did the same but in reference to Norwegian language. We have collected 37 responses from our English learning students and 38 responses from our Norwegian learning students. Responses were collected using Google Forms and students' answers are anonymous. The estimated burden time for completing each questionnaire was 5 minutes.

The first question asked students to indicate, on a scale of 1-10, how varied they consider the online resources for teaching English respectively Norwegian to be (1 being 'very limited' and 10 being 'extremely varied'). Of the students learning English, a percentage of 27% rated the variety of the resources an 8, another 27% a 9, and 24.3% a 10. The other 21.7% consists of 1 student rating the availability of online resources at a 5 (a mere 2.2%), 2 students rating it a 6 (5.4%) and 5 students rating it a 7 (13.5%). Thus, a total of 77.3% (the vast majority of students) consider that the online resources for learning English are varied or extremely varied.

The university students learning Norwegian rated the variety of online resources from 3-10, so their perception is quite varied. Half of them rated 7-8: 26.3% -7, 23.7% - 8, while the other half did not share similar views: 2 students rated 3 (5.3%), 4 students rated 4 (10.5%), 5 students rated 5 (13.2%), 3 students rated 6 (7.9%), 3 students rated 9 (7.9%), 2 students rated 10 (5.2%). The disunified rating scheme characterizing the foreign learners of Norwegian might point either to differentiated learning profiles or to the realization that the availability of online resources in learning a peripheral language is not as widespread as they had been used to in the case of, for example, English, during high school.

"How easy is it for you to access such resources personally?" was the second question that students were required to answer on a scale of 1-10, 1 being "impossible" and 10 being "extremely easy." No students learning English provided an answer ranging from 1-5, 2 students (5.4%) ranked the easiness at a 6, 3 students (8.1%) at a 7, 8 students (21.6%) at an 8, another 8 students (21.6%) at a 9, and 16 students (43.2%) at a 10. The results indicate that for a total of 86.5% of the 37 students who completed the questionnaire it is easy or extremely easy to

access online resources on their own. Students learning Norwegian scaled the ease of access ranging 4-10, with 5 as the highest percentage: 21.1%, 8 students. 7, 8 and 9 are also ranked high: 18.4%, namely 7 students rated 8, while 7 and 9 got equal votes: 15.8%, 6 students each. Surprisingly, 4 and 10 were rated identically: 10.5%, i.e. 4 students, whilst the lowest ranking was for 6: 7.9%, meaning 3 students. Contrary to the results listed by the students learning English, those learning Norwegian find it quite difficult to access online resources individually: more than half have rated the easiness from 4-7: 55, 3%. This reluctance may actually be a logical result of the reduced availability of online resources for Norwegian, rather than poor digital dexterity.

The next question provided a plethora of rankings, as we have received rankings from 1-10 for the question “How often does your English teacher make use of online resources in the teaching process?” The scale required students to choose 1 if their teacher never uses online resources in the teaching process all the way to 10 if the teacher uses such resources every class. We should restate the fact that not all respondents have the same English or Norwegian teacher. Percentage wise, 9 students learning English (24.3%) ranked the teacher’s usage of such materials at 7 and another 7 students (18.9%) at 8. Those two groups of students represent the majority of the answers, as the other rankings vary significantly, as follows: 2 students (5.4%) indicated that the teacher never uses such resources in the classroom, 4 students (10.8%) ranked the usage at 2, 1 student (2.7%) at 3, another student (another 2.7%) at 4, 3 students (8.1%) at 5, 1 student (2.7%) at 6, 3 students (8.1%) at 9 and 6 students (16.2%) at 10. Thus, a total of 11 students (29.7%) out of 37 ranked the teacher’s classroom usage of such resources between 1-5 and the remaining 26 students (70.3%) out of 37 ranked it between 6-10, meaning that more often than not teachers use online resources in the classroom. When it comes to the university students learning Norwegian, the dynamics is quite similar, in that they extensively agree on the teacher’s use of online resources. Moreover, the majority, i.e. 76.3% rated it 8-10, of which 10 scored highest, with 12 students (31.6%) assigning the maximum rank. The other rankings are insignificant and they also display high variation: 1 student ranked 2 (2.6%), another 2 ranked 5, respectively 7 (5.3%), while 4 students ranked the usage at 6 (10.5%). Hence, only 9 students ranked below 8 the frequency of using online resources by the teacher. These data reinforce the upward curve of

continual and increased usage of online resources in this post-pandemic teaching context.

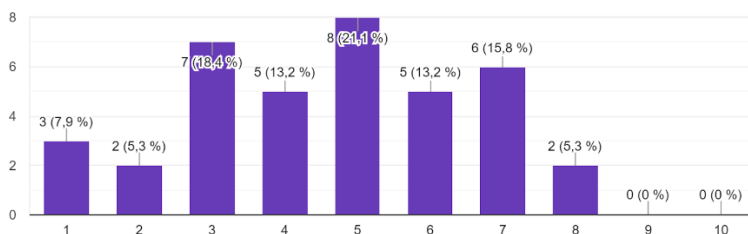
The fourth question referred to how useful students consider such online resources to be, 1 being 'not useful at all' and 10 being 'extremely useful.' Of students learning English as a foreign language, no student indicated a response ranked 1-4. One student (2.7%) ranked the usefulness at 5, 2 students (5.4%) at 6, 3 students (8.1%) at 7, 4 students (10.8%) at 8, 8 students (21.6%) at 9 and 19 students (51.4%) at 10. The progression of those rankings is noteworthy, as it clearly indicates that almost two-thirds of the students consider online resources to be useful or extremely useful, demonstrating that they understand the importance of such resources. The tendency is even clearer when analyzing the rankings of students learning Norwegian as a foreign language. No student indicated a response ranked 1-6, while 5 students ranked the usefulness at a 7, respectively 8 (13.2%). The vast majority, 28 of 38 students, believe that online resources are useful, of which 8 ranked it a 9 (21.1%) and the rest agreed on ranking the usefulness a 10 (52.6%). The conclusion is that both high school and university students are aware of the importance of online resources and this realization is, more often than not, a consequence of the extensive use of digitalization during the pandemic.

Since gamification is an increasing trend, we also included a question asking students to rank on a scale of 1-10 (1 being 'never' and 10 being 'every class') how often their teacher incorporates games into a lesson. Interestingly, the responses of students learning English are quite similar to the ones for the third question (How often does your English teacher make use of online resources in the teaching process?), leading us to conclude that teachers who do not make frequent use of online teaching resources also do not incorporate games into the teaching process. Of a total of 37 respondents, 7 (18.9%) indicated that their teacher never makes use of games during class; at the opposite pole, no student ranked the teacher's usage at 10. One student (2.7%) ranked it at 2, 3 students (8.1%) at 3, another student (2.7%) at 4, and 4 students (10.8%) at 5. Thus, the rankings from 1-5 add up to a total of 43.2%. Three students (8.1%) ranked the usage at a 6, 4 students (10.8%) at 7, 10 students (27%, representing the majority) at 8, and another 4 students (10.8%) at 9. Thus, the majority of students learning English benefit from having games incorporated into the teaching process.

The assumption that teachers who do not make frequent use of online materials tend not to incorporate games into the teaching process is, however, not valid for students learning Norwegian, as the third question showed extensive use of online resources during teaching, while this question displays varied rankings, pointing in the direction of little to no use of gamification in the case of university students. To ease the exemplification, we insert the chart, indicative of the downward ranking: 65.9% ranked 1-5 (25 of 38 respondents). As a matter of fact, this question differentiates itself from the rest, registering the singular and highest ranking of 1, as well as lack of 9 and 10. The most plausible explanation to such an omnifarious response scheme might be the dense university curricula, which makes gamification challenging for the teaching process. Another cause might either be the differentiated curriculum, with courses where the inclusion of games does not fit that easily, or differentiated teaching methods, as higher education students do not have a singular language teacher.

How often does your Norwegian teacher incorporate games into a lesson?

38 de răspunsuri



The final question that required ranking from 1-10 (1 being 'not useful at all' and 10 being 'extremely useful') asked students to indicate how useful they consider games to be when learning English, respectively Norwegian. The responses show that the overwhelming majority of students consider games to be instrumental in learning English, as 35 (94.6%) out of the total 37 respondents ranked the usefulness of games at least 6. No student ranked it a 1, 4 or 5, while one student (2.7%) ranked it at 2 and another student (2.7%) at 3. Three students (8.1%) ranked it at 6, 6 students (16.2%) ranked it at 7, 4 students (10.8%) ranked it at 8, 9 students (24.3%) ranked it at 9 and 13 students (35.1%) ranked it at 10.

Students learning Norwegian acknowledge the usefulness of gamification and express themselves in favor of it, with no student ranking it 1-3 and just one student ranking it 4 (2.6%). A small number of students, namely 4, ranked it at 5 (10.5%), the rest of 33 ranking 6-10 (87%). A peculiar aspect is the low ranking of 9 (2 students, 5.3%), compared to the high ranking of 10 (8 students, 21.1%). The upward curve undoubtedly suggests that both high school as well as college level students perceive games as highly beneficial when learning a foreign language.

The seventh question was a multiple choice one, asking students if they prefer online sources, printed ones, or a combination of both when learning English, respectively Norwegian. In the case of the high school students learning English, the majority (64.9%) have indicated that they prefer to use a combination of both printed and online resources, 32.4% prefer printed material only, and a mere 2.7% (one student) prefers to rely solely on online material. The majority of students learning Norwegian (31) would also rather use a combination of both printed and online resources at an even higher percentage: 81.6%. However, their preferences on online versus printed resources are inverted compared to those of the students learning English: 5 students (13.2%) would prefer online materials to 2 students in favor of printed materials (5.3%). Thus, we notice a slightly changing dynamic: more students preferring a mixture of resources, whilst fewer preferring printed materials. Although it is difficult to come up with a straightforward explanation for this shift, a plausible one would be that university students have by now managed to develop an individual learning style. Hence, their motivation is probably higher, since Norwegian was their study choice, not a language imposed by the school curriculum. Having become independent language learners, they now feel more confident on shifting to online sources, as these provide more liberty and flexibility throughout their language acquisition path.

Our eighth question was also a multiple choice one, asking students if, when learning English respectively Norwegian, they rely mostly on printed or online resources. Of the total 37 respondents learning English, 70.3% have indicated that they mostly rely on printed material while the other 29.7% rely primarily on online resources. The percentage is reversed for the respondents learning Norwegian: 56.8% of students rely mostly on online resources as opposed to 43.2% who rely mainly on printed resources. Again, as stated above,

one possible explanation for this preference is that college level students feel more comfortable with relying on online resources, given their learning motivation and independence. They most likely rely on online resources for the sake of availability, convenient access, easy accessibility and connectivity, as well as instant feedback.

The second to last question was an open-ended one, asking students to list some advantages of online resources when learning English, respectively Norwegian. The vast majority of students learning English pointed to the easiness of accessing and using online resources, the convenience of being able to access them regardless of where a person is located, the advantage of being able to find a specific resource with the help of the search buttons, the ability of such resources to keep them engaged and focused on a task for a longer period of time, and the environmental friendly aspect as well, as online resources do not require paper and ink. Likewise, most students learning Norwegian listed similar advantages, to which the following can be added: a wide range of materials; instant feedback on pronunciation and grammar; instant explanations; accessibility to diverse exercises, texts and audio resources. Norwegian learning students also find it beneficial to easily check for correct answers (especially receiving instant grammar test feedback) even from their mobile devices. Furthermore, they perceive online resources as interactive (multimedia incorporation for enhanced learning), appealing, easily searchable and well-organized, appreciating their global connectivity and cost-effectiveness.

Our last question was also open-ended and it was actually meant to provide a starting point for future research regarding the disadvantages of using online resources, as we consider this to be an interesting topic to explore. Most high school students learning English pointed out that online resources can be distracting, causing some students to lose focus and not pay attention, are sometimes unreliable, might cause students to be exposed to too much screen time, and would sometimes not give the students a chance to work individually. In addition to these, the university students learning Norwegian also identified issues as the lack of personalized guidance hindering comprehension, which they categorized as overwhelming. The absence of a teacher for clarification was widely listed by the respondents. This goes hand in hand with limited interactivity and indicates that they have always been perceiving the teacher as

a real help, not just an authority per se. This status of the teacher could not be changed by the rushed and forced shift towards online teaching. Students have also noticed that the content can become repetitive and the explanations may be inadequate. Another aspect that they seem to be aware of are the negative effects on their eyesight and/or their handwriting skills. Many have also pointed to the unavailability during internet disruptions or technical challenges. All in all, university students prefer using printed materials for memorization, as they are uncertain about the accuracy of online sources. Last but not least, they advocate for a balance between online and printed resources.

From a teacher's perspective, one of the disadvantages of having such a multitude of online and printed materials is that, quite often, there are inaccuracies in the answer keys, spelling mistakes in testing materials or confusing instructions for the students. For example, we came across exercises in the student books or workbooks where the printed version of the teacher's book provided one answer to the exercise whereas the online answer key provided a different answer. In other instances, the printed version of the answer key provided several options as an answer (in a rephrasing or transformation exercise, for example), while the online version provided only one answer, although even students realized that there might be multiple answers, as the printed version obviously indicated. In another instance, while I was administering a test to a sophomore class, one of the students pointed out that the directions for one particular exercise asked the students to fill in the blanks with the correct preposition. However, for one of the blanks the part of speech that correctly filled the blank was, in fact, a noun. Upon checking what the student had pointed out, I also realized that there was, indeed, a mistake in the way in which the instructions were given; of all the ten blanks that the students had to fill in, nine required a preposition, but there was one blank where the only part of speech that fit was, in fact, a noun. Such mistakes on the part of the publishers can make matters very confusing for students, be they native speakers or not.

Another drawback is that the layout of the pages in the online version does not entirely match the layout of the printed versions of the same book. For example, some publishers offer the feature of clicking on an exercise which will then open a separate window that will show the content of the exercise and the teacher will have the option to click to show the students the correct answer. The

problem is that the layout of the exercise that the students can see in the online version is completely different from the layout of the same exercise in the printed version. Again, such a visual mismatch can be confusing to some students, making it difficult for them to follow along. When it comes to the teacher's books, a major drawback is that very few publishers offer overprinted teacher's books. Thus, the teacher is forced to work in parallel using the digital tool, the student book and the teacher's book, which is not an ideal situation, given the fact that the teacher needs to pay attention to students as well, prompting them to answer and providing instructions and explanations.

Since the paper focuses on the advantages of online and offline resources in teaching English respectively Norwegian, we plan to explore more in depth the disadvantages of using such resources, possibly drawing a comparison between the same two languages and having the same two focus groups as for this research.

CONCLUSIONS

As we have initially anticipated, before asking the students to respond to the questionnaires, the responses of the high school students learning English are not significantly different to those of the college level students learning Norwegian, with a few exceptions, such as the responses regarding the students' reliance on printed materials rather than online sources (or vice versa) and slight differences in percentages for some other questions (such as the one regarding the usefulness of online resources), but not to a significant degree.

As such, the findings of the study partially validate our hypothesis.

When it comes to the availability of online resources, our first hypothesis: *Online resources are more readily available and extensively used by students now compared to the period before the Covid-19 pandemic* was validated by the questionnaire data. Both types of students rely more heavily on online resources than before the pandemic.

The second hypothesis: *Post-pandemic, teachers have incorporated more online resources into their teaching practice and continue to use the online resources* was also validated, but only through the students' perspective and through the

general considerations of the two authors. No specific questionnaire for teachers has been applied. This is a limitation of our study, but we intend to expand upon it in our future research.

The third hypothesis: *Printed materials continue to be the most reliable and widely used resources in the classroom* is again verified only through the students' lenses who have indicated their preference for and reliance on a combination of both printed and online materials. As previously mentioned, no questionnaire for teachers has been applied yet. This acknowledged limitation shall further be researched on.

Our fourth hypothesis: *Resources in English are easily available and more numerous than the ones in Norwegian, both in print and in electronic format* has been successfully demonstrated. After applying the questionnaire, it became clear that resources in English are easily available and more numerous than the ones in Norwegian, both in print and in electronic format. Norwegian thus benefits from fewer free digital resources for teaching it as a second language. Moreover, the printed materials, although beneficial, are inaccessible to be purchased or ordered directly by Romanian students, as they are not sold in bookshops.

It is also important to note that we have compared a mainstream language with a peripheral language, hence some of the discrepancies in responses. Moreover, both sets of students have offered their answers based on different teaching patterns, that is to say, they are all taught by several teachers. This might be another explanation regarding the diversity in perception.

Gamification was also included in the questionnaire, because we were aware that students find games catchy, engaging, competitive and appealing, regardless of their age. Games are also helpful for those who do not necessarily acquire information in a traditional way. The questionnaire responses indicate that games have not been incorporated extensively during the teaching process, at least not as much as our students would have wished to. We are of the opinion that educators need to emphasize to students the fact that the primary purpose for using games in the classroom is to help them acquire information in a

different, entertaining way. To conclude, both pupils' and students' approach to learning a foreign language is similar, and so are their preferences for language acquisition.

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