The Advantages and Disadvantages of Offline and Emergency Remote Online General English Classes

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Abstract

During the Covid-19 outbreak, with more than one billion school closures occurring worldwide, all teaching and learning interactions have to be conducted online, and it is a challenge for teachers (and learners) to adapt to this sudden shift because most educational institutions were not yet ready. However, regardless of the pandemic, in the era where technology plays a huge part in the advancement of human civilization, it is time for the global education system to evolve and begin incorporating technology into its implementation. Once the pandemic is over, teachers (and learners) will then have the opportunity to choose their medium of teaching and learning interactions, whether it is offline or online. Thus, this study examined and compared the advantages and disadvantages of both offline and emergency remote online teaching. The data were collected through Focus Group Discussion. Several prompts were used as discussion starters, but the researchers allowed the participants to share their opinions freely and let the data speak. The data were then analyzed and coded using thematic analysis. Researchers then made a summary of synthesis assumptions based on and supported by evidence from the data corpus. The findings revealed that teachers tend to favor offline teaching for its direct teacher-student interactions, although the high number of students in one class can be a challenge. Whereas online teaching is preferred for its time-efficiency and flexibility, albeit its technological complexity.

Keywords: [offline, online, English teaching, synchronous, asynchronous, technology]

INTRODUCTION

In the field of English language teaching, various teaching methodologies and approaches have been implemented in the classrooms. Some of the most common approaches are the oral approach and situational language teaching, the audiolingual method, total physical response (TPR), the silent way, community language learning (CLL), suggestopedia, the direct approach, grammar-translation method (GT), and communicative language teaching approach (CLT) (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In reality, English teachers combine the approaches to enable the students to achieve the learning objectives. A study by Kong (2011) explored a combination of communicative teaching methods and the grammar-translation method in teaching English to Chinese students in a vocational school. The result showed that by combining these two contrastive approaches, teachers could enhance their students' ability to grasp the learning objective in a better way. Another similar finding came from Chang (2011) where he initially conducted a contrastive study on the communicative approach and the grammar-translation method. He later concluded that the

best way to achieve maximum results was to integrate the two said approaches. However, these approaches were mainly developed for conventional teaching and learning activities which are conducted in offline classrooms with face-to-face and direct interactions between learners and instructors. As a consequence, for decades, language teachers around the world were used to teach within the "traditional" boundary.

The Covid-19 outbreak in early 2020 has extremely changed the global educational system. The outbreak resulted in approximately 1.38 billion school closures occurring worldwide (Li & Lalani for World Economic Forum, 2020, paras. 1-2). This unfortunate event forced educators around the world to switch to emergency remote (henceforth, ER) teaching, preventing learners from physically interacting with each other to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Consequently, all teaching and learning interactions have been conducted virtually through online educational platforms. At first glance, this could seem to be the perfect solution for global education amid a pandemic. Nevertheless, ER teaching that is being conducted everywhere right now is meaningfully different from regular, well-planned online learning. Hodges, et al. (2020) explained the phenomenon in their study:

> In contrast to experiences that are planned from the beginning and designed to be online, emergency remote teaching (ERT) is a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances. It involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction or education that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face or as blended or hybrid courses and that will return to that format once the crisis or emergency has abated. The primary objective in these circumstances is not to re-create a robust educational ecosystem but rather to provide temporary access to instruction and instructional support in a manner that is quick to set up and is reliably available during an emergency or crisis. (para. 13)

It seems that in ER teaching and learning, educators, teachers, lecturers, and all educational institutions personnel, even learners, are expected to "master" this new system overnight. This current situation is unexpected, and most schools and universities were not yet ready. Rahiem (2020) pointed out in his study on the ER learning experience of university students in Indonesia that one of the main reasons for this unpreparedness was because "most of the course syllabus was not designed to be an online or for a distance learning experience" (p. 17).

As a result, many teachers, including language teachers, are intensely pressured to provide manageable yet effective teaching methods that are appropriate and suitable for the current situation in a very limited time. They are expected to be able to implement the teaching methods that they have been used in offline to online classrooms, although previous studies revealed that many teachers were actually struggling to adapt to the sudden shift (see for example Nashir and Laili, 2021; and Nakhriyah & Muzakky, 2021). This situation was reflected in a survey conducted by The Inverness Institute (2021) to 121 teachers in California which revealed that around a third of the participants agreed that this sudden shift is extremely challenging and more than half felt that the general public does not understand the hardship teachers are going through.

For the last year, there have been several studies conducted to study ER online learning in the language teaching and learning field, especially, in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms (see for example Hodges, et al., 2020; Lestiyanawati & Widyantoro, 2020; Nakhriyah & Muzakky, 2021; Nashir & Laili, 2021). Many of the studies focused on teachers' perceptions towards online English learning and ER teaching, as well as teachers' opinions and suggestions on effective

online English teaching methods. However, there are very limited studies that are aimed at analyzing teachers' perceptions towards online and offline English classes. Furthermore, most previous studies (see for example Lestiyanawati & Widyantoro, 2020; Damayanti & Rachmah, 2020; Nashir & Laili, 2021) tended to investigate English teachers with limited resources or in rural places where most of them were not equipped with proper teaching apparatus for online teachings, such as computers, laptops, fast internet connections, and easy access to various English material resources both offline and online. Thus, naturally, the results tended to showcase the negative perceptions towards ER online teaching, and preferences for conventional, offline teaching. Therefore, this study aims to investigate English teachers' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of the ER online English classes in comparison to those of their previous offline ones, where the teachers are properly equipped with state-of-the-art teaching equipment. Hence, the present study sets out to answer the following research question:

1. What are the advantages of offline and online emergency remote English classes?
2. What are the disadvantages of the offline and online emergency remote English classes?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Some of the previous studies on offline teaching and classrooms suggested that teaching offline allowed English teachers to directly interact with the students (Damayanti & Rachmah, 2020) which resulted in the possibility for teachers to combine two or more contrastive teaching methods to increase their students' chance to grasp the learning objectives more effectively (Kong, 2011) and to eventually achieve the maximum result from the learning interaction (Chang, 2011), with "Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Grammar Translation Method (GTM), and Total Physical Response (TPR) were the dominant approaches used in EFL classrooms"

(Intarapanich, 2013, p. 310). Additionally, direct interactions between teachers and students found in offline classes might also help teachers conveniently implement various classroom activities such as presentations, group work, and group discussions (Chien, 2014), along with the use of teaching tools such as "flash cards, textbooks, worksheets, and chalkboard/whiteboard" (Intarapanich, 2013, p. 311). Furthermore, in offline classrooms, students are also believed to have more opportunities to build a two-way interaction with the teacher for a better understanding of the material discussed. A contrastive study on offline and online classrooms by Damayanti and Rachmah (2020) on 16 EFL students in Banjarmasin, Indonesia, found that, in offline classrooms, teachers were able to communicate directly with learners and provided immediate feedback during the teaching and learning process. In fact, according to the findings by Damayanti and Rahmah (2020) more than half of their participants preferred the "traditional" classrooms to online classes because these particular (physical) locations provided them with comfort and familiarity during the learning process which was absent from the online ones (pp. 23-24).

However, it is also important to note that "conventional (offline) classrooms also tend to be teacher-centered where teachers dominate the classroom and are the primary source of information and students have fewer chances to interact with each other (Ameliana, 2017, p. 60). Similar findings also revealed by Weizheng (2019) that "teachers still spent most of the time in the presentation, only leaving a small part of the time for interaction [...] some of the teachers have difficulty in developing the conversation or involving the students in teaching activities in EFL class." (p. 108). Teacher-centred classrooms also tended to focus on preparing students to take exams rather than to cater to the students' needs (Zohrabi, et al., 2012), and the materials are grammar-oriented (Acat & Dönmez, 2009).

Regarding the student-teacher interactions and classroom management in offline classrooms, teachers are believed to have the ability to manage the classroom interactions properly by "setting appropriate seating arrangements, managing learning activities, choosing the most interesting topic to discuss and making students discipline by setting the rules" (Muluk et al., 2021, p. 137). Yet**,** according to Lap and Thy (2017), the effectiveness of classroom interactions and management might not be purely determined by teachers, although, sometimes, teacher-related factors, such as personality, clarity in giving instructions, and teaching methods, would also play a part in affecting the overall quality of classroom interactions. They found that classroom interactions between teachers and students are, in fact, mostly affected by learners-related factors, such as learning styles, level of confidence, and level of proficiency. Similar findings by Dincer, Yeşilyurt, and Demiröz (2017) also revealed that,

> […] (the learners) who try to at least physically attend the course have agreed with the engagement items and they are the ones who are more behaviorally, emotionally and cognitively engaged. Regarding the learners' motivational orientation, […] when the learners engage in the course with pleasure or excitement, they become behaviorally, emotionally, agentically, and cognitively more engaged learners when compared to the learners engaging in the course for the external factors, like passing the course or to fulfill compulsory attendance (p. 100).

On the contrary, in ER online classrooms, the main concern raised by teachers was their inability to control the students during the teaching and learning process, which could lead to the class being less effective (Nakhriyah & Muzakky, 2021). Moreover, the lack of control of classroom management, the challenging process of materials delivery, and the feedback provision that was not optimal (Nashir & Laili, 2021) are also listed as some very common problems faced by teachers during ER online teaching. All of these resonate with the results of Lestiyanawati and Widyantoro's (2020) study which suggested that most teachers tend to struggle in integrating technology into their online classrooms.

However, apart from the obvious and urgent need to conduct ER online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is also essential for teachers to understand how to properly integrate technology into their teaching because in the 21st century, "the role of the teacher shifts […], they become orchestrators of learning rather than dispensers of skills, serving to facilitate learning" (Harris, n.d., p. 1). Yordming (2017) stated in her study that, "language teachers need to be clear about their purpose for incorporating ICT into their classroom […] Developing an awareness of how specific tools or techniques can enhance learning is essential." (p. 47). Classrooms that are integrated with technology have the potential to help develop students' authentic writing and oral communication, to "offer intimacy and immediacy, [and] to nurture a dynamic community of learners where feelings of togetherness and accessibility are expected." (Durriyah & Zuhdi, 2018, p. 58).

Therefore, to achieve those notions, teachers' (and learners') digital literacy seems to play a huge part. A private school in southern England, Paignton Academy (2012) shared a similar view on why (their) teachers should familiarize themselves with technology and be digitally literate, they stated that,

> […] digital literacy is not simply maintaining and developing a familiarity with computers, the internet and the possibilities afforded by incorporating ICT (Information, Communication, Technology) – it is more about future proofing learning, keeping teaching accessible and relevant to pupils, and extending and embedding key skills and concepts into pupils' lives – both in and out of school (para. 27).

Most of the previous studies tended to focus either on (conventional) offline teaching or ER online teaching only and are only partial in scope. Regarding ER online teaching, they tended to examine teachers' perceptions with similar background situations where the teachers were not fully equipped with proper facilities, such as fast internet connection, decent devices, and various resources for English materials, whereas for (conventional) offline teaching and classrooms, most of the studies only explored the advantages and rarely presented the opposite. Therefore, this study sets out to examine and compare the advantages and the disadvantages of both (conventional) offline and ER online teaching in a situation where the teachers have the experience of both types of teaching interactions, and they are fully supported with state-of-the-art teaching apparatus.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the qualitative approach with Focus Group Discussion as the research instrument. The authors chose Focus Group Discussion to facilitate the participants' different opinions on and to gain an in-depth understanding of the same topic, as Nassar-McMillan et al. (2014) stated in their study that, an unintentional result of the focus groups was realizing that the format created ample opportunities for discussion about topics that not only gave information to the researchers but to the participants as well. It was clear that this experience gave many participants the words to express their current understandings of the issues we addressed (pp. 1628 - 1629).

(5)

The first author as the moderator gave a few prompts as a discussion starter but allowed the participants to share their opinions freely and "let the data speak". There are four main prompts that were used during FGD, such as, learning activities, challenges, teaching methods, and teachers' perceptions. These prompts then were naturally developed into several questions throughout the discussion.

Participants

The participants are 3 female English lecturers (Amy, Bella, Christ). For the purpose of this study, the participants were chosen based on the following criteria:

(1) They have been teaching English professionally for more than 5 years. This means the lecturers have enough experience teaching English in offline, conventional classrooms to be compared to their ER online teaching experience.

(2) They have received a certified 3 to 6-month training of English instructors/facilitators from one private training and development institution in Jakarta.

(3) They belong to different age groups; Amy is in her 30s, Bella is in her 40s, and Christ is in her 50s. This criterion allows the author to examine whether the implementation of technology in ER online teaching has different impacts for the English lecturers in different age groups.

(4) They teach TOEIC Integrated General English to first-year students at a private institution in Kemang, South Jakarta, Indonesia (see Table 1).

Table 1. The participants.

Pseudonym	Amy	Bella	Christ
Age	32	45	55
Sex	F	F	F

Education	Bachelor of Economics	Bachelor of English Education	Master of English Education
Year(s) of teaching English	7	20	37

Data Collection Procedure

Participants were aware of the scope and the purpose of the study, and prior to the Focus Group Discussion, the participants were asked for their consent by signing a Letter of Consent stating that they were informed about the data collection procedure which involved recording and transcribing the verbal data to written form, and they were allowed to withdraw from the research anytime.

The FGD was conducted online on June 20, 2021, in a virtual meeting room using Zoom, and was recorded for 1 hour and 38 minutes long. The author as the moderator started the discussion by giving the prepared FGD prompts, and the participants were then allowed to respond to the prompts by sharing their opinions, interrupting other participants, giving comments, and raising new subtopics. The author then listened to the recording and manually transcribed the verbal data into a written document using Microsoft Word. The participants later were presented the full transcript and allowed to add or remove details, and to confirm the accuracy of the transcript by signing a statement letter. They were also given some follow-up questions through email on July 29, 2021, in order to clarify and elaborate some parts of their answers which the author found ambiguous or unclear.

Data Analysis Procedure

The author read the full transcript a few times to get a full understanding of the written data before making any notes. Since this is small-scale research and the total of the participants was only 3 people, the author mostly wrote handwritten notes and then created a backup file using Microsoft Word. To analyze the written data, this study used the Thematic Analysis (see more Braun & Clarke, 2006) to examine the written data and to find themes. There are two steps in data analysis, that is, (1) to code the data extracts, and (2) to group the coded data into meaningful categories or themes. The author conducted the first step by reading the transcript several times, highlighting keywords relevant to research questions, and creating initial codes. Table 2 shows the example of the coding process.

Table 2.
Sample of coded data extract

Data Extract	Coded For

Because the effort will be different, like, here's the thing, in offline classrooms, we [the teachers] are like the leader in the classroom—we have the control of the speed and the situation.	Strong sense of control in classroom management.
Meanwhile, in emergency online classrooms, there are some parts that we cannot control.	Lack of control in classroom management.

After all the data sets have been coded, all the different codes were then sorted into potential themes and sub-themes. In the process, the author changed codes, added new codes, and dropped a few codes to finalize the final themes. In this stage, the author gave the participants some follow-up questions through email to clarify and elaborate some parts of their answers which the author found ambiguous or unclear. There were two main themes, that is, offline teaching and online teaching, which were further divided into two sub-themes for each main theme, i.e., advantages and disadvantages. The two sub-themes were then divided into several categories, i.e., (1) classroom management (control and speed, number of students, physical gap), (2) emotional bonding (offline, online), (3) privilege (offline, online), (4) overload activities, (5) personal progress tracking, (6) technology (time-efficient, readiness), and (7) preparation stage (see Figures 1 and 2). Finally, the author made a summary of synthesis assumptions and claims based on and supported by evidence from the data corpus.
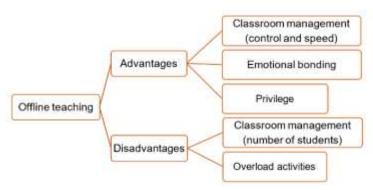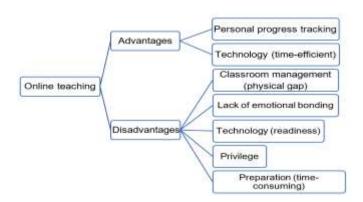
Figure 1

Thematic map for offline teaching/classes.

Figure 2
Thematic map for online teaching/classes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To answer the research questions, the results will be presented into two big groups, that is, (a) the advantages and disadvantages of conventional, offline teaching, and (b) the advantages and disadvantages of ER online teaching.

The advantages and disadvantages of conventional, offline teaching

At the beginning of the Focus Group Discussion, the participants were asked to share their teaching experience before the pandemic, including the teaching approaches that they used in the classroom.

To start her conventional, offline teaching, Bella would use her Teacher Talking Time (TTT) to provide explanations and necessary instructions to help students grasp contexts. In this part of the classroom interaction, TTT allows teachers to model pronunciation and vocabulary used at the beginning of the lesson (Nunes, 2021). She then would shift the focus to the students by implementing Students Talking Time (STT) where the students would share their opinions, needs, and wants. It is essential for teachers to increase STT since it allows students to actively participate in the classroom by producing the language, practicing what they have learned (Nunes, 2021), and being really involved in the lesson (Scrivener, 2005). Since it is an offline classroom, Bella also accommodated some of her students who happen to be bodily-kinesthetic learners (see more Gardner, 2011) by doing some physical learning activities, such as treasure hunt and gallery walking. She believed that doing that would make her class to be less boring (see Excerpt 1).

Excerpt 1.
Teaching approaches in offline English classes.

Bella	*Okay, so, for the offline teaching, especially in university classes, usually the first approach I'm using is the teacher-centered approach, because **we need to explain (the material) first to the students what we want to teach, what the topic would be for that day's lesson. And it's usually in the form of a presentation with slides** and after that, it goes to a student-centered approach which **I focus on what they want to learn, what they need to know, what they have learned, and then also followed by, either project-based learning or, because we're in an offline condition or situation, I usually try to accommodate the kinaesthetic learners by doing kinaesthetic learning with the use of role-playing, and then we can use a treasure hunt, and gallery walking, or anything to ignite their senses.**

Amy and Christ also expressed their agreement with Bella's opinion of having physical activities in an offline classroom. While Amy uses the physical activities mostly to start her class to prevent her

students from getting bored and always actively engage in the lesson, Christ would use it to do a material review to check her students' understanding (see Excerpt 2).

Excerpt 2.
Teaching approach to accommodate bodily-kinaesthetic learners.

Amy	*[…], **I also love to use kinaesthetic learning [as a starter activity].***
Christ	*I usually start the teaching by showing them a sample of dialogue within the context and then based on that dialogue, we break down the language [focus] then we practice and at the end of the session **the students will act out similar dialogues**. So, more or less, **it's the same with Bella and Amy, we try to make the students active by using the language.***

It seems that teaching in offline classrooms enables the teachers to adjust their teaching methods to the different learning styles of the students; not only by engaging in conversations but also by doing some physical learning activities together to cater to their students' needs.

Furthermore, teaching in conventional, offline classrooms also seems to enable the teachers to build relationships with the students; to have more engagement with them, to feel the classroom atmosphere including students' energy, feelings, and physical responses. In addition, they were able to see students' behavior in the classroom, for instance when they felt bored or tired, and give appropriate responses, such as some intermezzos that may help students stay focus on the subject (see Excerpt 3).

Excerpt 3.
Teachers are able to build chemistry in offline classes.

Bella	*[…] See, I would say that I'm thriving in this [offline] teaching style because **I always like to see their energy, their feelings, their reactions**, that I can tell by **their expressions** that this one still doesn't get it, and that one already does, you know? **That kind of engagement, like the body language**, so it's quite confusing when one of them is still confused and the others already get it. […]*
Amy	*In offline classes, **when you see some students getting bored in the middle of the lesson, or getting tired, then you can tell it's your cue to have a break**.*
Christ	*I agree with A.* *In offline classes, **we can have the students back on check directly**, and it's easier to do that. And, **we can also have some "intermezzo" in the middle of the lesson or any fun activity that will probably help the students refresh their minds**.*

The participants felt that being in the same room with their students enables them to notice their students' "unspoken" needs by reading their body language during the learning interactions. Amy and Christ openly stated that offline teaching helps them check on their students' well-being throughout the session, which eventually gave them cues when their students might need some in-between breaks.

Amy also pointed out that almost all students in her classes began every session on a very similar starting line. In offline classes, there are no complicated requirements that must be fulfilled by each student, for example, fast internet connection or decent electronic devices that are usually

required for online learning. Therefore, it was easier for the teacher to start the lesson right away

without the burden of having to check each student's readiness (see Excerpt 4).

Excerpt 4.
Students' starting line.

Amy	In offline classrooms, **the students come into the classroom with the same mindset, with all the necessities such as books, pens, and so on.**

Regarding classroom management, Amy stated that teaching in offline classrooms gave her better control of the learning speed and classroom situation. In certain situations where the students

disobeyed her instructions or showed confusion towards the lesson, she could immediately give necessary responses and figure out a solution (see Excerpt 5).

Excerpt 5.
Teachers have better control of classroom management in offline classes.

Amy	*[…], in offline classrooms, we [the teachers] are like the leader in the classroom—we have the control of the speed and the situation,* like when a student is sleeping in the back, we can just give them a warning or scold them, or when someone looks very confused, we can immediately know and find a solution.

Nevertheless, although conventional and might seem to be the ideal learning situation, in offline classrooms, there were also some challenges the participants commonly encountered as mentioned in Excerpts 6a and 6b. Although it was previously mentioned that in offline classes the teachers usually had better control of how the learning interactions are taking place, they also expressed their concerns regarding the high number of

students in offline classrooms. They thought it would affect *how* they controlled the class during the learning interactions. Interestingly, Bella also mentioned that, for her, even in small (in this case, both offline and ER online) classes, if the students were passive, she would have some difficulties in giving necessary feedback which might result in a "cemetery class" (see Excerpt 6b).

Excerpt 6a.
A usually high number of students and overload activities in offline classes.

Christ	*For me, I think, it's **classroom management—because usually, I teach a big class, like, more than 20 students. It's quite a challenge for me to manage the classroom** so that they all engage in the activities that I provide, and make sure that they really participate in it. […]*
Bella	*[…] Also, [offline classroom] is **related to the number of students**, in my opinion, because **the higher it is, the more difficult it is to handle**. But, then again, **if it's a small number, it's also not helping**—*
Amy	*I agree.*
Bella	*—**because we need to do a lot of activities**.*

Excerpt 6b.
Students' participation affects the classroom situation.

Bella	*It's related more to the student's participation in [both offline and emergency remote online] class.* ***Even in small classes, when the students are not actively participating due to their lack of understanding, their character traits, nor the insecurities of their level of English, the flow of the class will be interrupted often and it would be harder for the teacher to give feedback to the students.*** *There's a potential of becoming a "cemetery class" which results badly in their improvement.*

This part of the conversation seems to show another side of conventional, offline teaching that was previously discussed at the beginning of the discussion. While the teachers aim to accommodate their students' various learning styles, it seems that the intention came with a consequence. The high number of students in an offline classroom seem**ed** to give a negative effect on the teachers' classroom management. This concern then brings the participants to share their opinions on the ideal number of students an offline class should have (see Excerpt 7).

Excerpt 7.
The ideal number of students in an offline class according to teachers.

Christ	*[…] so, I think,* ***we need more than 10 and less the 20****. I think the most number of students that I had was 44 or 45.*
Bella	*So, the number for the offline [class], I think* ***15 is still manageable, especially for adult classes****, because I approach them differently.*

The advantages and disadvantages of ER online teaching

The next part of the discussion focused on the advantages and disadvantages of ER online teaching that has been implemented during the pandemic. In the previous subsection, the participants have shared their perceptions on the advantages and disadvantages of teaching English in offline classrooms. Amy, Bella, and Christ shared that teaching offline enabled them to create an exciting classroom atmosphere by doing various physical learning activities, building an emotional bonding with the students, and having better control of the (learning) speed and general situation. However, the participants also admitted that they struggled in managing the classes since offline classrooms usually have a higher number of students.

In this subsection, the participants shared their opinions on the change of teaching methods that occurred because of the sudden shift from offline to online, along with the benefit and the downside of online teaching. Bella and Christ shared that they would change their usual teaching approach to flipped learning method when teaching ER online classes. Based on their initial assumptions that the students might not gain a lot in this type of learning condition, i.e., ER online classrooms, the participants thought that it would be better for the students to have an early start by assigning some exercises or pre-class activities that hopefully would help the students grasp the idea of today's topic prior to their virtual session later on (see Excerpt 8).

Excerpt 8
The use of flipped learning method in ERonline classes.

Bella	*[…], but with the online class,* ***I shift to the flipped method****. […] they need to know what they're going to learn [beforehand].* ***They need to know the topic of today's lesson and they need to engage with that topic right away prior to the lesson****. […]* ***So, after the [pre-class activities] we start with***

	the teacher-centered method where I explain [the material] to them in an old-fashion way what *we're going to learn, with the slides, and then after that, we return to the student-centered* *approach.*
Christ	*[…] So, I think* **it's similar to the flipped learning method** *used by Bella.* **The students can do it** **independently first, and when we have the virtual [meeting] sessions, we can review those** **materials***.

According to the participants, flipped learning methods allow their students to engage in the lesson right away once they join the virtual session. However, during the virtual session, participants said that they would still proceed with the usual teaching methods they used in offline classrooms, such as total physical response (TPR) and communicative language teaching approach (CLT).

Similar to conventional, offline teaching, there are also some advantages of online teaching shared by the participants. According to them, teaching online provided them with easier access to their student's individual progress, which is almost impossible to do regularly in offline classes. For example, Christ said that in offline classrooms she mostly struggled in monitoring her students' individual progress, or on a more positive note, she feels that she is only able to *sometimes* check her students' progress—unlike in her online classrooms where she can intensely do so and with easier access, according to Bella (see Excerpt 9).

Excerpt 9.
Teachers are able to track students' individual progress.

Christ	*[…] You know, in emergency remote online teaching, in my opinion, probably this is one of the advantages,* **I can know exactly the individual ability**, *which I cannot really see in offline classrooms. Because usually in offline classrooms, even though we focus on each student, but it doesn't happen all the time, but* **in online classrooms, we can monitor the progress of each student more intensely***.
Bella	*[…] Because in the online [class]* **we are more facilitated with the easy access** *to [check the students' progress], so* **it's quite easier to track the progress***. […]*

Later on, through email, Christ explained that in an ER online classroom, teachers were able to design the lesson so that the students could access the materials at their own pace. The (online learning) system also allowed teachers to collect students' assignments and store the soft files (in clouds or computers) which gave them access and flexibility to check and re-check the files numerous times as necessary. This kind of advantage was usually impractical to conduct in offline classrooms since the participants were not used to implement blended/flipped methods prior to ERT. For example, in offline classes, they almost never recorded role-plays activities, or any classroom activities, using videotapes unless the classes were being observed for teachers' performance evaluation (see Excerpt 10).

Excerpt 10
Christ' explanation regarding tracking students' individual progress.

Christ	*In online teaching [using Moodle-based platform],* **materials are designed and prepared to make students study independently.** *There are some exercises and assignments that students have to do and submit in each session. All students' work (written exercises, video/audio recordings) are saved in the system so* **teachers can see the progress more intensely because they can always play/replay the videos/audios anytime.** **This cannot be done in offline teaching (unless whenever there's a roleplay, it's always recorded, which is impossible to do).**

It may indicate that technology has helped the teachers to make the classes more effective. The participants admitted that technology does help them deliver the lesson more effectively and time-efficiently (see Excerpt 11). Unlike in offline classrooms where the teachers usually have to manually check on their students' understanding one by one, in (ER) online classrooms, products of technology, for example, Google Form and Learning Management System, can do that for them. As a result, they can move on to the next part of the lesson right away.

Excerpt 11
Using technology in the classroom is time-saving and time-efficient.

Christ	*FYI, [for some classes],* **I'm using Learning Management System, so we can design the lesson where the students can access the lessons by themselves.** *[Since] we are the ones who design the lessons, we can make it as if we teach them like we're in the classroom.*
Bella	*[…]* **but when we apply [the technology] into the classrooms, it is really time-saving, it's efficient.** *Probably, [when we think about it], […]. For example, with Google Form, you can just assign the students to practice for a few minutes and then they get the (automated) feedback right away.* **And we don't have to [waste our time] to talk about it [further] unless they really have questions.**

However, when discussing ER online teaching the participants also shared some disadvantages. They thought that one of the main problems that commonly occurred in online classrooms was the physical gap between teachers and students that resulted in the lack of emotions between them. It prevented the participants to really see their students' personalities and how they would react to certain situations and eventually built a deeper emotional bonding which usually could be strengthened in offline classrooms.

Furthermore, the use of technology for virtual meetings may not necessarily help to bridge the physical gap between teachers and students, especially in a situation where some students did not comply with the rules and had excuses not to show their faces on the screen. Amy pointed out that when the students seemed to lose focus (whether she was aware of it or not), she could not always handle it, and even if she tried to get their attention back, most of the time, it did not work. The participants agreed that, in ER online classes, it was a challenge for them to encourage students' active participation, to check students' understanding, to make sure the students were involved in the lesson by doing the activities provided, and to make sure the students could follow the lesson well (see Excerpt 12).

Excerpt 12

The physical gap prevents the development of emotional bonding and negatively affects teachers' classroom management.

Christ	*I agree with A. […] But in online [classrooms], I think **the problem is because we cannot see all the students' faces on the screen**, even though we ask them to turn on the camera there's always a reason or excuse not to comply. So**, it's hard for us to really know whether they follow the lesson or not**. And, of course, then I have to repeatedly and randomly call or mention someone's name and make sure that they know what we're talking about. […]*
Bella	*[…] So, it's quite difficult to adjust it in online classrooms because **I cannot memorize them just by their faces, since it doesn't show their [true nature] in the classroom**, like how they would react to something. **There are no emotions there [in online classes]**. So, I feel a bit disappointed.*
Christ	*[…] The difficult part, especially when we're talking about classroom management, is probably when we are having virtual [meeting] sessions. […] **But the problem is, in terms of classroom management, how to make sure that all the students are [actively] involved in the activities that we provided.** […] So, probably, **controlling the students to do the activities, for me, is still a problem.***
Amy	*[…] Meanwhile**, in emergency online classrooms, there are some parts that we cannot control.** For example, **when some students do not pay attention to us, we cannot do anything about it [because we are not aware of it]. Even when we do our best to grab their attention, most of the time, it just doesn't work**. […] While in online classes, **it takes a lot of effort to do that**. […] But, in reality, it's not applicable to all classes, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.*

Students' motivation and cooperation were also considered to determine the effectiveness and quality of the ER online teaching. According to the participants, if their students do not want to cooperate or actively engage in the lesson, everything will not work, no matter how much effort the teachers have put in (see Excerpt 13).

Excerpt 13

Students' motivation and cooperation would hugely affect the effectiveness of ERT.

Amy	*Even in online classes, I try to do some kinaesthetic activities, simple ones like "Can you find something [in your house] related to our vocabulary items?". But, in reality, it's not applicable to all classes, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. **It really depends on students' cooperation**.*
Bella	*[…] **It depends on the students, on their motivation, and also on how they think it's important for them in the future [or not]**. So, whatever we do as the facilitator, even if we give our 1 million percent **if the students do not want to engage and they feel that this is not important [for them], it just goes down the drain**.*

Regarding the lack of motivation, Amy suggested that it is also important to consider the readiness of each student and how each student might have a different preparation stage prior to the class. It is widely known that the main requirement of ER online classes is that the students are expected to make use of their electronic devices to properly interact in the classroom. However, unfortunately, not every student has the privilege of having a decent laptop or computer and a fast internet connection. Some of them do not even have their own personal bedroom which might disturb or cause a distraction to their online learning (see Excerpt 14).

Excerpt 14
Students' readiness and privilege in ERT.

Amy	*Meanwhile, in online classrooms,* **the preparation stage is different for each student.** *Because it depends on their environment, too.* **Some are privileged to have a decent laptop and internet connection in their own personal bedroom, but some are not.** *There is a lot of other factors that might affect their technical performance.*

Another disadvantage that the participants faced in ER online teaching was the implementation of technology. Especially for Bella and Christ who are currently in their 40s and 50s, integrating technology into their online classrooms was a very challenging task. The following excerpt (see Excerpt 15) further explains the participants' concerns regarding the implementation of technology into their ER online teaching. The participants admitted that most technology-related problems that occur seemed to be caused by their own limited capability in understanding how to make the best use of the technology. Christ pointed out that throughout the online class she would keep worrying if something unfortunate might happen to her mid-teaching. She was particularly concerned about facing unpredictable technical problems to which she did not know the solutions.

Yet, this challenging situation might also become an unexpected advantage for the participants. Their inconvenience could become some sort of motivation for them to push their limits by expanding their knowledge and developing their competence towards the use of technology. Christ and Bella realized that the only way to master the skill is by learning the ins and outs of whatever technology platforms they were using, even though it might take a longer time to cover it all.

Excerpt 15
Teachers' readiness towards the implementation of technology.

Christ	*For me, the facility is not really a problem—I'm really grateful that I have my laptop and I have the [internet] connection running well, but* **I think [the problem would be] my own capability [in using the technology]. I'm not feeling confident, I'm rather insecure,** *like, "What if—?" [the question] keeps popping up in my head. When I already planned the lesson well,* **but then some technical problems happened in the middle of the class which I could not give the solutions [to fix it], I really don't know what to do.** *[…] And* **I think I still need to learn [the technical part]** *a lot (laughing).*
Bella	*But Christ, you still know how to operate [Microsoft] Excel, and* **I have no idea***, and I just click this and that, and if it's an error then well… (laughing). […] it's not just about the preparation—***when things got out of hands, like, suddenly the electricity went out, or we lost the internet connection—I just don't know how to deal with that.** *[…] I have been nodding a lot with everyone's opinions. Especially when Christ explained [her struggle with technology]. It's basically me and how I've been feeling. So, [regarding technology], I'm trying to learn it one by one, at my own pace. Because* **I know I'm going to get stressed out if I'm trying to get everything at once.**

The pre-class preparation stages also seemed to be a challenge for the participants. In their opinion, in ER online teaching, preparation was the most important part of the whole teaching and learning interactions. However, the preparation for the online classes was very time-consuming and required them to put in their extra effort (see Excerpt 16).

Excerpt 16
Time-consuming pre-class preparation.

Bella	*[…] So, the level of readiness that I feel when I start a class really depends on my preparation. Because, you know, online [classroom] is unlike offline [classroom] where we can just improvise and then create something out of the blue.* **With the online [classroom], if you don't have the materials ready, you're doomed.** *[…]* **The preparation is indeed time-consuming** *[…].*
Amy	*[…] even though at times* ***it's tiring and the preparation is time-consuming****.*

This study revealed that offline classes gave teachers the opportunity to directly interact with their students, and allowed the teachers to conduct various learning activities to accommodate students' different learning styles. Teachers can also conveniently implement various classroom activities (Chien, 2014), combine two or more contrastive teaching methods (Kong, 2011), and be supported by multiple teaching tools (Intarapanich, 2013). The participants shared that these direct interactions in offline classes between them as teachers and their students allowed them to understand their students' unspoken needs and well-being. Offline classes also do not have complicated technical requirements that must be fulfilled by each student, which also makes it easier for teachers to control the learning speed and classroom situation (Muluk et al., 2021). In certain situations, teachers can also provide immediate feedback (Damayanti & Rachmah, 2020) such as giving necessary responses or figure out a solution to a problem. However, offline classes also tend to have a higher number of students, which can be a disadvantage. For example, when the class has more than 20 students, it was more difficult for the participants to manage the classroom and control how the flow of the class interactions was going.

Meanwhile, in online classes, the participants admitted to having easier access to check their students' individual progress. Incorporating technology into their teaching also helps teachers make the classes more productive and time-efficient in terms of conducting learning activities. However, the physical gap between teachers and students in online classes prevented them to have deeper emotional bonding (Damayanti &

Rachmah, 2020) and put teachers in a difficult position to control the students which led to the class often being less effective (Nakhriyah & Muzakky, 2021). It is also important to note that not all students had the privilege to have and were provided with decent electronic devices and a fast internet connection. Some of them do not even have their own personal bedroom which might disturb or cause a distraction to their online learning. On the other hand, teachers also seem to have difficulties integrating technology into their teaching (Lestiyanawati and Widyantoro, 2020), particularly when delivering the material and providing feedback (Nashir & Laili, 2021). Although, the participants suggested that their own limited capability in understanding technology might be the main cause. They also pointed out that this challenging situation might as well force them to expand their knowledge and develop their competence in using technology, since "developing an awareness of how specific tools or techniques can enhance learning is essential" (Yordming, 2017).

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that offline teaching tends to be favoured by teachers for its simplicity and direct teacher-student interactions, while (ER) online teaching is preferred for its time-efficiency and flexibility. While the high number of students in offline classrooms could be a challenge in classroom management, the complexity of technology incorporation is the main obstacle for teachers in online teaching. This study may provide some insights for English teachers to better understand how offline and online classes might have different impacts on both teachers and

learners, whole needs to further adjust their teaching and learning activities to promote effective and meaningful learning experiences.

Due to the small coverage of the present study, the result may not be generalized in other EFL teaching or learning contexts. Hence, it is recommended to conduct further studies with a larger number of participants. It may be interesting to investigate how English teachers and students in rural and marginalized areas narrate and reflect their offline and ER online teaching and learning experiences and how those experiences have shaped the way they see today's education in both macro and micro situations.

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