

THE EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE TEACHING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ONLINE AND  
OFFLINE METHODS

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**Grisha Gasparyan**

*PhD in Philology*

*YSU, Chair of English Language No. 2*

*grisha.gasparyan@ysu.am*

**Anna Amiryan**

*YSU, Chair of English Language No. 2*

*amiryananna@ysu.am*

**Abstract**

The emergence of online platforms has disrupted the traditional way of teaching languages which now has affected the manner in which learners acquire a given language. The methods of teaching both traditional offline and modern online teaching are the scope of the current analysis with regard to flexibility, technological integration, and accessibility of materials. While teaching in person is engaging, structured, and location-specific, learning online is more convenient, both spatially and personally. These approaches come with their own problems, such as lack of participation on the part of learners, the digital divide with regard to socio-economic and geographic regions in online learning, and constraints associated with participation in offline modalities. A part of the research is a brief online survey suggesting that people tend to prefer in-person education as opposed to virtual education. There is some belief that this trend will change due to the speedy pace of life and societal demands. It is reasonable to conclude from the report that a combination of both approaches to teaching a foreign language can be more effective.

**Keywords:** *Online language teaching, asynchronous learning, MALL, adaptive devices, language instruction, gamification, virtual teaching.*

**Introduction**

Language as an essential component of human communication can facilitate cooperation and cultural interaction among learners. Having been applied in conventional classrooms, standard language teaching methods transformed significantly on the face of the introduction of online learning. Global events like the COVID-19 epidemic, which forced schools to use virtual platforms, have accelerated the process. The move towards online language learning has helped many fresh ideas and techniques to be developed by teachers teaching different students all across the world. This paper aims to closely investigate the features and possibilities of online language learning compared with offline language learning, especially its advantages, disadvantages, and ability to transform the learning environment.

### ***Literature review***

Online language learning plays a crucial role in today's education. According to Sun and Chen [Sun & Chen], online platforms provide students with greater freedom and accessibility. This is especially beneficial for individuals who reside in remote areas or have demanding and unpredictable schedules. At the same time, Sun, Z., Lin, C. H., & You, J. W [Sun et al.] say that using tech tools can boost engagement, thanks to things like learning through games and AI that gives feedback [Sun et al.]. The last few decades witnessed an explosion of mobile application use for personal, professional and educational purposes. Mobile-learning refers to the use of mobile or portable devices such as smartphones or handhelds for learning [Viberg & Grönlund]. But problems still exist. Xu and Jaggars look into the differences in how students talk about the gap between those who have tech and those who don't, and how well students can manage themselves. [Xu & Jaggars]

The Group of Inquiry idea was discovered by Garrison, Anderson, and Archer [Garrison et al.] to look at how online learning works with a well-planned framework. To make a good learning place teachers must mix thinking presence with social presence and teaching presence. The new uses of this way in language learning show that student happiness and success get better with more group engagement.

The area of flexible learning methods has seen big growth and change. According to Alammary, Sheard and Carbone, AI-powered custom learning ways got better results in student success [Alammary et al.]. These systems track user behavior patterns to modify information distribution based on personal strengths and limitations which improves the learning experience.

Finally, Mihaylova, M., Gorin, S., Reber, T. P., & Rothen show that mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is becoming increasingly significant. Pre-existing or newly developed MALL and MALL-applications should be experimentally validated to ensure quantifiable learning outcomes prior to use in classrooms or on the market for individual use [Mihaylova et al., 266]. Language educators are adopting language-learning programs to provide flexible, mobile learning opportunities due to the increasing prevalence of mobile devices. These educational platforms use both multimedia elements and spaced repetition techniques to boost vocabulary retention and user engagement.

### ***Characteristics of Online Language Teaching***

#### ***1. Flexibility and Accessibility***

One of the most prominent features of online language teaching is its flexibility. Unlike traditional classroom-based learning, online platforms enable the learners to have easy access to materials and engage in classes at their leisure time thus making language learning more flexible to personal and professional preferences.

#### ***Asynchronous Learning***

Asynchronous courses give students a chance to learn at their own pace while fitting a range of schedules and personal responsibilities. This is especially important for adult learners who need this chance to balance their job and home responsibilities. Unlike traditional language learning, which requires students to follow fixed timetables, asynchronous learning allows students to interact with coursework at their own pace, significantly reducing stress and enriching their comprehension essentially.

Moreover, asynchronous learning brings forward self-reflection and high engagement with language learning. Learners may study lectures, participate in discussion forums, and complete assignments at their own pace, which can improve their knowledge significantly. This technique also

may later allow educators to develop more accurate feedback mechanisms, thus improving their educational quality without the constraints of real-time participation.

Drawing parallels between online and offline education, it should be noted that although online learning is considered to be more flexible, offline education also offers specific degrees of flexibility depending on the students' needs, material to be delivered, and the teaching methods to be used.

Teaching pace is an integral part of education. Students' needs are at the core of the learning process; thus, in traditional teaching mode, teachers adjust the necessary instructions to their students' individual needs. Slow-paced learners can be given more profound explanations, while advanced students get extra tasks to improve delivered knowledge.

In offline mode, the learning classroom conveniences are of great importance. Printed materials, whiteboards, projectors, and interactive classes allow students to stay focused and not to limit their participation.

### ***Global Reach***

Online education platforms make it easier to connect various students and educators all around the world. This exposure to varied cultural situations broadens the learning experience and promotes the learners' intercultural competency. Unlike traditional classrooms, which may have restricted access to native teachers, online platforms promote an inclusive atmosphere in which students may interact with a variety of accents and cultural differences.

Worldwide accessibility promotes collaborative learning via virtual programs and multilingual group projects. Language learners may engage in real discussions with peers from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, improving their understanding and fluency in an authentic context. This increases cultural awareness and prepares students for professional and social interactions in multicultural settings.

Online language teaching is beneficial for people living in remote areas specifically or people living under common political restrictions. It removes barriers to quality education by providing a variety of course alternatives, access to famous language educators, and exposure to learning resources that may not otherwise be available in local schools. Online language teaching promotes inclusion and access to language education by connecting students from all backgrounds with language instructors all over the world.

As a whole, offline teaching has accessibility limitations compared to online mode. Nevertheless, offline teaching accessibility differentiates a range of its own specific ways:

Compared to online education, there are diverse resources in offline mode. Textbooks and printed materials, handwritten notes, newspapers, and magazines continue to remain the base of offline education. Thus, offline learners don't have to rely on internet connectivity or diverse digital devices.

### ***2. Resource Availability***

Online language teaching provides unprecedented access to diverse resources, making it easier for educators to tailor lessons to individual needs.

### ***Multimedia Integration***

The integration of multimedia tools, such as videos, audio clips, and interactive exercises, allows for a far richer learning experience. These resources cater to different learning styles and needs - visual, auditory, and kinesthetic - enhancing comprehension, production and retention. Video lessons can provide context and pronunciation practice, while audio materials enable students to refine their listening skills. Interactive exercises, such as quizzes and gamified language drills, keep learners engaged and reinforce new vocabulary and grammatical structures.

### ***Challenges in Online Language Teaching***

Online language teaching offers a number of benefits. At the same time it possesses unique challenges that must be accounted for to reach its potential to maximum.

#### ***1. Digital Divide***

Many students across the world, especially in developing nations, still struggle with basic technology and a stable internet connection. This gap is detrimental to education as it leaves entire communities unable to fully utilize available online language learning resources. Even a simple purchase of a device, along with a primary speed internet connection, and the needed digital skills, costs too much for many people. This further deepens the division among the privileged and underprivileged students. Funding targeted programs that help teach digital skills, improving internet availability as well as investing in digital infrastructure would greatly assist in solving this issue.

Though the digital divide in online education is an issue of great importance, we mustn't underestimate the offline teaching divide either. The most widespread causes for this division are socioeconomic status, geographical locations of students, and availability of quality resources. Thus, wealthier students may attend better schools, deal with experienced teachers, and study in modern labs. In the same way, students from disadvantaged families have to study in ill-equipped classrooms with a lack of materials and underpaid teachers.

#### ***2. Engagement and Motivation***

Engaging learners in a virtual environment is harder to achieve than physical classrooms. This can stem from distractions, social interactions with peers being limited, and no immediate feedback. Online learning often requires a higher degree of self-discipline and time management than many students possess. Interactive activities, games, and discussion boards can achieve higher levels of engagement. An effort to increase motivation and can promote greater social interaction can be achieved through group work, peer interaction, and through a sense of community.

Contrasting to online mode, it should be mentioned that social engagement and physical participation are implemented in offline teaching. Being present in a classroom ensures easier organization of interactive classes. This mode of education fosters learners' self-expression through peer work, discussions, debates, gaming, and collaboration, thus improving language acquisition. Besides, an optimal classroom environment is another factor that helps students stay devoted to the learning process, guarantees accountability, self-discipline, and established schedules.

#### ***3. Assessment Accuracy***

Where accurate assessment of language proficiency: speaking and writing skills, is scanned online, can pose challenges. Automated nuancing systems always fail to account for context, tone, or even the most critical component - the nuance in pronunciation. There are many gaps lacking in the AI technology - speech recognition systems have improved greatly, yet evaluating for fluency and naturalness are areas yet to be examined. Writing assessments have always posed problems for detection and authenticity. These barriers can use a hybrid form of assessment through automated systems, fellow students, teachers, and a human completing a comprehensive check.

Conversely, in offline assessment, teachers have the ability to observe their students' answers immediately. Besides, the direct responses, facial expressions and gestures help to make up a holistic understanding of the students' real knowledge. Also, immediate feedback can be helpful in clarifying any kind of misunderstanding.

### ***4. Technological Learning Curve***

Both teachers and students may consider the integration of new technologies to be burdensome. By not being able to properly train teachers or provide them with adequate digital tools, the cycle of teaching and learning becomes stagnant. There is a need for teachers to undergo training so that they can effectively use digital tools, facilitate remote classrooms, and utilize other multimedia technologies. Likewise, students may also have difficulties working with the learning management system, online collaboration environment, or even with issues of simple system maintenance. By conducting workshops and equipping learners with uncomplicated systems and persistent support, the transition can be made smoother to make the process of learning online better.

In traditional education, the absence of technological hurdles should be highlighted. In most cases, offline classes are conducted without the use of the internet. This mode of education nearly excludes distractions during the classes. Thus, this is one of the key reasons why offline learning remains so essential.

### ***5. Lack of Personalized Interaction***

One of the major disadvantages of teaching a language in a remote setting is that it offers minimal interaction between the learner and the teacher. Unlike a physical classroom, there are no opportunities for informal conversations, instant doubts, and questions to be resolved, or custom comments to be given. The absence of these factors may lead to students feeling disconnected from their instructors and vice versa. To mitigate the issue, teachers can adopt the use of video conferencing, online consultations, and chatbots that respond to basic queries in a more personable manner.

On the contrary an advantage of offline teaching is unmediated communication and interaction. Teachers can observe the comprehension levels and reactions of their students, thus adopting their teaching style and teaching methods to them.

Provision of immediate feedback is another significant feature common of offline teaching: pronunciation, spelling, grammar errors can get teachers' instant and immediate feedback thus ensuring education progress without hindering.

### ***6. Cultural and Linguistic Barriers***

The comprehension and communication of participants from various regions of the globe in these online classes can pose some difficulties due to cultural and linguistic differences. Differences in learners' and speakers' accents, dialects, and colloquialism can act as barriers to understanding the content. The learners' cultural background, along with their expectations and styles of learning, can also affect active engagement from the students. These problems can be alleviated by promoting intercultural interaction and multilingual support, as well as developing appropriate learning materials.

Cultural differences may be even more challenging offline than in an online way of education. In Asian countries, students get teacher-centered education, while European countries emphasize student-centered ways of learning through critical thinking and problem solving. When representatives of different cultures gather in one classroom, misunderstandings are unavoidable. Teachers who are not familiar with various cultures' educational nuances may misinterpret their learners' behavior, considering, for instance, silence as a sign of incomprehension or lack of knowledge of the lesson. As it was mentioned above, cultural barriers are more vividly seen in offline mode.

Linguistic barriers create a range of obstacles in offline teaching. Students with a lack of knowledge may struggle with reading assignments and expressing themselves orally. This

phenomenon may lead to reducing both participation during the classes thus grasping complex concepts of the subject.

To make the comparative study of online and offline teaching privileges and preferences more vivid, a survey was needed to conduct not only to reveal the future of education itself but also to draw parallels between the preferences of learners to identify the current issues, tendencies, and challenges they may face. The issue of online and offline education is continuing to remain controversial. Due to the development of modern technologies, the demands for digital forms of learning have become more widespread, competing with traditional modes of education.

The aim of the current brief survey was to put forward and show the opinions of learners concerning the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy.

The survey questionnaire was standardized and contained 10 multiple-choice and evaluation scale questions. Based on the answers to the suggested questions certain data was collected.

The participants were asked about engagement, flexibility, interactivity, efficiency, and resource availability.

Relying on the collected data, certain remarkable patterns and preferences were differentiated and highlighted.

Thus, according to the participants, the primary mode of education was offline (89.2), while 10.8% of responders mentioned online mode. These figures prove that especially in Armenia, the traditional mode of education continues to remain prevailing. Though online education is increasing drastically, the main and most required form of education is continuing to be traditional. According to different studies, the figures are similar for both European countries and the USA.

The survey results show that the majority of the participants (56.8%) have at least 1-3 years of experience. Thus, these figures show that the majority of the participants are experienced in certain modes, so their answers can be considered justified as all the pros and cons are taken into account.

The overall results show that most of the participants find their current learning mode engaging (51.4% very engaging; 45.9% somewhat engaging). Most of them (82.4%) believe that it supports their academic progress. Here it's worth reminding that most of the participants (89.2%) mentioned online as their primary mode. And to the question on their preferences concerning the mode of learning, they answered the following way: 58.1% preferred offline education, 29.7% mentioned hybrid or blended form, and only 12.2% chose online mode.

Overall, it may be noted that the survey was conducted among Armenians and can't reflect the whole world's tendencies. Thus, the current preferences of learners are either offline or hybrid forms of education. This is a picture that can be shifted very quickly, influenced by world statistics. We see the rapidly growing number of online learners throughout the world, which is, undoubtedly and mainly, connected with the speedy pace of life. We may predict that a hybrid mode of education will affect Armenians.

### ***Conclusion***

The traditional methods of teaching are being completely changed by online language teaching, which gives priority to communication rather than grammar. With this new approach, learners are able to experience more hands-on interactive activities where there is a greater application of learned concepts. Entry barriers like the digital divide still pose challenges, but the industry keeps moving forward with new technologies and multifaceted teaching methods.

In the future, we will see that language subjects are taught using learning models that combine the two approaches, online and offline. Interpersonal interaction is still needed in the classroom to

develop deeper communication and cultural understanding, but online teaching offers more economic and time efficient as well as accessible options. With this, students are sure to benefit the most from both face-to-face interactions and the speedy nature of modern tools.

The case with Armenia showcases how advances in language learning are characterized by a shift to more hybrid or traditional classroom models. It shows that cultural and contextual factors define effective learning strategies. While online methods are easily adaptable and efficient, remote instruction neglects its psychological and physiological benefits, which are key in acquiring a new language.

In summary, the supplementary use of technology in language learning favors the integration of new with old. The use of artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and adaptive learning will shape the new world of education. The combination of online and offline learning will integrate into the world of second language teaching. The rest will be a matter of tackling those challenges. Language does become a tool for overseas cultural and academic relationships in a close knit world.

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