English Language Learning Strategies during COVID-19 in the Middle East: A Systematic Review

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Abstract:
The recent pandemic has forced the educational sector to unwillingly reform its strategies by compelling it to embrace technology as the savior of the educational process. COVID-19 has adversely affected this sector by forcing a halt to all face-to-face learning in educational institutes, which led to dependence solely on online education and adopting strategies fit solely to distant learning. Thus, this paper has focused on the English language learning strategies adopted during Covid-19. Moreover, this research aims to provide the latest information about online teaching strategies adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic by English language instructors in Asia, especially in Middle Eastern countries. This study is qualitative in nature and utilizes the systematic literature review approach. The data for this research was gathered from renowned databases to maintain reliability. The results highlighted that among many strategies, three are most important in teaching the English language during COVID-19, first is collaborative learning (i.e., breakout classes, cloud-based collaboration), the second is flipped classroom, and the final is scaffolding. In the end, the study concluded with the recommendation as the findings of this research can help policymakers and educationists in developing effective or efficient strategies for tackling tough situations or pandemics.
Keywords: collaborative learning, covid-19, English language strategies, online teaching, pandemics

Introduction

The lockdown due to pandemics has forced the closure of businesses and other activities. Similarly, it also affected the educational sector (Toquero, 2020; Zhu & Liu, 2020) because education presumably seemed impossible without student-teacher face-to-face interaction (Pustika, 2020). Rido and Sari (2018) highlighted that the effectiveness of learning, especially language learning, depends upon the dual interaction of students and teachers and active physical participation. However, the lockdown has imposed online e-learning on all. The learning process by adopting the internet and utilizing technology is known as online learning (Fry, 2001), which has two types, one is synchronous online learning, and the other is asynchronous online learning. The utilization of each of these depends upon the effectiveness, efficiency, and abilities of the institute and its instructors (Hrastinski, 2008). The COVID-19 lockdown situation has shifted the entire learning system to online learning, distance learning, e-learning, or flexible learning (Tanveer, Bhaumik, Hassan & Haq, 2020). Similarly, educational institutes in Asia and particularly in Saudi Arabia and many other gulf countries, have also shifted to online teaching (Alshehri, Mordhah, Alsibiani, Alsobhi, & Alnazzawi, 2020). The institutes that tried to continue the physical education of language were also shut due to sudden spread (Al-Nofaie, 2020). Even though it is difficult to teach any language online or virtually, the pandemic has forced the institutions in Saudi Arabia to adopt it (Almekhlafy, 2020). Thus, in Saudi Arabia and other parts of Asia, the adoption of e-learning has become the new regulation, and technology has emerged as the primary need (Hoq, 2020) and a beacon of hope for the continuity of education. This era of technology has made children digital natives and created ease for humans, especially there is much need for education (Oktaviani & Desiarti, 2017).

Nowadays, technology is helping students in English language learning via online learning. Some researchers attest that some students now prefer the online mode over the physical one due to ease of learning (Sari & Wahyudin, 2019). Simply described, E-learning is actually an education or training that is delivered electronically (Li, Lau & Dharmendran, 2009). It enhances students learning through the use of any appropriate information and communication technologies (Ellis, Ginns, & Piggott, 2009) and can involve Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Blackboard and Moodle. Moreover, it can also include video conferencing tools like Skype and Zoom as well as mobile applications (Telegram and WhatsApp, etc.). These technologies comprise both synchronous (e.g., chatrooms and Listservs) and asynchronous (e.g., e-mails, discussion boards) modes of communication in providing education (Layali & Al-Shlowiy, 2020).

In the context of Saudi Arabia, the implementation of e-learning is really a unique and progressive approach because of technological advancement in the majority of countries. However, still being a vast country, many cities or specific areas do not have the basic technological need or proper coverage (i.e., internet connection). The students, even the teachers, are facing a lack of resources and knowledge of the adoption of teaching applications or methods (Almaiah, Al-Khasawneh & Althunibat, 2020). Thus, to ensure the smooth flow of online education, English language teachers should be provided with "continuous teacher professional development (CTPD)" in using the online pedagogies (Hulon, Tucker & Green, 2020; Williams, Schroer, Gull, Miller & Axelson, 2020) and many such other strategies can be adopted by teachers to facilitate the teaching process in this pandemic. Spiceland, Spiceland, and Schaeffer (2015) explained that the strategy of course redesigning is the most effective way for the course

instructor to deliver lectures online and enable him/her to integrate technology into the online courses. This strategy helps in teaching and increases the chances of student retention. Furthermore, redesigning the course and aligning it with principles of andragogy can assist the usage of interactive learning in the online environment with the help of multimedia tools (Twigg, 2003).

Similarly, Yarrow, Masood, and Afkar (2020) highlighted that the effect of the pandemic on education could be mitigated by online learning. Therefore, it is important to analyze the major issues which can be a barrier to online learning, as online English learning is a barrier for EFL learners in general and Saudis in particular because it is not their first language. Khan (2016) explored whether e-learning in English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching in Saudi Arabia can be beneficial to students and even teachers if all the resources for online classes are available. Zakarneh (2018) also highlighted that Arab students favor online English learning and consider it the best way to improve their English language proficiency. In addition, the teachers also believe teaching the English language online is more beneficial (Pustika, 2020). Prior studies in the context of Saudi Arabia have focused a lot on teaching English online during COVID-19 but ignored the strategies adopted for online teaching. Therefore, this research has not only revealed the literal aspect of online learning or teaching in the pandemic but also highlighted the most commonly used strategies for learning by students (EFL students) and teaching by language instructors in the context of Asia. Especially, the focus will be on Middle East countries, i.e., Saudi Arabia. The emphasis of the study is on the latest research area of learning strategies during COVID-19 and deeply analyzed the literature.

Research problem:

As the pandemic has shut the educational institutes and worsened everything, it is extremely important to analyze the strategies adopted by education institutions and recommend the best methods for future implementations.

The rational and significance:

It is known that student performance, satisfaction, and course outcomes depend on the teaching and learning strategies. The Covid-19 situation has greatly influenced the teaching modes, forcing the teacher to change their strategies. This study has directed the attention towards online or e-learning and provided strategies that can help restore the educational loss due to Covid-19/pandemic. Although various empirical (qualitative and quantitative) studies have been conducted in the past, no studies have conducted a comprehensive systematic literature review, especially regarding online teaching and learning strategies adopted in EFL classes during Covid-19. Therefore, this study is the first in this area and expanded the literature on COVID-19, learning strategies, teaching strategies, and technology adoption during the era of COVID in the context of Asia and Middle East counties.

Research question(s)

1) What are the teaching strategies adopted by educational institutions during the pandemic/Covid-19?
2) What are the teaching and learning strategies adopted in the English language classes/EFL classes?
3) What are the learning, teaching strategies, and technology adoption During Covid-19 in EFL classes in the context of Asia and Middle East countries?

Objectives:

This study aims to provide the latest information about teaching and learning strategies adopted during Covid-19 in EFL classes and point out the best strategies for policymakers and educationists so that they can develop an effective or efficient strategy.

Literature Review

There are various forms of teaching and learning strategies, but the pandemic has changed the shift from offline to completely online teaching which includes blended learning, collaborative learning, flipped classroom strategy, breakout classes and scaffolding (Hakim, 2020; Ahmad, 2020). According to Ria (2021), strategy is a way, tactic, or method of accomplishing something; in this scenario, it is teaching students to achieve their learning objectives. According to Lederman (2020), COVID-19 has inclined both students as well as teachers to embrace the digital experience of academics, even though there are many constraints in the implementation of online teaching and learning (i.e., internet connection, lack of access to learning tools) (Agung & OP, 2020). A study reported that students expressed a positive opinion about the effectiveness of online education during the pandemic (Yildiz, Cengel, & Alkan, 2020). Further research examined the significance of online education and analyzed the flaws, qualities, difficulties, and possibilities associated with online education during the global epidemic (Mahyoob, 2020). The report also offers some recommendations for addressing online learning challenges during natural catastrophes and epidemics.

A study evaluated the stress caused by online learning among Saudi university students during the COVID-19 pandemic, examining students at King Saud University. They observed that most of the student students were experiencing extreme stress and anxiety as a result of the abrupt transition from traditional face-to-face classes to online classes. On the other hand, Bao (2020) noted that online courses' success is highly dependent on detailed course design, attractive and interactive teaching materials, including multimedia content. Wolfinger (2016) concentrated on achieving fully online virtual schooling through the middle school years. The findings indicated that teachers play a critical role in virtual learning and also reported that parental involvement could help children achieve academic success. According to Sun and Chen (2016), online teaching needs to cultivate a sense of community; however, it is a significantly challenging task. They emphasized that student participation, interaction, and collaboration could play a critical role in teaching. Therefore, they concluded that both students and learners should make a joint effort and construct an interactive and collaborative environment for effective online learning.

In addition, according to Alasmari (2021), the challenges faced by EFL students can worsen since English is not their first language. Given the challenges encountered by teachers and students due to the abrupt transition from traditional to online classes, innovative and creative teaching in online classes is more essential now than before due to Covid-19, an increasing number of studies tried to evaluate the teaching strategies, either quantitative or qualitative, but none have analyzed the results through literature review. Therefore, this study aims to provide information about the latest and most effective strategies that can help researchers, teachers, and educationists ineffective teaching.

Methodology

Generally, there are two types of research, one is qualitative, and the other is quantitative. According to Slevitch (2011), quantitative research is primarily concerned with numbers and figures. It is used to quantify attitudes, behaviors, and other defined variables with the goal of confirming or refuting hypotheses about a particular phenomenon and possibly contextualizing the study sample's findings in a larger population (or specific groups) (Park & Park, 2016). Since quantitative research clearly outlines what will be assessed and how it will be measured, it is considered much more structured than qualitative data collection and uncovering patterns in behavior, motivation, emotion, and cognition. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is mostly used in exploratory research. It is generally utilized to obtain a deeper understanding of individual experiences, thoughts, attitudes, and trends. A qualitative researcher's data gathering toolkit is quite diverse, spanning from entirely unstructured to semi-structured techniques. In this study, the exploratory research design was utilized, and the literature analysis method was applied.

Every qualitative research is based on different/specific concepts (Duffy & Chenail, 2009). Hence, this study is based on a special category known as a systematic literature review. Many researchers conclude that systematic literature research is entirely different or opposite from empirical research. The systematic review of the literature supports the subjectivist/interpretivist paradigm primarily on the basis of research paradigms (Campbell, 2014). In contrast to empirical research, it does not test hypotheses or develop theories. Additionally, it distinguishes itself from interpretive strategies such as focus groups, ethnography, as well as interviews. The systematic literature review is written based on the evidence and concepts provided in the literature.

Data Collection and Search Strategy

In order to execute this systematic review, a systematic search of current and prevalent literature was performed by carrying out a detailed search of electronic databases like; Scopus, Ebsco Host, Web of Science. The articles cited in this study were taken from renowned journals which were indexed in Scopus (q1, q2, and q3) and web of science (SSCI, SCI, and ESCI). These databases are mentioned below in detail (Table one):

Table 1. *Databases for Data Collection*

Databases			
Contextual Database	Scopus	Literature Database	Web of Science
Publishers	Emerald		
	Taylor		
	Cogent		
	Elsevier		
	IGI Global		
	Oxford Publishers		

The goal of this search was to find studies that took place between 2019 and 2021. After identifying appropriate research/review papers and eliminating any duplicates, the remaining papers were thoroughly examined. All the irrelevant articles were also eliminated. Furthermore, abstracts from any remaining research papers were thoroughly examined to ensure that all

assimilated papers met the objectives of this current study and to identify any additional papers that could be excluded from this review. In the end, whatever was left after the filtering of the assimilated papers was eventually taken in its full context.

The current review synthesizes the studies collected using the qualitative synthesis approach. According to Stenbacka (2001), the validity of qualitative research has several issues and is also difficult to predict. As a result, the collected data was taken from reliable sources in order to maintain the research's reliability and validity. Furthermore, the data for this study was gathered from the literature, which is referred to as secondary data. As a result, the collected data was linked to the scope of this systematic literature review. Figure one, given below, reveals the process of data collection (Liberati et al., 2009).
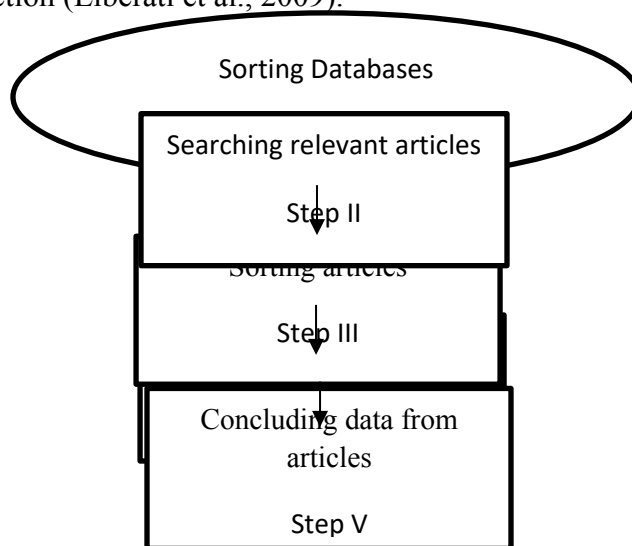

Figure 1. Procedure for Data Collection

Study Selection
All duplicate studies were removed from the list of studies that had been identified and gathered. Afterwards, the titles of the studies and the abstracts were examined to see if the papers found were relevant or not. Moreover, reference lists from previously identified studies were scanned sparingly to find any additional relevant studies with similar objectives. Finally, the peer-reviewed papers that were eventually selected were read carefully by the researcher (Macaro, Curle, Pun, An & Dearden, 2018).

Inclusion Criteria
- Latest studies were considered (From 2019-2021).
- Studies that have been conducted with a methodology that were either qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methodology were included.
- Studies across developing and developed countries were considered
- Studies that were relevant with regards to English language teaching, learning in COVID-19, English teaching strategies in COVID-19, and teaching strategies when teaching online were taken into consideration for this review.
- The majority of studies focusing on Middle East countries and Saudi Arabia were considered.

- The study focusing on Asian countries were also considered.
- The studies published in the English language were included for this review.

Exclusion Criteria
- Old studies were not included.
- Similar studies were excluded.
- The studies published in other than the English language were not considered.

Code of Conduct

In any research project, the code of conduct is the first area of action. This is extensively used as a guide in professional communities to verify the criteria for what is good. The scientific community has established ethical guidelines that must be followed in any research effort and have a social influence (Farisco, Evers & Salles, 2019). The research must contribute to the advancement of society by demonstrating a viable solution to an existing problem. The communities' code of conduct assists in defining the expectations for research outcomes. This research adhered strictly to the code of conduct. All data were compiled from reliable sources of literature.

Results/Findings

Extensive research within electronic databases was carried out, and all the duplicate studies were identified and excluded. Moreover, the irrelevant studies were excluded. The remaining studies were included in this systematic review. The details of total studies included and excluded is given in figure 2.
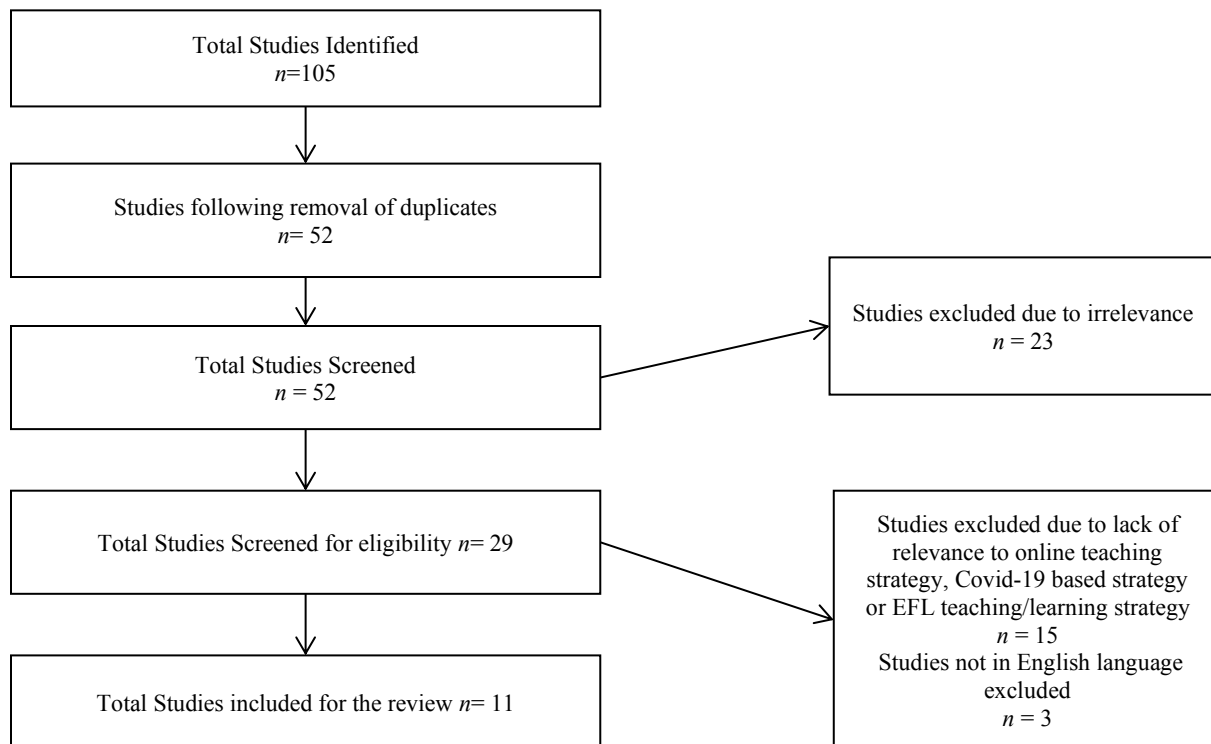

Figure 2. Details of studies (Included and Excluded)

Overall, different teaching and learning strategies have been adopted in Asia and more specifically Middle Eastren countries for effective English language teaching in the era of COVID-19. These strategies are discussed below.

Discussion:

Amid the rise of COVID-19, educational systems and teaching strategies were shifted from face-to-face to online. Collaborative and cooperative learning/teaching strategies are among the most important methods. Collaborative learning is a type of learning that is based on social activities and simulates students' active participation in their studies (Abulhassan & Hamid, 2021). Group activities are learning practices that are utilized in both cooperative and collaborative learning, in which learners participate as co-learners. Group activities also cover a wide range of activities, from collaborative and cooperative group activities to peer tutoring (Chen, 2018). In the case of online EFL classes, collaborative tools are applications that are used to improve the quality of online teaching and learning. Generally, collaboration is a process in which students work in pairs or groups and collaborate to achieve a task by brainstorming, listening to peers, and sharing of ideas. Such activities demanded teachers' guidance and communication between students in order to accomplish the lesson's objectives (Rashid, Yunus & Wahi, 2019).

In the Covid-19 scenario, Ahmad (2020) checked the effect of online cloud-based collaborative writing on the EFL student's writings in a Saudi university. The study involved 21 tertiary EFL students. Prior to treatment, the students were pre-tested in both the quantity and quality of their writing. Then, they were subjected to cloud-based collaborative writing practice for a whole semester before being post-tested on both criteria. All the participants (students) were asked to use Google Docs to write weekly essays. Students were divided into small groups and assigned to write their own essays in collaboration. Google Docs was selected because it allows synchronous and asynchronous communication and modification on one or more documents by several writers regardless of location. The result of this study showed that online collaborative writing is effective in improving the quality and quantity of English writing by EFL students. In addition, the majority of students were satisfied using this method as an effective learning strategy (Ahmad, 2020). However, this study only focused on English writing and completely ignored the reading and speaking context for EFL students. Moreover, the focus of the study was students from Saudi Arabia. Similarly, Badr (2020) studies the effect of online collaborative learning on EFL students (focusing on speaking skills). This study included 25 university students (From Egypt), and the result was included based on the pre-posttest. The result revealed that online collaborative learning significantly enhances the English learning skills of the students. Moreover, it also helped to reduce the English-speaking anxiety level of the students. Nevertheless, the scope of the study was limited to first-year English department Egyptian university students and did not study the anxiety level as the students' progress in their academic years. On the other hand, Kanno (2020) checked the effectiveness of an online collaborative teaching strategy in a Japanese university EFL student's context. The researcher used online collaborative platforms (i.e., Slack, Microsoft Team) to evaluate the impact of this strategy. To this end, 94 students participated in online collaborative classes, and they were also involved in group discussion sessions. Through after-classes discussion, it was revealed that collaborative learning enhanced student engagement and improved EFL learning. This study's

main drawback was the absence of precise data collection methods such as quantitative analysis of categorized online responses, structured questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews.

Similarly, collaborative and synchronized online discussion as a teaching strategy for EFL students was employed by researchers in Indonesia (Rinekso & Muslim, 2020). In this research 5 university students participated in collaborative-based classes in which synchronized online discussions were also included. The data were collected through virtual observations (participatory) and virtual semi-structured interviews. The findings indicated that students responded positively and believed that this teaching strategy was an effective style of online instruction because it facilitated task negotiation, exchange of opinions, and task planning. However, the target of this study was only Indonesian students.

Similarly, another interesting collaborative learning strategy, known as online breakout room, has been explored by researchers for EFL students. Saltz and Heckman (2020) defined breakout room as a type of collaborative peer learning in which students work in small groups synchronously. Such activities can be easily held through online applications (i.e., Zoom, Skype, and Google Meet). Therefore, EFL teachers can also use breakout rooms in online classes. In such strategies, students may utilize language constructively, produce meaningful output, and communicate with other students. Within a session, students can be divided into small groups or pairs to engage in spoken language practice, debates, role-playing, and group tasks, while also inviting the teacher to participate. Since teachers can provide opportunities for children to build peer connections without fear of making grammatical errors in their language use, so, this method assists in strengthening their second language acquisition skills (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2020). In Bahrain, Bamidele (2021) studied the utilization of online breakout rooms in EFL classes of a university. In this study, the researcher used primarily quantitative analysis through the use of a small number of survey questions (32 participants) and qualitative analysis (three participants) through the use of semi-guided interviews conducted during online classes. As a result, the study concluded that students were able to perform more efficiently, increased students' engagement in learning, and made EFL classes more interactive. Additionally, students also found the use of online breakout classes quite exciting and thought of it as an innovative learning strategy. In another study, Lee (2021) also employed the Zoom breakout rooms for EFL students in South Korea. A total of 25 university students participated in this study, in which data collection was comprised of open-ended survey, a focus group as well as individual interviews. According to the findings of this study, the majority of students were satisfied with the use of Zoom breakout rooms in EFL classes. The study also highlighted that breakout room provides an environment for students to engage in practical communication activities that may be difficult to achieve in the main online classes, particularly if the class is large. Yet, this research evaluated students enrolled in a single South Korean university, and the number of the sample was small to draw generalizable conclusions.

Due to the rising implications of online classes, the concept of flipped classrooms has also grabbed attention as an alternative teaching strategy. In a traditional classroom, new knowledge is taught in class through lectures, and students practice it at home via homework. On the contrary, in the flipped classroom, students receive information before the class via technology (Alsmari, 2020; Kurt, 2017). In this approach, the teacher distributes video recordings of the classes to EFL students so they can watch them at home and gain a better

understanding of the topic. They could watch the video indefinitely until they learned the concept. The students then do the assigned work and activities in class (i.e., online) alongside their peers and the teacher. Therefore, the teacher serves as a guide, encouraging learners to become active participants. Using this technique, practices that are typically conducted in class are transformed into home activities delivered with the help of technology (Wu ,Hsieh, & Yang, 2017). In Saudi Arabia, Chatta and Haque (2020) conducted a study to check the effectiveness of flipped classrooms on EFL students of the university. This study divided students into two groups. In the first group, 32 students were taught using traditional methods, whereas in the second group, 31 students were taught using flipped classrooms. The study used a mixed-method research design to collect data. This included a combination of several tools such as pre and post-tests, a questionnaire, and a group discussion (conducted only for the experimental group). The study found that flipped instruction method enhanced the students' writing skills. It also revealed that teachers and students had a positive attitude towards using this tool. However, this study was limited on improving the students' paragraph writing skills (Chatta & Haque, 2020). Similarly, Alsmari's (2020) study also highlighted the effectiveness of flipped classrooms for EFL learners and mentioned that such teaching strategies could enhance the learning skills of students. This study involved a total of 100 students, 50 of whom were assigned to the flipped teaching group, and the other 50 were assigned to the traditional teaching group. The researcher concluded that flipped instruction could assist the students in becoming active learners in class. Regarding other Arab countries, Flipped classrooms have also been implemented in Oman (Al-Naabi, 2020). In this study, 25 participants (EFL students) from an Omani university were involved where flipped classroom method was adopted. The study utilized many tools including pre-test, post-test, and semi-structured interviews (Al-Naabi, 2020). The study found that using flipped learning played an important part in improving the students' English language comprehension and implementation of grammar. Students' attitudes toward the flipped approach were positive. Nevertheless, this study only explored the flipped classroom through the perspective of one element of classroom pedagogy, which is pre-class video-recorded lessons. Moreover, the study was limited to students from a single Omani university. This study also proposed that teachers should create brief videos that are easy for learners to comprehend and follow (Al-Naabi, 2020). Since the main goal is to make online availability of lessons to students and to allow students to view them at their own pace and level of understanding, the flipped classroom can serve this role excellently.

In addition to the strategies mentioned above, scaffolding is another potential teaching strategy for EFL students. Generally, scaffolding is a term that refers to the act of guiding students gradually toward greater understanding and, ultimately, higher independence in the learning process (Mohammed, 2020). Benefits of this method are numerous. it allows students to easily ask questions, offer feedback, and aid their classmates in acquiring new knowledge. Furthermore, scaffolding promotes student engagement in their classrooms and learning processes. Learners assume control of their teaching and learning through scaffolds that encourage them to go beyond their current levels of knowledge and skills. Overall, there are three main characteristics of scaffolding. First is the collaborative interaction between students and teachers. The second is that learning should take place in the learner's zone of proximal development. To accomplish this, the instructor must first determine the student's current level and then work on improving it. Scaffolding's final distinguishing feature is that the scaffold, or the teacher's assistance and supervision, is gradually lifted as the learner gains proficiency and

independence (Hamad & Metwally, 2019). Such teaching methods can be implicated for EFL students at the university level. In Saudi Arabia, the study of Mohammed (2020) showed that online scaffolding significantly increases the learning and writing skills of EFL students. The study's participants were randomly categorized into two main groups (31 for the experimental group and 31 for the control group). However, the participants of this study were 2nd year secondary school students, and rationale for this selection is not mentioned. It is asserted that innovative strategies like e-feedback in scaffolding could play an important role in effective teaching in online EFL classes at the university level (Alharbi, 2017). Another study evaluated the effect of online scaffolding in enhancing the learning and participation of EFL students (Pradita, Prasetya, & Maharsi, 2019). This study was conducted in Indonesia and involved 18 participants. It evaluated students' discussions and presented results using thematic analysis. Although the student's participation and learning were enhanced, the researchers found that the first stage of scaffolding (where the instructor provides total guidance) is the most important step as compared to other stages (lowering the guidance and transfer of responsibility to student). Troudi and Zayani (2020) indicated that even scaffolding is necessary for EFL teachers to increase their knowledge through reading within a theoretical framework in order to provide a better service to students in the long run. Moreover, Hamad and Metwally (2019) highlighted that EFL teachers in Saudi universities can also utilize the scaffolding strategy using online applications and platforms (i.e., Zoom, blackboard). Also, EFL teachers have shown positive responses towards the implication of the scaffolding teaching method.

Overall, most of the previous research has focused on the student's perception and effectiveness of teaching in online EFL classes during Covid-19. But we have identified various learning and teaching strategies that were effective and have been implemented in online classes. Among them, cooperative/collaborative learning, breakout rooms, flipped classrooms, and scaffolding has been identified as important strategies utilized in the era of COVID-19 lockdown. These strategies have the potential to be implemented in Saudi Arabia or Middle East institutions for effective EFL teaching and rendered to be useful while teaching online.

Conclusion

This review paper was aimed at providing information and effective strategies implemented during Covid-19 in EFL classes. After reviewing various latest papers, we have identified a few teaching and learning strategies. Amon them, cooperative/collaborative-based strategy seems to play the most effective role in students learning experience. Moreover, implementing the cloud-based collaborative breakout classes has brought positive results by influencing students' academic performance, enhancing student engagement and participation, and overall class performance. Other than these collaborative teaching, the flipped classroom can also be implemented for enhancing the student's experience and effective teaching. Alternative, another important strategy, scaffolding, has been identified as an effective method for improving students' overall performance and harnessing their skill and full potential. All of these strategies can be applied in online teaching and have been found effective in EFL online classes. Moreover, these methods can be applied and have the potential to be implemented in Saudi Arabia /Middle East institutions and even other Asian countries for effective EFL teaching during the pandemic.

Implications

This research has keenly analyzed the literature and gathered many literature-based evidences to highlight significant implications. Theoretically, this research has comprehensively explained the unique strategies that can be adopted to teach and learn the English language during the era of COVID-19 and after. Moreover, it showed the significance of many strategies which were implemented in situations where face-to-face teaching were impossible. Thus, this research expanded the literature on English language teaching, English language learning, and strategies adopted by teachers during the COVID-19 era. In pandemics, when institutions are closed, it is difficult not only for teachers but also for students to continue the learning process. Therefore, this research has directed the attention towards different strategies which can help the teachers and students in developing excellence in English teaching and learning. In comparison to other studies, this research is unique and innovative as prior studies merely focused on English language teaching and neglected its significance in the era of COVID-19. In terms of methodological contributions, this research adopted an entirely unique way of gathering the data and analyzing it. Instead of case analysis, this research has adopted the literature review approach. The data were gathered from renowned databases to maintain reliability. Therefore, the results highlighted in this research could be used by further researchers to be supported with empirical investigations. Moreover, the findings of this research can help institutional managers, education officers, and educationists to develop effective strategies during pandemics or epidemics.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study emphasized on the important problem of English language teaching in the Asian continent with special focus on Middle Eastern learners whose native language is not English. The results highlighted several implications, but still, it has many limitations which can be addressed in future studies. First, this research is based on the literature review and qualitative in nature, and future studies can conduct the empirical investigation based on the strategies highlighted in the results. Secondly, the focus of this research is majorly on the Arab students from the Middle Eastern countries. The covid-19 affected equally every region; thus, it is important to focus on other regions, especially Europe and Africa. Therefore, future studies can conduct similar research from the perspective of any other region or country.
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