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THE ORGANIZATION OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE ONLINE CLASSES FOR CHINESE STUDENTS[1]

ABSTRACT: In this paper we study the issues concerning the preparation and planning of lessons for online English classes. We use a survey to gather responses from our respondents (N=53), who are online instructors of the English language working for various international language schools, concerning the choices of teaching methods, materials and approaches. The instructors adapt the structure and flow of the teaching process to the recipients, who are students from China, by carefully planning the lessons for the purpose of achieving specific objectives. In their line of work, they face many challenges. By employing qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, we come to the conclusion that the parents of the students, who are predominantly minors, are present during classes, which the majority of instructors find to be a positive influence. In their teaching they mostly use already prepared materials that are available on the platform. They utilize Communicative Language Teaching and Total Physical Response as default teaching methods. A certain degree of dissatisfaction arises from the working conditions of freelancers, low salaries, overly high degree of parents' influence and sporadic lack of discipline on the students' side.

Keywords: teaching process, teaching methods, lesson planning, English as a foreign language, Chinese students, online teaching.

ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈА ОНЛАЈН НАСТАВЕ ЕНГЛЕСКОГ КАО СТРАНОГ ЈЕЗИКА ЗА СТУДЕНТЕ ИЗ КИНЕ

АПСТРАКТ: У овом раду бавимо се питањем квалитативног припремања и планирања наставе за потребе онлајн часова енглеског језика. Одговори прикупљени путем анкете нуде нам одговоре о избору наставних метода, наставним средствима и наставним облицима за које се опредељују наши испитаници (N=53), предавачи енглеског језика у више различитих интернационалних школа језика. Структуру и ток наставног

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процеса они прилагођавају реципијентима, студентима из Кине, пажљивим планирањем као видом свесне активности којом пројектују свој рад према одређеном циљу. На том путу сусрећу се са изазовима у раду. Квалитативним и квантитативним методама дошли смо до закључка да родитељи ученика, пре свега малолетних, присуствују настави, што већина предавача сматра позитивним. У свом наставном раду најчешће користе већ припремљене материјале, доступне на платформи ослањајући се на комуникативни приступ и тотални физички одговор. Известан степен незадовољства могу да им изазову услови рада фриленсера, недовољно висока зарада, претеран утицај родитеља и повремена недисциплина ученика.

Кључне речи: наставни процес, наставне методе, планирање и припремање наставе, енглески као страни језик, кинески студенти, онлајн настава.

1. INTRODUCTION

Institutionalized education is based on and regulated by core pedagogical principles (Nikolić 1998: 90–93). This includes planning, preparation, and the selection of methods and procedures for shaping and structuring course content, as well as organizing classroom activities (Marzano & Marzano 2003: 6–10). It further involves the development, design, and selection of textbooks and teaching resources (Byrd 2001: 415–422; Inal 2006: 19–23; Law on Textbooks), the ongoing improvement of content, format, and organization of teachers' methodological training (Milatović 2011), and the evolution of pedagogical and research methods under the supervision of various agencies and the Ministry of Education (Vasilev & Rakić 1998: 15). By contrast, instruction delivered in out-of-school settings is subject to far fewer regulations and restrictions. This so-called freedom can be an advantage, yet it also poses a distinct challenge, since such a complex and demanding process is often entrusted to an instructor with limited experience[2] (Radović-Marković 2010: 289–298; Belias et al. 2013: 73–78; Jakšić et al. 2021: 182).

In this paper we intend to examine how online English language instruction is organized in these non-institutionalized learning environments. Our student cohort consists of learners from China and our respondents, whose practices are the subject of our inquiry of the instructional process, are English language instructors from Serbia.

Consequently, the institutional framework typical of the Serbian educational system is absent, while the interactional-communicative dimension becomes dominant. In particular, instructors have the flexibility to tailor their teaching to the

[2] We describe them as "instructors with limited experience", not only because they may lack sufficient teaching experience, but also because they are unfamiliar with the entire organizational, regulatory, and validation system.

needs and preferences of both students and themselves, without strict adherence to an externally imposed syllabus. The analysis of extensive data (from a broader study) on the advantages and challenges of online English instruction for Chinese students (Todorović & Spasić 2025) has revealed both the potential and the obstacles faced by educators working with learners across diverse age groups, proficiency levels, affinities, and motivations, all sharing a common native language, Chinese, and the desire to learn English.

2. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

The primary objectives of this research are:

1. to examine external factors that may influence the online language teaching process;
2. to gain insight into how instructors organize the instructional process in an online environment.

From these primary aims arise secondary objectives, namely:

3. to assess the influence of students, parents, and employers, as well as the working conditions;
4. to evaluate the role of technology and the quality of teaching materials used by instructors.

In accordance with these objectives, we formulated the following hypotheses:

1. Parents and employers significantly limit instructors' autonomy in organizing instruction, while students exert a lesser influence on lesson dynamics.
2. Instructors who lack familiarity with new technologies exhibit reluctance, do not use web-based tools, and struggle to adapt to this instructional mode.
3. Teaching materials available on online platforms give instructors a sense of security and facilitate the preparatory phase.
4. Freelance instructor status, with its unstable income, negatively affects instructor motivation.

The research procedure relied predominantly on empirical data collected from a sample of 53 instructors employed by online schools and companies operating in the Republic of Serbia: TutorABC, BedaKid, BiBo, Magic Ears, VIP Kid, 51Talk, DaDaABC, and others, that provide English lessons to students in China. The questionnaire was created in electronic form via Google Forms and distributed across

several professional networks (social media groups, Skype channels, etc.) composed of English-as-a-foreign-language instructors. Data collection spanned one month, with the processing and analysis conducted at the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025. Respondents were informed of the anonymity, purpose, and significance of the survey. Their responses serve as a benchmark for evaluating the organization, content, and quality of this mode of instruction, thereby enhancing the credibility of our findings.

To present as many respondent answers as possible without interrupting the flow of this paper, we placed supplementary materials in a separate document[3] that includes Appendix 1: the survey questionnaire, and Appendix 2: anecdotes and noteworthy observations. The second appendix contains numerous responses that reflect our participants' specific experiences and may warrant separate study, as they are largely conditioned by cultural differences.

2.1. Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of 19 questions, 17 of which were mandatory. The majority were open-ended questions that allowed respondents to freely express their impressions and attitudes toward this mode of instruction. To deepen our understanding of their perspectives, we also included clarification questions, and, to a lesser extent, short-answer questions.

During data collection, we focused on several dimensions of online teaching: the organization of lessons (methods and work formats, material and technical conditions, teaching aids), the implementation of lesson plans and curricula, and the communication established on the one hand between students (and their parents) and instructors, and on the other hand between instructors and employers.

2.2. Target group and sample

Effective teaching, i.e. the core unit of the educational process, should rest on quality instructions and development for all learners. This implies that organizational formats, teaching methods, materials, lesson plans, and the conditions in which lessons take place should equally address every student.

However, the context of online instruction outside formal institutions brings its own particularities. For this reason, we examined the characteristics of our "average" instructor and a typical learner. In addition to the core questionnaire items,

[3] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ogvev6gQcSrz3i84mMCt2ZfX1HTbbzPPJ_KRAeu79js/edit?usp=sharing

we included general background questions. Our findings show that the English-as-a-foreign-language instructors teaching Chinese students are predominantly (86.8%) female, aged between 26 and 35. By education, 43.40% hold degrees as English language and literature bachelors; others include one Masters philologist, one French language teacher, one Serbian-language specialist, and thus the number of participants that have philological training sums up to 67.92%. The remaining 32.8% of respondents work in fields such as: student (3), medical professional (2), marketing manager (1), lawyer (1), hotelier (1), tourism specialist (1), economist (1), tutor (1), insurance clerk (1), physical-education and sports teacher (1), financial technician (1), software engineer (1), and industrial pharmaceutical-technology technician (1). Given this diversity, we refer to them uniformly as "instructors," since neither the level nor the type of formal education appears decisive for employment in these companies.

Regarding teaching experience, 79.25% of instructors have worked fewer than ten years (with 15.1% each reporting five or ten years' experience), while 9.43% exceed fifteen years of service. One instructor has 25 years' experience, and two have just one year. Experience working in the online environment is shorter, reflecting the relatively recent emergence of internet-based learning platforms and the significant shifts brought about during and after the COVID-19 pandemic (König et al. 2020: 609–615; Mishra et al. 2020). The students' age range is equally broad: the youngest learner is two years old, the oldest eighty, with the majority falling between four and seventeen years of age.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this section we use respondents' answers to explore the challenges encountered in planning and delivering online instruction, which primarily manifest in:

1. the influence of parents on the teaching process;
2. restrictions on instructors' freedom to organize activities and select materials;
3. issues of student discipline, among others.

3.1. Influence of parents and employers

Given that many students are minors learning from home, we sought to determine whether parents participate in lessons or otherwise influence their flow. Nearly all respondents reported that parents "sit beside their children and encourage

them to follow the teacher", "ensure discipline and attention", "do not interfere directly with the lesson but send materials and suggest what the student needs".[4]

Most instructors view parental involvement positively when teaching young children. However, some find it problematic because parents "sometimes suggest incorrect pronunciation", "exert a negative influence by choosing inappropriate materials", "can upset children, causing them to refuse to participate".

From these responses, we conclude that company guidelines do not formally regulate parental presence; it is left to individual arrangements. Research indicates two main reasons for parental participation or influence in online instruction: (1) during the COVID-19 pandemic, regular schools shifted to online teaching, thrusting parents into new supervisory and assistant roles at home as children's contact with teachers decreased and home time increased (Zhu, Liu, et al. 2022: 210). Parents carry this role into private lessons because the format remains unchanged; (2) more broadly, parents play a key role in developing their children's academic motivation and achievement, since parental beliefs and attitudes about education can shape children's attitudes and success (Matthes & Stoeger 2018: 3). In Chinese culture, education is viewed as fundamental to wealth and social status, leading parents to have (often excessive) expectations of their children, a phenomenon intensified during the one-child policy era (Wei 2012: 153). While parental presence can provide comfort and help children navigate stressful situations, excessive pressure may backfire, undermining children's self-confidence and causing them to seek parental approval (Matthes & Stoeger 2018: 5–6).

The influence of parents and employer-companies leads instructors to reassess their autonomy when structuring lessons. Respondents' perceptions of their freedom varied widely, with answers ranging from '100 %' to '50 %' to 'None': "I have full freedom, unless parents have specific requests, which I generally strive to implement," "Maximum," "It depends on the lesson the student chooses. If they choose free talk, then structuring is free; if they choose a set lesson, it's less so," "Freedom exists only to the extent parents allow it. In some cases, complete freedom; in others, minimal," "Not much—maybe around 10 %," "For me, none; the student has complete freedom," "Minimal." These responses indicate that many instructors face certain constraints imposed by parents, company rules, chosen materials, lesson type, proficiency level, and specific teaching units.

When asked about their greatest challenges in this teaching mode, and whether they encounter discipline problems, most instructors reported few major issues and described overcoming them through adjustments in lesson dynamics,

[4] Selected responses are translated versions of the original responses.

gamification, and individualized attention. If they cannot find an in-lesson solution, they rely on parental support and platform policies to address unacceptable behavior. A subset of respondents described minor discipline challenges and their strategies: "I give them small rewards if they behave, show them toys, and tell them they'll get a song if we finish the lesson well," "After class, I speak with parents to explain what happened," "Sometimes attention wanes after thirty minutes, but introducing games, songs, and interactive activities keeps it under control," "I show them scenes from a film or series to cheer them up, then we're ready to work," "I remain patient and don't let misbehavior annoy me. I engage students with jokes, images, GIFs, and videos related to the topic," "In rare cases of total disobedience, I do my best to finish the lesson – ignoring negative behavior or gently pointing it out – then message the parent afterward to explain that such behavior won't yield learning results unless addressed," "Authority is limited at a distance, and these children are often overloaded with extra obligations, so it's understandable their concentration lapses."

A few instructors reported non-reaction or more radical approaches: "Usually I don't react – or I simply end the class," "There are too many problems with no solution," "Restless children often seek reactions; ignoring them protects me and keeps me neutral if issues arise," "If it happens, I stay silent and stare at the student – that usually snaps them back," "I disable their pen and any classroom controls and ignore them until their disruptive behavior stops. If they persist, I conduct a pro forma lesson with minimum effort – 1) I'm not their caregiver and 2) I'm not paid enough."

Given these challenges and debates, it is clear that instructors need appropriate support, whether through training or IT assistance, and greater freedom to organize their teaching process. This would enhance student engagement, skill development, and the suitability of materials used (Ayu & Sari 2021: 318). Despite the lack of such support, available literature suggests that most instructors intuitively, and drawing on their methodological training and experience, respond effectively to establish discipline.[5]

[5] Additional inspiration for creating a positive, encouraging atmosphere in class, as well as guidelines on possible interventions when working with groups, but also individuals, "with the aim of establishing and maintaining discipline from the standpoint of authority," teachers can find in the handbook by following the concrete exercises and play-based activities that can be implemented both in-person and online (Popović-Ćitić et al. 2021: 83–98).

3.2. Technological conditions and quality of teaching materials as assessed by respondents

Firstly, some parameters such as lesson length are dictated by the platform or employer rules, which means that the majority of instructors (64.15%) teach 25-minute lessons. Other respondents reported lesson durations of 30, 45, or 60 minutes, or a range between 25 and 90 minutes. Several instructors noted that they would change the lesson length "because 25 minutes is too short for anything."

Platform rules also determine whether training is provided. Most instructors agreed that: "assistants provided adequate training on the materials to be used and the platform for online teaching," "training also covered how to deal with different types of learners," "the training addressed the platform, teaching methods, working with children, potential difficulties, and other scenarios that could affect our job satisfaction and operational details of the school." However, some instructors felt that "there should have been more hands-on practice" and "they didn't pay much attention to the teaching style during training, yet they heavily criticized it during the probation period."

Overall, over 83% of respondents received training and found it adequate, familiarizing them with the platform, teaching methods, learner types, and potential issues. Fewer than 17% reported no training or dissatisfaction. The most common complaints were the lack of practical demonstrations and an insufficient focus on the teaching approach, materials, and student interaction. In subsequent evaluations, these training gaps became the main points of criticism. Adequate training is, therefore, critical for new online instructors. Instructors who simply transfer their traditional classroom routines to an online environment may not be effective in that new context (Gold 2001: 35–36). Proper training should encompass two core segments: (1) using necessary technology to create an environment where students can learn without disruption; (2) teaching instructors how to utilize various teaching materials and deliver them effectively in an online format (Gold 2001: 36). These two segments are labeled as most significant because they can easily be linked to the problems teachers face during online teaching – they lack sufficient IT competencies, and the virtual classrooms themselves, with their software, pose a challenge for them (Hassan, Mirza, et al. 2020: 21–22).

This brings us to the crucial questions and lesson segments that are not always directly dictated by employer mandates. Our respondents, with diverse educational backgrounds and experience levels, entered the virtual classroom under varying conditions of training and support. When it comes to teaching materials, 62.26% of instructors rely exclusively on pre-prepared resources available on their

platforms. A smaller proportion combine existing lessons with self-created or internet-sourced materials: "partially prepared materials, but teachers are expected to add their own content and originality," "I prepare my own materials but also draw on a vast array of internet resources – PDF books, fill-in exercises, etc," "I mostly use the prepared materials, but I occasionally create new ones at parents' requests."

Prompted about which language-skill components their materials lack, instructors reported that "Questions that would stimulate communication and speaking skills are missing," "Writing and exercises related to writing are mostly missing," "Reading is missing. Children don't want to read in class," "Nothing is missing except songs," "I think there is a problem and a lack of materials for learning grammar," "Depending on the syllabus, listening and writing exercises for children are missing. Generally, the course is based only on conversation because everyone only wants to learn to speak but does not understand the importance of developing other skills," "The drawback is that there are no writing exercises or homework at all."

Many of these issues could be addressed through more comprehensive instructor training. Employers should recognize that investing in instructor preparation not only eases instructors' work but also enhances student satisfaction since well-prepared instructors with minimal IT problems make an online company far more attractive to learners (Wolf 2006: 55).

Regarding company-provided resources, several instructors rated them good or excellent: "Everything is well covered in the Cambridge exam books and mock tests for FCE/CAE/CPE. If a student wants to focus on writing, we follow the Cambridge guidelines; I explain the grammar myself," "Oxford materials are fantastic because they're systematic—likewise, New Concept English." However, others noted that "Materials are the least of our worries; the student-teacher relationship matters most," "Sometimes parents choose materials inappropriate for the student's age or level," "All materials rely on repetition, which isn't helpful."

Some respondents offered suggestions to overcome these shortcomings: "writing during class isn't advisable except in lessons one on one, as it consumes too much time. I usually assign writing for homework and cover all other skills in class," "Everything except writing is well covered. I try to have students write sentences they speak and encourage them to write more."

In sum, instructors structure their 25-minute lessons based on prior experience and training, largely relying on pre-prepared platform materials.

3.3. Lesson flow

The core of our research focuses on concrete questions about the instructional process, namely lesson organization (use of web tools, selection of teaching methods, and lesson dynamics that foster the development of various receptive and productive skills). When asked about their familiarity with and use of web tools in teaching, 75% of respondents reported that they either do not know these tools or do not use them, citing lack of time or target-group considerations: "I'm not able to use them because I don't have time during the lesson," "I don't use them because I don't teach children. With older students, these platforms aren't necessary," "I know some, but given the extensive material supplied by the school, I rarely have the opportunity to create additional resources," "I have used some with pleasure, but not with Chinese students because the platform doesn't allow it. They're definitely useful and I recommend them to everyone—students respond wonderfully to them."

A smaller number of instructors have heard of web tools and employ them for more interactive tasks, vocabulary checks, quizzes, and educational games: "Yes – Miro board. I use it rarely," "I use the Koala Go classroom and their playground," "I use Wordwall and Kahoot (for group classes), mainly to practice vocabulary."

Web tools bring unique advantages that can be easily implemented in virtual classrooms. Since physical presence and direct contact are impossible in an online format, these tools can accelerate interaction. A multitude of web tools introduce engaging tasks that promote collaboration, critical thinking, and information exchange in online teaching (Usluel & Mazman 2009: 818). They can also directly support the development of language skills as many tools focus on practicing listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the target language (Morgan 2012: 167). However, instructors should incorporate web tools in moderation so that they serve as a natural complement to teaching, since excessive use may become a distraction (Costa, Alvelos, et al. 2015: 2).

Our respondents combine various teaching methods, but Total Physical Response (TPR) and the Communicative Approach dominate. TPR is modeled on first-language acquisition: through observing and executing commands, learners interpret meaning via movement and mimicry (Psoinos 2021: 65–66). The Communicative Approach uses tasks and exercises based on authentic language use, aiming to maximize learners' active use of the foreign language, sometimes at the expense of strict grammar focus (Psoinos 2021: 73). Respondents described their application of these methods: "Usually we start with small talk (Communicative Approach); the main part of the lesson, for example explaining vocabulary, uses

TPR," "I use a lot of TPR. The lesson type depends on what's being taught: phonics and letter sounds follow the textbook's program; otherwise, I base it on CLT," "Total Physical Response is my go-to method with children," "I simply try to have as much speaking as possible and create a relaxed atmosphere," "I primarily use the Communicative Approach. I want to give students freedom of speech and remove their fear of language barriers by encouraging discussions where they help each other."

Total Physical Response is suitable for online teaching because it allows teachers and learners to incorporate elements of the physical world into the virtual classroom. It also introduces variety into online interactions through the use of realia and mimicry and is appropriate for all ages, especially the youngest learners (Psoinos 2021: 67). On the other hand, the Communicative Approach in the online classroom is suitable because it enables students and teachers to engage in diverse communication types like narratives, argumentation, illustrative examples, persuasion, presentations, or simply a friendly chat before class. It offers instructors the ability to use a wide range of web tools and technologies like quizzes, debates, drawing apps to achieve lesson objectives. It is the framework behind many modern coursebooks designed with communicative activities in mind (Psoinos 2021: 75).

Some respondents also draw on the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), traditionally viewed as outdated because it emphasizes learning language rules through extensive repetition, translation, and use of the mother tongue (Psoinos 2021: 57). Yet GTM can be advantageous: for example, when teaching plant names, it is often simpler to give a direct translation than to describe the concept: "Expansion, guidance, TPR, GTM," "Grammar-Translation Method, and usually translation into Chinese," "Grammar–Translation is useful when English communication stalls."

From subsequent questions, we learned that, in addition to English, several instructors occasionally use other languages, most often Spanish or Chinese (with online translators), and far less frequently German (2 respondents), Italian (1), French (1), Swedish (1), and Russian (1). Some of the responses are presented in full to highlight that, evidently, the school does not support the use of other languages in instruction: "I use only English. Parents have the right to complain if we use another language," "No, but in a few cases I used Chinese via Google Translate to clarify instructions. Very rarely," "I'm not allowed, but if I see etymological connections I mention that this word comes from that language. I often use Spanish and Italian examples with advanced or older students."

Although counterintuitive, GTM still has a place in modern online classrooms since it can serve as a bridge to other methods. Early virtual interactions may be one-sided but GTM facilitates communication by leveraging a shared language, thus reducing learners' nervousness. It transfers smoothly from traditional practice to the online setting without extra effort, and its focus on linguistic structures and vocabulary remains valuable (Psoinos 2021: 59).

Some sample lesson flows reported by instructors are as follows: "The class begins with small talk—I ask how they are and what they did today. Then we practice reading and pronouncing new words. I check meaning, model sentence use, and ask the student for their own example. I pose follow-up questions, extend the lesson where possible, and correct errors. For higher-level students, I explain the grammar rule. We finish with a review. If we're working on a text, we listen first, then the student reads aloud. I correct and ask comprehension questions," "Students arrive at grammatical conclusions themselves. We use brainstorming extensively," "I rely mostly on TPR and repetition—pronouncing words and sentences in Chinese so very young learners understand, then repeating in English. With more advanced students, I use communication and prompt questions; with the most advanced, I expand with fun facts," "For young children, we sometimes use songs with TPR, but communication remains the priority—something parents insist on," "I use TPR and the Communicative Approach. I stay cheerful and explain using flashcards, realia, images, GIFs, hand gestures, and facial expressions."

In sum, during each lesson instructors strive to have students actively use English through reading or speaking by combining TPR for meaning-clarification or tactile learners with communicative activities. They employ both platform-provided materials and resources they find online, practice new structures and vocabulary, tailor lessons to individual needs, and break monotony with songs and games.

Aside from the instructor's methodological approach, several previously mentioned factors strongly influence lesson flow. In the survey section for personal observations, respondents identified three critical determinants of successful online teaching: (1) the relationship between instructor and student, and between instructor and parent (less often parent and student) ("In cases where a parent has predetermined goals that actually hinder the child, I wish my voice were heard more and that parents would truly think about long-term learning rather than outpacing another student. I need more freedom to adjust the level for the student; sometimes a parent expects certain materials to be completed in two lessons when realistically it takes four," "Clear boundaries and 'penalties' for disrespecting the teacher and disrupting class," "Choosing students to suit my preferences and leaving the platform

without consequences when a student is disobedient."); (2) the quality of materials and platform features ("Better platforms to connect with students without taking an enormous commission," "Higher-quality curriculum and textbooks. More interactive activities, especially for very young learners," "In Bibo and AcadSoc, teachers are presumed guilty; there's no IT or management support in AcadSoc; too many disruptive students in Bibo and AcadSoc; low pay in Bibo."); (3) the instructor's status and working conditions ("If the teaching profession were more valued and teachers valued themselves more," "A better tax system," "Paid health and pension insurance, maternity leave, and paid annual leave," "A bit more flexibility regarding absences from lessons," "I believe schools should respect instructors more. They focus mainly on students because they're the source of revenue."). Respondents suggested that online teaching could be improved by better regulating parental and company influence, enforcing stricter measures for students who miss classes regularly or cause major disruptions, respecting instructors' scheduled time by preventing last-minute cancellations, and aligning instructors' financial compensation with their qualifications and effort.

When asked to compare with language schools in Serbia or other countries, our most experienced instructors reported even more severe problems: "Teachers are often victims of mobbing and lack of respect. Parents have high demands and standards, yet instructors aren't paid enough to entertain their unruly children. I don't encounter such issues in online lessons with Chinese students," "I worked at three companies. I worked with the Japanese at Engu, with Russians at Skajeng, and with the Chinese at Beida. Working with adult Japanese was difficult for me because they're not sincere and expect the teacher to have answers to every question at all times. During class they smile and are polite, and after class they give you three out of five stars. Working with adult Russians was easy because they're much more relaxed, honest, and flexible, but I don't like that they don't respect time and constantly reschedule and cancel lessons. Working with Chinese children has been phenomenal because they're very hardworking, obedient, and always cheer me up with their jokes."

These responses suggest that instructors working with Chinese students enjoy higher levels of student engagement and respect. By contrast, other schools and student populations face issues such as insincere evaluations, rude behavior, and tardiness that merit a separate, focused study to draw valid conclusions from both qualitative and quantitative data.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Despite the rapid expansion of online instruction and the heightened demand for English-as-a-foreign-language instructors for Chinese students by international companies, Serbia lacks research analyzing the instructional process of this teaching mode for a specific target group. Based on the empirical data from 53 respondents, we identified the following positive aspects: access to multiple schools, allowing instructors to control their schedules, earnings, and obligations; student dedication to learning; cultural diversity that broadens instructors' perspectives beyond pedagogy. When it comes to the negative aspects of this vocation, our instructors stated that instructors are viewed as inexpensive labor; taking leave diminishes their already modest income; excessive parental involvement creates stress for both instructors and students.

The findings in this paper also show that instructors have limited autonomy in organizing lessons. They partially adapt lessons to individual student needs by relying on pre-prepared platform materials, which provide security, simplify preparation, and reduce stress, rather than designing their own resources. Lesson duration and core teaching procedures are largely dictated by platform or employer rules, partially confirming our first hypothesis that parents and employers significantly restrict instructors' organizational freedom.

There is no systematic adoption of diverse methods and formats; most instructors depend on the Communicative Approach and Total Physical Response without leveraging web tools, confirming our second hypothesis that instructors trained exclusively in traditional classrooms struggle in virtual environments. A lack of IT skills hinders the transition to online teaching, unlike colleagues with prior experience in digital instruction. Although companies advocate modern methods, the choice of the approach depends on student age, proficiency, lesson content, and communication or comprehension challenges. Only a minority of instructors familiar with web tools use them, often citing time constraints or perceived mismatch with their target group. Finally, our last hypothesis was confirmed: instructors report dissatisfaction with the freelance status due to unstable income, absence of employment benefits, paid leave, and career-advancement opportunities.

Our goal was not only to open avenues for further research and deepen understanding of how to refine pedagogical practices in online language teaching, but also to underscore both the strengths and weaknesses of this mode of instruction. We aim to encourage the development of robust support systems for instructors in delivering effective online lessons.

We believe the data from this paper provide an accurate portrayal of how online EFL teaching for Chinese students is organized and delivered. The data also highlight the challenges most instructors face, equipping future instructors with realistic expectations, strategies to mitigate cultural shock, and a clearer picture of this teaching context. Identifying and disseminating these insights is the first step toward solving the problems uncovered.

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ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈА ОНЛАЈН НАСТАВЕ ЕНГЛЕСКОГ КАО СТРАНОГ ЈЕЗИКА ЗА УЧЕНИКЕ ИЗ КИНЕ

Сажетак

У овом раду бавимо се питањем припреме и планирања наставе за потребе онлајн часова енглеског језика. Анкетом смо прикупили одговоре од 53 испитаника, наставника енглеског језика запослених у различитим интернационалним школама језика. Прикупљени одговори пружају увид о избору наставних метода, наставним средствима, материјалима и приступима за које се опредељују. Наставници структуру и ток наставног процеса прилагођавају ученицима из Кине, пажљивим планирањем наставе у циљу постизања конкретних образовних исхода. У свом раду сусрећу се са бројним изазовима, од потребе за технолошком оспособљеношћу до прилагођавања строгим правилима и политикама компанија и школа. Комбиновањем квалитативних и квантитативних метода анализе дошли смо до закључка да родитељи ученика, углавном малолетних, често присуствују часовима, што већина наставника доживљава као позитиван утицај. Испитаници су указали и на то да обука коју су добили често није била довољна. Када је реч о организацији наставе, већина наставника сматра да немају онолико слободе у раду колико би желели. У настави углавном користе унапред припремљене материјале доступне на платформи, ослањајући се превасходно на комуникативни приступ и методу тоталног физичког одговора. Одређени степен

незадовољства изазивају услови рада као фриленсера, ниске зараде, претеран утицај родитеља и повремена недисциплина ученика.

Кључне речи: наставни процес, наставне методе, планирање наставе, енглески као страни језик, ученици из Кине, онлајн настава.

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