UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

at Cheltenham and Gloucester

"I'M HERE IN THE SMALL VILLAGE AND, AT THE SAME TIME, I'M A PART OF THE WHOLE WORLD".

THE IMPACT OF USING SOCIAL NETWORKS AND VIDEO CONFERENCING SERVICE TO SUPPORT COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN INGUSHETIA, RUSSIA.

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ABSTRACT

This study conducted in Ingushetia uses mixed methods to examine the influence of video conferencing platforms (VCs) and social networks (SNs) on the acquisition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) among Year-10 students. The study aims to compare how students and teachers perceive these digital tools in contrast to traditional language learning methods. The research involved a survey of 165 students to understand what digital tools, video conferencing platforms (VCs) and social networks (SNs) they use in language learning. Additionally, a more focused study comprised 30 students, divided equally into focus and control groups, to examine in-depth the impact of these digital tools on language acquisition, engagement, and motivation.

Focusing on both student and teacher perspectives, the research scrutinizes the comparative effectiveness of these digital tools against traditional teaching methods. It evaluates the contribution of VCs and SNs to students' language development and gauges their perceived educational value as opined by teachers. A significant component of the study also involves analysing the practical application of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) strategies, particularly emphasizing the influence of real-time interactions with native-speaking language coaches on the students' learning experience.

Utilising a mixed-method approach, the study combines questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to gather comprehensive data from students and teachers. The findings reveal notable improvements in students' language skills across all areas, including writing, reading, listening, and speaking, as well as increased motivation. A significant outcome is the emphasis students place on the value of personal relationships with language coaches, underscoring the role of interaction in language learning.

The effectiveness of online interactions in enhancing language proficiency and motivation is evident, with implications suggesting a broader application in global language education. The results advocate for pedagogical reforms, stressing the importance of professional development in digital tools usage for more dynamic and

engaging English language teaching. This study contributes to the evolving landscape of language education, highlighting the potential for integrating online learning into traditional teaching methodologies.

Keywords: novelty, online learning, socio-cultural theory, communicative language teaching, motivation, language acquisition.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original, except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of this thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed: Date: 28 December, 2023

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CALL   Computer Assisted Language Learning

CLT   Communicative Language Teaching

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

EGE   Final Unified State Exam

ELT   English Language Teaching

ESL   English as a Second Language

FSES   Federal State Education Standard

GIA   State Final Certification

GTM   Grammar Translation Method

IC   Intercultural Communication

L1   First Language

L2   Second Language

MKO   More Knowledgeable Other

MALL   Mobile Assisted Language Learning

SCT   Sociocultural Theory

SEET   Student Experiences and Expectations of Technology

SLA   Second language acquisition

SN   Social Network

TL   Target Language

TPACK   Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge

VC   Video-Conferencing Tool

ZPD   The Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background to the Research

According to Erzenkina (2020, pp.139-146) English is the most common language of intercultural communication in the world. It is spoken by 1.35 billion people, of which only 375 million are native speakers (LIPV, 2021). The number of individuals learning English is increasing rapidly each year, which confirms its status as an international and global language. (Raikan *et al*, pp.482-493). English is the language of popular culture, business, science, the social sphere, mass media, diplomacy and international organisations (Zabanova and Khobrakova, 2018, pp.343-350). Therefore, the ability to speak English provides a crucial means of global communication and fosters international connections. This underlines the importance of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) for individuals in non-English-speaking countries, enabling them to communicate effectively with people worldwide.

According to Mishina's research in 2022, it was found that English is still the most widely studied foreign language among Russian students. A similar trend can be observed in Ingushetia, where in 2023, out of the graduates who sat for the Unified State Exam in a foreign language, 185 students chose English, while only one student chose German, as reported by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Ingushetia (2023). Ingushetia, the smallest republic of Russia, is located on the northern slopes of the North Caucasus. As of January 2023, it has a population of 518,952 people (GOGOV, 2022, para.2). According to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2022, para.15), the 2020 census showed that 94.1% of Ingushetia's population is Ingush; they are predominantly Sunni Muslims and speak the Ingush and Russian languages (National Accent, 2022; Bowers *et al*., 2004, pp.395-407).

The Russian government provides political support for the English language and actively endorses its teaching and learning (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, 2021). This emphasises how the English language plays a

significant role in both global communication and educational progress. English is 'considered to be a language for intercultural and international business communication' (Proshina, 2018, p.125).

In Ingushetia, however, the focus of English language education is more on pragmatic usage and educational objectives. The use of English in advertising, where English-flavoured trade names suggest prestige and quality, exemplifies its pragmatic application. English is also a subject of study in secondary and tertiary education, and its presence is expanding in primary education and even in kindergarten curricula. Despite this support, the approach to teaching English in Ingushetia often aims at a basic proficiency level, mainly to pass written exams, rather than fostering advanced language skills (Sorokina, 2017, p.23). These examinations tend to assess specific information but do not adequately prepare students for using English in a wide range of real-world situations. However, the status of English in the region is on the rise, fueled by rapid developments in information media, telecommunication systems, and new multimedia technologies (Martazanova, 2020, p.43), suggesting a growing recognition of its importance in contemporary society and the global market.

The method generally used to teach English in Ingushetia is the grammar translation method (GTM), also known as the traditional teaching method (Martazanova, 2020, p.45). The GTM is based on learning grammar rules, vocabulary expansion, translations of texts, and working with a dictionary (Kolobkova, 2021, pp.28-37; Zakharova, 2017, pp.174-183). The focus of the method is memorising grammar rules and mastering the structure of grammar to benefit from the intellectual development of the learning process (Harmer, 2007, p.63). Additionally, learners translate texts from the target language (TL) into their mother tongue (L1) and vice versa, from L1 to TL, and to do so they learn vocabulary and grammar. The role of the mother tongue is crucial here as the only way of making the meaning of the TL for students is by translating it into L1. In this approach, teachers are not obliged to use the TL at all and the learners' L1 tends to be used for classroom interaction and instruction (Larsen-Freeman, 2011; Harmer, 2007; Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

GTM has its pros and cons, Kolobkova (2021, pp.28-37) claims that the positive quality of the method is the effective assimilation of the grammatical basis of a language with an intensive expansion of vocabulary. However, the method also has its apparent

disadvantages: one of the most obvious ones is the lack of attention to speaking and listening as even instructions are given in students' native language, even though acquiring these skills is seen as being of primary importance in modern conditions (Lyubskaya and Cherepanova, 2021; Koryakovtseva, 2019).

Zakharova (2017, pp.174-183) emphasised that the GTM continues to maintain its relevance and usage. This is attributed to its perceived effectiveness rooted in three primary factors. Firstly, it offers a straightforward and rapid means of conveying word and phrase meanings. Secondly, it demands no specialised expertise from teachers, making it accessible to a wide range of educators. Lastly, students find it easy to comprehend the study material as they operate within their native language environment, allowing explanations to be provided in their mother tongue. Martazanova (2020, p.98) highlights that the main reason students do not freely communicate in English after six to eight years of studying the language at schools is because teachers use GTM, which is a method that depends on drilling grammatical structures but does not help students to communicate in real-life situations. Traditional teaching methodologies that support a teacher-centred method cause students to achieve poor proficiency in functional English, and particularly in the skills of speaking and listening, whereas the purpose of teaching a foreign language is to 'master a foreign language as a means of communication' and students 'must be able to use it orally and in written' (Sakaeva and Baranova, 2016, p.16).

In 2017, the Federal State Education Standard of Russia (FSES), changed its English education policy to improve students' communicative English performance (Kovaleva, 2022, para.10). These changes have become a professional challenge for many teachers, entrusting them with many functions; not all teachers had enough energy, time, and competencies to implement all the tasks at the same time (Kovaleva, 2022, para.2; Kiseleva, 2017). In the 2018/2019 academic year, English was introduced as a compulsory subject from the second year in elementary school through to the final year of secondary school, which is equivalent to A-Level standard in England. In 2021, a new Federal State Education Standard (FSES) for basic general education was approved (Order of the Ministry of Education of May 31 No. 287). In alignment with the second generation of the FSES introduced in September 2022, the emphasis on English language education in schools has shifted significantly. The revised standards underscore a primary focus on enhancing students' spoken skills, aiming to cultivate

their ability and willingness to engage in effective verbal communication (FGOS, 2022). These standards, as outlined in the FSES of 2022, require students' ability to effectively communicate both orally and in written form on various contemporary subjects. This proficiency includes not only linguistic competence but also the mastery of sociocultural skills in English (Konobeev, 2022, p.19). Moreover, students are expected to demonstrate the capacity to compare and classify information, indicating a deep understanding and analytical approach to the language (see appendix A).

This shift in focus arises from the heightened recognition of the pivotal role of language practice and stems from discontentment with the GTM. The GTM predominantly prioritises reading and writing, often sidelining structured instruction in speaking and listening skills, as noted by Richards and Rodgers (2001). Consequently, the FSES of 2022 advocate for the adoption of communicative language teaching (CLT) methodologies and interactive approaches in English instruction. This pedagogical directive underscores the imperative of meaningful communication, aligning with contemporary educational goals for comprehensive language development (Panchenko, 2018, p.154).

CLT aims to develop learners' competence to communicate in the target language with a focus on real-life situations, instead of focusing just on the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary (Banartseva, 2017). This approach is a student-centred educational activity that promotes the development of students' initiative and their ability to think creatively. The lessons are delivered by discussing current life issues, rather than prepared texts (Toro *et al.*, 2019; Alamri, 2018; Wei, Lin and Litton, 2018). In this case, the interests of the students, their abilities, and their wishes are considered. The main task is the formation of the students' semantic perception and language understanding for constructing speech utterances. The main goal of this method is to motivate and interest students in learning English through the accumulation and expansion of their knowledge, skills and experience. Thus, the aim of the communicative approach is to practise meaningful communication in the target language with the learners (Alamri, 2018; Toro *et al.*, 2019; Wei, Lin and Litton, 2018). Within this process, learners who use language spontaneously are likely to make errors, and those errors are tolerated and recognised as a natural outcome of the development of communication skills (Alamri, 2018; Shinta and Tedjaatmadja, 2014).

Language learning has advanced far beyond the traditional paradigms of formal education and overcome geographical and temporal borders as information and communication technologies have had a major impact on education (Knodel, 2019, p. 6). Social Networks (SNs) and online video platforms (OVPs), such as Skype or Zoom allow learners to access distant cultures and places, communicate with people all over the world and send and receive messages, as well as upload and share photos and videos. The pedagogical basis of these OVPs is tandem language learning that allows communicating with multiple native speakers simultaneously to practice the target language (TL) (Panopto, 2021).

Notwithstanding the new policy to focus on CLT approaches and interactive methods in English classes, current research suggests that English teaching and learning in Ingushetia is based on GTM and remains teacher-centred rather than student-centred, which prevents learners from developing satisfactory language competence (Martazanova, 2020, pp.98-113; Voroshnina and Pimenova, 2019, pp.14-18; Novikov, 2018, pp.23-24).

This study investigates the perspectives of Ingush teachers and students on the teaching of English through the CLT approach, using native-speaking teachers via Zoom and WhatsApp. It assesses CLT's effect on each of the oral and productive skills (listening, speaking and writing) and the teaching of grammar by Ingush teachers. As noted above, FSES has made changes to its English education policy in order to increase students' communicative competence, since CLT appeared to be an effective way of promoting students' communicative capacity (Kovaleva, 2022). Therefore, further investigation is needed to better understand the factors that contribute to the current situation regarding EFL in Ingushetia. Teachers' approaches to teaching English are an important issue that needs exploration because their role and their teaching methods are the key links between the students, the syllabus, and the classroom environment. It is 'especially important in those schools or districts where limited resources result in little or no instructional support' in a student's learning of foreign language acquisition (Martazanova, 2020, p.62).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

At the time of writing, the Internet, computer technologies and online communication networks are becoming increasingly important globally. This has a number of important implications for education, including:

Firstly, the vast majority of today's students are people of a new generation, and they increasingly understand the huge creative potential of computer technology (Haleem *et al*, 2022). As such, many students readily accept progressive innovations, and e-learning (computer learning, distance learning) is becoming a widely used method in teaching (Haleem *et al*, 2022).

Secondly, much has been said about the advantages and disadvantages of distance/online education (Shoyimkulova and Ahatova, 2023; Klimova et al., 2021; Tambieva and Salpagarova, 2021; Ferreira-Meyers and Martins, 2020; Alshamrani, 2019). However, it is impossible to compare the degree of development of traditional education methods with the state of the study of online technologies in Ingushetia, because, at present, the methodology of e-education in Ingushetia is completely absent. There are no algorithms, rules, or proven systems for the introduction of computer technologies in the field of education described and confirmed by theory. Basically, online learning is built in the same way as existing methods of traditional learning (Dascal and Dror, 2005, pp.451-457).

Martazanova (2020, p.35) underscores a crucial point: the integration of distance learning into the Ingush educational system is primarily driven by organisers' decisions rather than the inherent capabilities of the system itself. Additionally, the hesitance among teachers to adopt innovative methods, especially those involving technology, can be attributed to the lack of adequate preparation provided by educational institutions in Ingushetia (Martazanova, 2020, p.37). Furthermore, Martazanova (2020, pp.39-42) identifies several significant barriers to technology implementation in Ingushetia's schools, including insufficient technology resources, inadequate teacher training and time constraints. Despite official claims of internet availability in all Ingushetia villages, the reality paints a different picture. Internet connectivity is limited to specific points, leading to inconsistent access. Moreover, the scarcity of IT equipment in schools and varying internet quality compound the challenges in incorporating technology effectively into the educational process. Martazanova's

research sheds light on these multifaceted issues, highlighting the complex landscape of technology integration within the Ingush educational system.

Aksenty (2021, p.2) highlighted the internet connectivity issues faced by Ingushetia. Although the government claims that the internet speed can go up to 8 Mbps, the actual average speed turns out to be less than 3 Mbps. This falls significantly short of the 30-40 Mbps, and ideally, 100 Mbps, that are required for effective school education. The Russian Ministry of Digital Development has set minimum internet speed standards ranging from 50 Mbps to 100 Mbps, depending on the location of educational organisations (Karmal, 2019, para.2). Sidorenko (2019) highlights that the Federal State Educational Standard specifies the equipment that is necessary for language classrooms, which includes multimedia tools, interactive boards, and computers. However, the school that was studied did not possess this necessary equipment, thereby further hindering effective teaching and learning.

At present, communication is an important skill in the fields of career, education, and interpersonal communication (Zashikhina, 2014, pp.38-46). Without the ability to communicate with other people, it is difficult to be 'a full-fledged part of modern society' (Zashikhina, 2014, pp.38-46). Moreover, communication for high-level careers requires students to have foreign languages and the ability to express themselves in a particular language. The development of this skill depends on a few factors, including the method of teaching a foreign language.

Since its emergence in Europe during the 1970s, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has garnered increasing global attention and adoption as an effective language teaching methodology. Despite its popularity, the application of CLT varies widely in EFL settings (Kulpina, 2014, pp.3-4). In Ingushetia, for example, Martazanova (2020, p.16) notes a preference among educators for traditional teaching methods, which favour a structured and controlled classroom environment. In such traditional settings, students typically work quietly, with teachers directing classroom activities, solving problems, and providing advice (Almonihideb, 2019; Bremner, 2019; Burova and Manuylenko, 2019). This contrasts starkly with the CLT approach, where the classroom dynamic is more interactive and learner-centred, encouraging students to communicate with each other in the target language (Martazanova, 2020, p.21; Kulpina, 2014, pp.3-4).

To elucidate the distinctions between the Teacher-Centred and Learner-Centred approaches, Table 1 was constructed. This table delineates the key aspects of each pedagogical style, spanning the roles of teachers and students, learning environments, teaching methods, assessments, and classroom interactions. The creation of this table draws upon the insights provided by Martazanova (2020), Bremner (2019), Burova and Manuylenko (2019), and Glukhova and Sorokina (2018) synthesising their perspectives into a unified representation that distinctly showcases the dichotomy between these two instructional paradigms.

Table 1. Differences Between Teacher-Centred and Learner-Centred Learning

Aspect	Teacher-Centred Learning	Learner-Centred Learning
Role of Teacher	Dominant, knowledge transmitter	Facilitator, guide
Role of Student	Passive, receivers of information	Active, constructors of knowledge
Learning Environment	Structured, teacher controls direction	Flexible, student-cantered
Teaching Methods	Lectures, direct instruction	Interactive techniques, group work
Assessment	Standardized tests, summative	Formative assessments, self-assessment
Classroom Interaction	Teacher to student	Student to student interaction
Focus of Learning	Curriculum and teacher's goals	Student interests and needs
Language Emphasis	Forms and structures (instructor's knowledge)	Language use in typical situations (student usage)
Teaching Method	Instructor talks; students listen	Instructor models; student interaction
Student Work	Students work alone	Students work in pairs/groups/alone
Error Correction	Constant monitoring and correction by instructor	Feedback/correction as needed; less constant monitoring
Answering Questions	Instructor answers language questions	Students answer each other's questions
Topic Selection	Chosen by instructor	Some student choice
Learning Evaluation	Conducted by instructor	Self-evaluation by students; also instructor evaluation

Aspect	Teacher-Centred Learning	Learner-Centred Learning
Classroom Environment	Quiet	Often noisy and busy

Source: this table draws upon the insights provided by Martazanova (2020), Bremner (2019), Burova and Manuylenko (2019), and Glukhova and Sorokina (2018).

Glukhova and Sorokina (2018, p. 3) conclude that moving towards student-centred education leads to greater success for students and increases job satisfaction for teachers.

Martazanova (2020, pp.41-42) emphasised that L2 teachers in Ingushetia lack the appropriate theoretical background in teaching methods due to the lack of effective training; teachers and students have been found to favour the use of a combination of the Russian and Ingush languages as the primary language of the English classroom, a practice that is usually used for GTM approach. As a consequence of the focus on the students' first language as a key factor is the traditional teaching method, GTM, teachers tend to adopt Ingush for teaching English: moreover, consistent with the GTM approach they focus on teaching grammar, reading, writing and vocabulary, with little attention being paid to listening and speaking skills. In summary, this research aims to better understand the new government policy that is focused on CLT with regard to syllabus design and curriculum, and the methodological practice of English teachers in Ingushetia, who, as recent research suggests, still rely on the GTM approach.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The impetus for undertaking this study is rooted in a confluence of personal, professional, and contextual factors that underscore its necessity and timeliness. Firstly, my deep personal interest in language education, shaped by my own journey as a learner and subsequently as a teacher in Ingushetia, has driven my curiosity in this field. Additionally, the ongoing educational reforms within Russia, which have a direct impact on the educational landscape in Ingushetia, present a compelling backdrop for this research.

Moreover, the global shift towards digital education, particularly in the realm of language learning, further motivates this study. There is a noticeable gap in research concerning the integration of VCs and SNs in language courses, especially within the

unique sociocultural and educational context of Ingushetia. This study aims to bridge this gap, offering insights into the implementation and efficacy of these modern technological tools in enhancing language learning experiences. The exploration of such digital avenues in a local context is not only reflective of international trends in computerised education but also crucial for understanding and optimising the educational strategies in Ingushetia. Moreover, according to Rubtcova (2017, pp.117-120), the main purpose of teaching and learning English is the use of English in meaningful communication consisting of oral interaction with people (speaking and listening), reading and writing, and this has taken on particular significance in the age if the Internet as people around the world can connect with each other remotely, without the need for travel. These opportunities for intercultural and international communication require new approaches to language teaching. The participants in this study, year-10 students, began learning English in the fourth year of primary school, but the quality of students' productive skills and their abilities to understand spoken English were below Federal State Educational Standard (FSES) (FSES, 2022). These students had been learning grammar and reading, writing, listening and speaking skills through GTM, with limited instructional use of target language (TL), despite the new FSES policy focusing on CLT approaches and interactive methods in English classes. Martazanova (2020, p.17) highlighted several challenges 'stemming from the educational system, the syllabi, the teaching setting and the culture' that may hinder the CLT approach to teaching EFL in Ingushetia. Consequently, this study additionally aims to investigate the impact of employing the CLT approach alongside modern technology in the context of teaching English in Ingushetia. It seeks to delve into the perceptions of both students and teachers regarding the effectiveness of the CLT approach in enhancing the teaching and learning of English. This exploration will be conducted over two months, providing a focused lens on the immediate outcomes and experiences associated with the integration of CLT methodologies and technological tools in an educational setting. The goal is to gain a comprehensive understanding of how these approaches are received and their effectiveness in the specific context of English language education in Ingushetia. The CLT approach involved native English-speaking language coaches, who interacted with students via Zoom and WhatsApp.

Furthermore, this study includes my observations of the implementation of the CLT approach in Ingushetia EFL classrooms, with a particular focus on the level and nature

of interactive processes within the learning environment. The outcomes of this research are anticipated to offer valuable insights for educational institutions and EFL teachers regarding the effectiveness of a technology-enhanced language curriculum aimed at advancing learners' language skills. The findings will be especially beneficial for instructors keen on incorporating modern technological tools into their teaching practices. This research will explore both the opportunities and challenges associated with the integration of technology-driven activities into language courses. Additionally, it will contribute to the relatively sparse body of literature on educational technology in the context of foreign language learning in Ingushetia, thereby enriching the understanding and application of these tools in language education.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do the use of video conferencing platforms (VCs) and social networks (SNs) affect English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' language acquisition (LA)?

a. To what extent do students think VCs and SNs support or limit language learning?

b. How do teachers perceive the value of VCs and SNs to improve English Language Teaching (ELT) compared to traditional methods?

2. What perceptions do teachers have about the opportunities and limitations associated with implementing the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes?

3. What impact did the interaction with native-speaking language coaches using CLT, VCs, and SNs have on students' English proficiency?

Through these questions, this study aims to explore the potential of technology and human interaction in shaping EFL learning environments. By investigating the use of digital platforms, the nuances of the CLT approach, and the integration of native-speaking language coaches, this research seeks to uncover how technology and human engagement collectively contribute to language acquisition. The insights garnered from this inquiry are anticipated to illuminate the diverse possibilities and methods through which technology and personal interaction can be effectively combined to enhance the overall experience and success in EFL education.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research holds significant promise in advancing the field of EFL learning and practice, particularly within the context of Ingushetia. It aims to enhance the quality of English education in Ingush schools by employing interactive methods and the CLT approach. The study fills a notable gap in the literature, as it investigates how students engage with English language coaches in real-time during mandatory EFL lessons, a topic that has not been extensively explored, especially in Ingushetia. This is of particular interest to educators focusing on developing all four language skills, with an emphasis on the speaking skills needed for real-life communication.

The integration of VCs and SNs in language learning is pivotal, changing how students learn and perceive language acquisition. These modern technologies not only influence the traditional student-teacher dynamic but also serve as tools for sociocultural learning, allowing for a more comprehensive educational experience. The study demonstrates that platforms like Zoom and WhatsApp can significantly enhance students' language learning experiences and aid teachers in their professional development by introducing challenges and fostering creativity.

A key contribution of this study is its exploration of the integration of SCL and CLT approaches within SNs and VCs, examining their role in boosting motivation and success in English language learning. This research is particularly important due to the general lack of investigation into how SNs and VCs contribute to English language learning in non-English-speaking countries in a classroom setting. There is no published research specifically focusing on the use of these platforms to improve English language interactions in Ingushetia, making this study a potential cornerstone for improving English teaching and learning in similar contexts. The exploration of CLT, VCs, and SNs integration in ELT within Ingushetia remains notably scarce, especially with a specific focus on secondary schools in this region. Existing research, such as Tambieva's (2017) work, concentrates primarily on the pedagogical aspects of organizing independent educational activities for undergraduates using information and communication technologies.

Moreover, a unique aspect of this research is its focus on human interaction globally via technology, positioning it as an effective vehicle to enhance learning. This is especially pertinent given the lack of prior research on the use of SNs and OVPs in improving student interactions in English in non-English-speaking countries or regions like Ingushetia. The findings from this study are expected to be foundational in advancing ELT methodologies in Ingushetia and similar regions, potentially catalysing educational transformations. They also provide vital guidance for operational changes in teaching methods, such as organising online debates and group discussions with diverse language communities, thereby encouraging language learning through cultural exploration, self-discovery, and fostering a cohesive society.

Furthermore, this research is poised to help L2 educators better understand the potential benefits of CLT and digital technologies, enabling them to make informed adjustments to their teaching practices. It identifies both the obstacles and facilitators of implementing CLT in Ingush EFL classrooms, offering a balanced view of the challenges and opportunities presented by these modern teaching tools. The insights gained could also be valuable references for enhancing teaching and learning experiences beyond ELT. In viewing this research as a personal contribution to the educational community, it is hoped that the outcomes will not only improve practices within Ingushetia but also inspire future developments in educational strategies globally.

In summary, this study not only contributes to the academic understanding of L2 learning through digital platforms but also has practical implications for educators and learners engaging in online language education. It identifies both the challenges and facilitators of implementing CLT in Ingush EFL classrooms, providing a comprehensive view of the potential of digital technologies in language education.

1.6 Original Contribution to Knowledge

Innovative Integration of Digital Tools in Language Teaching:

This study provides a detailed analysis of the role and effectiveness of digital tools in communicative language teaching (CLT) within English language education in Ingushetia. It advocates for pedagogical reforms to dynamically incorporate

technology, challenging educators and policymakers to modernise traditional methodologies and fully implement new teaching methods.

Empirical Evidence on Online Interactions:

By integrating online interactions, particularly live sessions with native language coaches, the study offers empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of combining traditional teaching methods with digital platforms. This aligns with and extends the principles of CLT and socio-cultural theory, emphasising the importance of interaction in language learning. A key benefit observed in the study is the boost in speaking confidence. Regular and structured interaction with native speakers reduces speaking anxiety, encouraging learners to express themselves more freely and confidently. Engaging with native speakers introduces students to cultural references and allusions found in popular culture, literature, and media. This knowledge enriches language learning, making it more engaging and relevant to real-life communication. Furthermore, live interactions allow for personalised learning. Conversations can be tailored to individual interests and proficiency levels, making them more relevant and effective. This personalisation addresses diverse learning needs and styles.

Enhanced Language Skills and Motivation:

The research demonstrates significant improvements in students' writing, reading, listening, and speaking abilities. Real-time feedback is a critical aspect, as live interactions allow for immediate correction and guidance from native speakers. This significantly aids in refining language skills, particularly in pronunciation, grammar, and conversational fluency. The interactive feedback loop accelerates the learning process and helps address mistakes promptly. Additionally, the study shows increased student motivation and engagement, reinforcing the value of interactive and dynamic learning methods.

First Study on EFL in Ingushetia:

Conducting the first empirical study on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Ingushetia fills a crucial gap in academic literature. It provides valuable insights into the educational landscape of a previously underrepresented region.

Innovative Use of Native Speakers:

The study's approach of using native speakers to teach online in real-time to classrooms is innovative. It offers fresh perspectives on the effectiveness of real-time, interactive EFL instruction compared to traditional methods. Firstly, it provides learners with exposure to authentic language use. This includes not just vocabulary and grammar, but also idiomatic expressions, colloquialisms, and real-world conversational nuances. Such exposure is vital for developing a practical understanding of the language, going beyond textbook learning.

Secondly, the study highlights how these interactions notably increase learner engagement. The dynamic nature of live conversation keeps the learning process stimulating and interactive, fostering greater student interest and participation. This is especially important in maintaining motivation levels among learners, which is a key challenge in language education.

Global Relevance:

While localised, the study's methodology and findings have global implications. Regions with limited access to native English speakers might adopt similar approaches to improve language acquisition, making the research relevant beyond its immediate context. Moreover, there's a valuable cultural exchange element. Engaging with native speakers allows learners to understand the cultural contexts in which certain phrases or expressions are used, providing a more holistic language learning experience. Such cultural insights are essential for achieving true language proficiency. In addition to this, my research found that these interactions markedly improve listening and comprehension skills. Regular practice with native speakers enables learners to navigate different accents and speech patterns, enhancing their overall listening abilities.

Practical Implications for Educational Policy:

The practical implications of the findings could influence educational policies in regions with similar characteristics to Ingushetia. The study advocates for the broader adoption of real-time, online native-speaking engagements as a viable component of language education programs. These interactions offer practical application of language skills in real-world contexts. The opportunity to use language skills in actual conversation reinforces learning and aids retention, effectively bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical usage.

Contribution to Language Education Theory:

The research contributes to language education theory by providing empirical evidence supporting the integration of CLT and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). It challenges traditional language learning models and highlights the importance of social interaction and digital technology in language acquisition.

In conclusion, this study enriches the field of language education by demonstrating the potential and effectiveness of combining traditional teaching methods with online interactive sessions, advocating for a more integrated, dynamic, and engaging approach to language teaching.

1.7 Personal Interest

I have always been interested in learning foreign languages, especially English, to enable me to speak the language in a communicative way. In accordance with the curriculum in the 1980s, I started learning English in my secondary school and I studied the language for five years. During the introductory stage, I had to memorise a list of vocabulary every day and was tested by writing the words on the blackboard the following day in front of the class. Additionally, learning English was characterised by reading a comprehension text and answering questions about it. The whole method that was employed for teaching English focused on the teaching of grammar rules and memorising words. This led to the neglect of the practical side of teaching English.

Throughout my secondary education, I encountered no opportunities to actively speak English. I continued learning English at university in a hope of obtaining a chance to practice and improve my English-speaking proficiency. I recall that this experience was also frustrating, as the only spoken English practice I engaged in involved memorising dialogues and sometimes trying to perform them in front of a lecturer to pass an oral exam. Learning English was limited to memorising vocabulary lists and grammar rules, which did not give me a strong sense of English as a language, since I was aware that the only way to learn English was to practice it.

Consequently, my choice of topic was inspired by Ingush students' needs and my sympathetic attitude toward them. The focus of these needs is on the development of

their English language oral skills via the implementation of communicative language teaching in Ingushetia. Although the FSES introduced a new curriculum in Russia in 2009 based on the CLT approach to improving students' communicative English performance, Ingush students still do not appear to be able to communicate in English confidently and effectively. In other words, the implementation of the communicative approach in the learning process appears to have been applied in only a limited way and appears to be what Ingush students have lost. They have not been presented with any opportunity to use the language themselves for any communicative purpose. Even nowadays, the most important aspect of the learning process in Ingushetia remains how to pass the exam; therefore, it seems that there is no real interest or enjoyment in terms of learning the English language.

It is worth mentioning that, according to TACC (2015), August 28, 1990 is considered the official date for the appearance of the Internet in the Soviet Union (later Russia). In schools in large cities such as Moscow, and St. Petersburg, the Internet became available in 2012, but in some regions, such as Ingushetia, not all schools have access to the Internet even today. This disparity has led to constrained opportunities for students in these areas to engage with digital technologies, such as using computers, playing online games, browsing the Internet, or communicating online. This limited digital access presents a significant challenge in integrating modern educational technologies and practices in these regions.

Over the years, I have dedicated myself to finding the most effective methods for learning and teaching the English language. Through my observations, it has become evident that Ingush students face challenges in developing proficient spoken English skills for various reasons. Firstly, not all teachers in state schools possess the necessary qualifications for second language competency. Secondly, while the GTM laid a strong foundation for reading and writing skills, it proved insufficient in cultivating adequate speaking abilities. Moreover, the region's mono-ethnic demographics limit exposure to English, with minimal contact with native English speakers. Consequently, the classroom remains the primary environment where students can practice and enhance their English-speaking skills, further complicating the situation. This scenario underscores the pressing need for innovative teaching approaches to address these challenges and promote effective English language communication among Ingush students.

A pivotal moment in my journey occurred when I relocated to England. There, I was profoundly impressed by the extensive use of technology in English Second Language (ESOL) classes. The classrooms were equipped with smartboards, virtual learning environments, and VCs, for example, Teams. Additionally, the CLT approach was actively embraced, encouraging student participation in debates, seminars, and group presentations in the target language. This stark contrast to the educational landscape in Ingushetia was eye-opening, highlighting the significant differences in teaching methodologies and the integration of technology in language learning.

At the outset of my language learning journey, engaging with English-language media, such as movies, television programs, and radio broadcasts – as often suggested by language educators – played a crucial role in enhancing my contextual comprehension, even though it provided a more general rather than a detailed grasp of the language. However, the most significant advancement in my speaking abilities undeniably came from the invaluable opportunity to interact with native English speakers, immensely improving my practical language skills.

This scenario served as a catalyst for my realisation that a powerful synthesis of strategies, particularly utilising VCs, SNs, CLT and direct communication with native speakers could significantly enhance students' language learning experiences. I recognised the transformative potential of combining these methods, understanding that effective language learning thrives not only in socio-cultural contexts but also through direct engagement with native speakers. By facilitating opportunities for students to interact with native English speakers, the learning experience becomes more authentic, allowing students to practice language skills in real-life situations and gain valuable cultural insights. Embracing these diverse methods not only enriches the learning process but also nurtures a deeper understanding of language within the broader context of social and cultural dynamics, fostering a more comprehensive and meaningful educational experience for students.

1.8 Structure of the Study

This thesis unfolds across seven chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction.

The first chapter serves as an introduction, laying the groundwork for the research. It delves into the reasoning behind selecting this particular topic, provides a background context for the study, and articulates the purpose of the study. This is followed by a presentation of the research questions, an exploration of the study's significance, and a reflection on my personal interest in the subject.

Chapter 2: Literature Review.

This chapter reviews the literature relating to the implementation of the CLT approach, VCs, and SNs in the context of EFL. This chapter reviews the existing research and theories relating to some of the issues that are relevant to teaching English with the grammar-translation method (GTM) approach with special reference to the challenges encountered in Russia and its regions. It begins with an overview of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), followed by a discussion on collaborative learning and its influence on diverse teaching methodologies. The chapter then compares various EFL pedagogies, including GTM and CLT, and concludes by synthesizing the literature and discussing its implications for this study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

The third chapter lays out the theoretical framework that guides this study, providing the foundational concepts and theories underpinning the research.

Chapter 4: Methodology.

Chapter four introduces the research methodology that underpins the study. The chapter presents the research methods and discusses the research paradigms that were adopted, the importance of mixed methods and triangulation and why these were used, the target population of the study, and sampling methods. This chapter describes the multiple methods that were used for data collection and the ethical considerations associated with the study.

Chapter 5: Findings.

In the fifth chapter, the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data are presented. This includes analyses of questionnaires, pre- and post-course tests, focus group interviews, and classroom observations.

Chapter 6: Discussion.

The sixth chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the findings. It triangulates and interprets the results, addressing each research question in relation to the main findings and broader literature. The chapter also considers the situational and socio-cultural aspects of the classroom settings.

Chapter7: Conclusion.

The concluding chapter provides a summary of the main findings, presents key recommendations, acknowledges research limitations, and proposes future research directions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a literature review that delves into the role and impact of digital technologies in language learning, with a specific focus on their application in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. The aim is to provide a comprehensive context for understanding the state of English language teaching environments in Ingushetia at the time of data collection. The review begins by exploring the broader use of digital technologies in educational settings, highlighting their importance and effectiveness in enhancing learning experiences. Following this, the discussion narrows down to the specific use of Video Conferencing services (VCs) and Social Networks (SNs), assessing how these tools are currently being leveraged in EFL teaching and learning.

The review also considers sociocultural approaches in online learning environments, providing insights into how these digital platforms support not just language acquisition but also cultural and social engagement among learners.

In the subsequent sections of this chapter, the focus shifts to providing an overview of the most relevant studies on the utilization of technology in teaching English, both within the context of Russia and in other countries. This part of the review is particularly aligned with the research objectives of the study, emphasizing the exploration of teachers' and students' perceptions of digital learning environments in English language education. This examination aims to shed light on the broader landscape of technology-enhanced language teaching, highlighting the various factors that influence its effectiveness and reception.

Finally, the limitations of other studies are discussed, to identify the knowledge gaps in current research, especially regarding the use of digital technologies in English language teaching across different contexts. By pinpointing these limitations, the study is better positioned to address these unexplored areas and contribute new insights to the field.

2.2 Communicative Language Teaching

In this segment of the chapter, the focus is on examining significant theories and research associated with the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, particularly within the context of teaching a second language (L2). This exploration seeks to illuminate the potential applications and adaptations of CLT in English language learning classrooms, with a specific emphasis on the context of Ingushetia. The objective is to understand how CLT, as a teaching methodology, can be effectively integrated and utilized in this unique linguistic and cultural setting.

2.2.1 The theory of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The theory underpinning Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) begins from a theory of language as communication. The aim of CLT is to improve communicative skills rather than "a mere mastery of grammar and structures" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.161).

The need to develop and implement new methods of intensive language teaching arose in the 1960s when the English language began to acquire the status of the language of international communication (Howatt and Smith, 2014, p.89). As a result of scientific research in that area in Europe, the USA, and Canada in the late 1970s and early 1980s, CLT began to have an influence on teaching foreign languages (Howatt and Smith, 2014; Passov, 2010, p.98). The communicative approach challenged, and in some contexts replaced, the grammatical-translational (GTM) method of studying languages, in which the skill of the correct use of the language is developed through grammar exercises, memorising dialogues and phrases, constant supervision by the teacher, and correcting errors in oral or written form (Pavlova and Sakharova, 2019, pp.13-14). According to Pavlova and Sakharova, the CLT approach turned the process of teaching a foreign language into communication in the target language. Describing the difference between those two approaches, Banartseva (2017, pp.22-29) noted that target language use had been largely rehearsed and automatised and CLT heralded a more spontaneous, improvised oral and aural register. Within this approach, which prioritised meaning-making, the aim was to encourage learners to communicate from the very beginning, to experiment and create

language independently through trial and error (Passov, 2010, pp.35-39). A feature of the communicative approach lies in the similarity of the learning process with the real process of communication (Prus *et al.*, 2018, p.110). Thus, the goal of communicative learning is for learners to master communicative competence, which allows them to practically implement the skills and abilities they have acquired in order to successfully solve communicative problems (Banartseva, 2017, p.27).

2.2.2 Communicative Competence

Communicative competence, according to Hymes (1971, cited in Klapper, 2006, p.109), is "a learner's need to focus on appropriate use, which is on using language for particular purposes and in particular situations and settings". This approach places emphasis on grasping not only the content of communication but also the context, including an awareness of the situation, the individuals involved, and their roles and intentions, to determine the most appropriate way to express oneself (Chu, 2023; Ozsevik, 2010).

According to Knodel (2019, pp. 65-116), overall communicative competence includes grammatical competence (knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics), pragmatic competence (knowing what to say in a certain situation to certain people), strategic competence (knowing how to communicate in different circumstances) and sociocultural competence (knowledge of public etiquette, national mentality, values, etc.). Acquisition of these different competencies enhances language learners' knowledge about the language system, ways of formulating thoughts in the target language and "understanding the judgments of others", the national and cultural characteristics of native speakers of the target language, and "the specifics of various types of discourses" (Rudinsky, 2019 p.102). Improving communicative competence motivates students to "understand, interpret and generate coherent statements" (Rudinsky, 2019 p.101). Therefore, competence includes not only cognitive (skills, knowledge), but also non-cognitive (motivation, value orientations, ethical attitudes, etc.) components and ensures the success of activities in rapidly changing modern conditions (Zakharova *et al.*, 2020). In a study conducted by Zakharova *et al.* (2017) at the MKOU "Podgornovskaya Secondary Educational School No. 17" in the village of Podgornoye, Yenisei region, an experimental investigation was undertaken to

assess the communicative competence of younger adolescents. The participants included 5th and 6th-grade students, totalling 19 individuals, with 10 students in the control group and nine students in the experimental group. Initial analysis of the subjects' communicative competence revealed a tendency among younger adolescents to be influenced by others' opinions in various communicative situations. Upon subsequent evaluation after the implementation of targeted developmental interventions, noteworthy advancements in the communicative competence of the experimental group were observed. The adolescents exhibited increased proactivity, sociability, improved listening skills, and a heightened ability to empathize with their conversation partners. As they progressed, they became more proactive and communicative, and their level of communicative competence development increased. Moreover, they demonstrated a greater awareness of their interlocutors' characteristics and applied their knowledge effectively in diverse communicative contexts (Zakharova *et al.*, 2017, para.28). These outcomes underscore the positive impact of the developmental interventions, indicating a substantial enhancement in the communicative competence of the younger adolescents involved in the study. Similar conclusions in studies with university students were made by researchers Voznyuk (2019), Purgina (2018), Veletskaya (2017).

In a recent investigation conducted by Tran (2022), the effectiveness of the CLT approach was examined. The study utilised survey questionnaires administered to both teachers and students, involving 16 English teachers and 23 learners enrolled in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program at Hau Giang Community College. The research utilized quantitative data collected through Google Forms. The results indicated that crucial elements such as classroom activities, appropriate teaching materials, and multimedia tools contribute to establishing a communicative environment and facilitating meaningful interactions among learners. The study confirmed that CLT serves as an appropriate and effective teaching method for the participants in this context.

Tran's (2022) findings align with Toro *et al.*'s (2019) assertion. Toro and colleagues emphasised CLT's focus on learning through interaction and communication, highlighting its departure from memorisation-based learning methods. Toro *et al.* (2019) advocate for the incorporation of interactive activities in EFL instruction to align with the principles of CLT. This perspective resonates with Passov's (2010, p.33)

findings, which highlight CLT's superiority over the GTM and advocate for CLT-based activities to enhance students' communicative competence. Similarly, Wahyuni (2021) underscores the active participation of students in classroom activities facilitated by CLT. According to Wahyuni, students engage in activities that allow them to communicate their perspectives and emotions effectively.

The significance of comprehending the findings from prior studies cannot be overstated within the context of this research endeavour. The existing literature accentuates the efficacy of CLT in augmenting communicative competence through interactive pedagogical activities, juxtaposed with conventional memorization-oriented techniques such as the GTM. This body of literature establishes a sturdy theoretical framework, underscoring the pertinence of integrating CLT principles and interactive exercises into the instructional paradigm, thereby enabling students to actively articulate their thoughts and ideas. This approach not only advances their linguistic proficiencies but also cultivates a profound grasp of the language within authentic communicative situations. The incorporation of CLT-based activities, informed by the insights derived from these studies, possesses the potential to yield superior language learning outcomes for the participants in this study. Such integration furnishes an educational methodology that prioritises interactive and communicative learning, ensuring that pedagogical practices remain empirically substantiated and in harmony with contemporary theories of language acquisition.

The next section describes some activities, based on the literature review in the EFL area, which recommends teaching English through communication, that may help develop students' communicative competence.

2.2.3 CLT-based Activities in EFL Classes

Pair-work activities, role-play, group-work activities, or project work are known as communication-based activities (Wahyuni, 2021; Voznyuk, 2019; Banartseva, 2017; Purgina, 2018; Veletskaya, 2017; Passov, 2010). The primary characteristic and objective of CLT involve incorporating activities where almost all actions are geared towards communication, as stated by Larsen-Freeman (2000, p. 129). This stands in sharp contrast to the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), where the emphasis lies on mastering grammar elements and practising through controlled activities like

memorizing dialogues and exercises, as noted by Richards (2006, p.4). According to both Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Richards (2006), CLT instruction necessitates teachers to function as facilitators. In this role, teachers are responsible for creating situations that encourage communication. Throughout these activities, teachers act as guides, provide feedback, and monitor student performance.

Toro *et al.* (2019) acknowledge that learners' communicative competence develops when using classroom activities such as information sharing, negotiation of meaning, and interaction. In line with that, the development of students' speaking skills in the classroom is emphasised by Dabiri (2019), who suggests that encouraging students to express their views and ideas in the target language provides a valuable opportunity for practice. Additionally, under the CLT approach, students gradually gain confidence and overcome feelings of anxiety and shyness, leading to enhanced fluency. Almuhammadi (2019) highlights the role of interactive activities like interviews and problem-solving tasks in achieving this fluency. Observing classmates' interactions and engaging in activities within pairs, small groups, and larger contexts are integral to improving English speaking skills (Wael *et al.*, 2019). Interviews, in particular, play a crucial role in enhancing fluency, along with problem-solving activities that address various topics and tasks (AL-Garni and Almuhammadi, 2019).

Especially in non-English-speaking countries, students need classroom communication activities to practice speaking English and improve their spoken communication, as well as other language learning skills (Vaneva, 2022, p.23). For example, authentic texts which are materials that exist in an English-speaking culture and are not adapted or made easier for non-native speakers (Artamonova, 2016, pp.51-54). According to Ulyanova (2018, pp.206-214), such texts have several advantages because they reflect the actual functioning of the language in the speech of its speakers and in a natural social context. If these texts are diverse in genre and subject matter, they are capable of arousing the interest of students and can stimulate communication processes in the classroom. Additionally, they prepare students for the perception of the language in an authentic language environment and are "the best means of getting to know a foreign culture" (Ulyanova (2018, p.213). Incorporating "authentic materials into pedagogical practices" and working in pairs and small groups effectively promotes the "full development of second language skills" (Garova, 2016, pp.136-137). Real-world and authentic materials accommodate learners' real

communicative needs and play "a primary role in promoting communicative use" (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.168). Garova (2016) came to a similar conclusion after conducting qualitative research with 370 high-school students, finding that students were interested and motivated in the learning process and achieved better test results when they were involved in real-world communication using authentic materials. Similarly, to investigate the effect of communication-based activities on Intermediate level learners' English proficiency, Zaikova (2019) used authentic materials material such as newspapers, maps, pictures, games, role plays, and pair-communication practice. Zaikova (2019, p.174) concludes that communication-based activities and authentic materials in ESL classes have great potential and positively influence the improvement of students' speaking skills as those activities increase students' interest and motivation.

Koval (2019, pp.147-148) described four characteristics of communicative activities: information gap, feedback, selection and authenticity of materials. His conclusions also coincide with the above. However, the second feature, feedback, is not so popular among the researchers cited above. According to Koval (2019, p. 146), feedback implies receiving a signal from the recipient that the speech message received by them is understood; that is, it implies a reaction to what they heard or read. Koval (2019, p.147) believes that feedback impacts the results of language proficiency. In view of the foregoing, it can be concluded that CLT-based activities force students to be 'brave to practice their English, not only speaking, but also how to write, read, and listen better' (Rahmatillah, 2019, pp.161-177). Integrating Koval's (2019) delineation of communicative activities, specifically focusing on the often-overlooked element of feedback aligns seamlessly with the design of my language intervention program. By incorporating Koval's insights, this research underscores the multifaceted nature of language acquisition, emphasising not only speaking skills but also encompassing writing, reading, and listening proficiencies. In the context of the present thesis, these scholarly perspectives serve to enrich the theoretical foundation of the study, emphasising the importance of incorporating feedback mechanisms within communicative language teaching practices. This alignment supports the rationale behind the methodology employed in this research and highlights the significance of a holistic language intervention approach. By elucidating the synergy between Koval's findings and this study's framework, the literature review substantiates the

pedagogical choices made in the design of the language intervention, providing a scholarly basis for the incorporation of feedback and other communicative elements. This synthesis not only validates the approach adopted in this research but also contributes to the broader discourse on effective language teaching methodologies within the context of communicative language education.

Despite the positive results of CLT-based activities in EFL Classes, many studies describe challenges with the implementation of CLT, which are discussed in the next section.

2.3 Challenges of CLT

A review of the current literature has identified some difficulties with the use of CLT in EFL settings. These issues are reviewed in this section because when designing the English language intervention for a school in Ingushetia it was necessary to know the challenges of the CLT approach as well as knowing its successes.

2.3.1 Teacher training

In Russian universities, Klikova (2021) states that the GTM remains the foundational approach for training language specialists. A study by Kravchenko and Payunena (2018, p.15) revealed that teachers faced challenges integrating communication-based activities, primarily due to insufficient language practice and training. These findings parallel those of Ignatovich (2014), who observed English teachers in three Russian regions. Ignatovich reported that these teachers, despite claiming to use CLT-based activities, predominantly focused on reading and writing tests for exam preparation, relying on GTM. Their limited awareness of how to implement CLT activities stemmed from their lack of experience and training in CLT (Ignatovich, 2014, pp.208-210).

In regions with limited opportunities for genuine communication in the target language, such as Russia, Knodel (2019, p.43) emphasises the critical role of teacher training. This training is vital for bridging the gap between traditional methods like the GTM and modern communicative approaches, ensuring effective language instruction in

contexts where authentic communication experiences are rare. To excel as practitioners of CLT, teachers must possess in-depth knowledge of the pedagogy essential for instilling language competence, alongside a strong command of linguistics and teaching methodologies. However, both teachers and learners of foreign languages in Russian regions struggle to obtain adequate exposure to communicative practices, largely due to limited interactions with native speakers (Knodel, 2019, p.44). This scarcity of real communication opportunities poses challenges, making it harder for teachers to model native-like communication and compromising the overall language quality, as noted by Passov (2018, p.36).

In a similar context, Islam (2016) found that the implementation of CLT was challenged by several factors, including teacher training. He investigated how CLT is implemented in the classrooms at Primary Level in Bangladesh and obstacles behind the implementation. The findings indicated that classrooms were still teacher-centred, learners were not engaged, fluency was still beyond the students' acquisition, and classroom activities were not communicative. Similar to Islam (2016), some research projects have found that lack of time and expertise in material development and CLT training was a major difficulty in adopting CLT and successful implementation of communication-based activities in EFL settings (Knodel, 2019; Passov, 2018; Banartseva, 2017; Koval, 2014).

Creating an environment that replicates real-life situations and incorporating authentic materials are fundamental aspects of implementing CLT, as emphasised by Passov (2018, p.33). These elements are essential components of a comprehensive teacher training curriculum, underlining the practical application of CLT principles in classroom instruction (Narkuzieva and Mansurova, 2020, pp.132-133).

Consequently, in regions devoid of an English language milieu and lacking opportunities for natural language interactions, it becomes imperative for educators to engage in practical training and adopt contemporary methodologies and techniques for teaching English, ensuring the effective implementation of the CLT approach (Passov, 2018, p.39).

2.3.2 Class size

In her analysis, Kovaleva (2021) refers to the 2019 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) education report, which reveals that the average class size in Russia is 21 students, placing the country alongside nations like Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland in terms of this metric. Interestingly, certain countries, including Costa Rica and Japan, grapple with class sizes exceeding 30 students, and in some cases, secondary school enrolment surpasses that of primary education, as seen in Costa Rica. Conversely, Russia belongs to a category of countries, including Great Britain, Australia, Chile, and Hungary, where student numbers are decreasing within secondary education contexts (Kovaleva, 2021). However, Rynda (2021, para.19) reported that in the 2021 academic year at a school in Rostov-on-Don, there were 20 first-grade classes, each with 30 or more students.

Kerr (2011), within a tertiary-level education context, argues that a large class could range from an introductory class of 700 students to an upper-year seminar with 50 students. Lukyanova (2019, p.31) acknowledges the challenge of precisely defining what constitutes a large class. In Russia and some other countries, 25-30 students per teacher might be considered large, whereas in other nations, this number is regarded as normal or even relatively small.

Class size can make the implementation of CLT difficult in an EFL setting. According to Vasilyeva (2022), maintaining students' focus throughout the entirety of a lesson poses a significant challenge, even for seasoned educators. Moreover, when faced with a class size exceeding 25 students, the teacher's role often shifts from an educator to a disciplinarian, necessitating a significant portion of the lesson to be dedicated to matters of classroom management. Consequently, this diversion from the instructional focus detrimentally impacts the learning experience and diminishes comprehension of new material among the students (Vasilyeva, 2022). Moreover, based on the findings of Wang and Zhang (2011, p.3), teaching in large classrooms presents numerous difficulties. Primarily, maintaining discipline, particularly among primary and middle school students who lack self-control, becomes exceedingly challenging. Additionally, addressing the diverse interests, personalities, and abilities of students poses a formidable task. Moreover, arranging impactful class activities is impeded by constraints in both time and space. Ensuring equal opportunities for

student engagement and practice becomes intricate under these circumstances. Lastly, delivering timely and meaningful feedback and evaluation emerges as a formidable undertaking in large class settings (Wang and Zhang , 2011, p.3).

In a similar vein, Todd (2012) has determined that learners enrolled in classes exceeding 25 students encounter diminished learning effectiveness. These concerns are corroborated by Abdulkader (2012, pp.57-58), who noted that teachers faced challenges in managing EFL classrooms with more than 30 students. Abdulkader's (2012, p.57) survey data demonstrates that having a significant number of students in a class creates substantial difficulties for Saudi EFL teachers when implementing CLT in English classrooms. Among the 35 participants, 17 (48.6%) reported having a minimum of 35 students, whereas six (17.1%) indicated class sizes ranging from 25 to 30 students. Additionally, seven (20.0%) teachers stated that the average number of students in their class was between 20 and 25 students, with only five (14.3%) mentioning having 15-20 students in their class. Similarly, both Bahanshal (2013) and Ogorodny (2018) concluded that evaluating individual student requirements and providing tailored, interactive instruction that addresses all students' needs in large classrooms proves to be highly challenging.

Aoumeur's (2017) study aims to investigate the organisational and pedagogical challenges commonly faced by teachers dealing with large classes and their impact on student learning. The researcher distributed questionnaires to 200 students and 40 teachers as part of the research. The survey results unequivocally indicate that large class sizes negatively influence the quality of both teaching and learning (Aoumeur, 2017, p.349). Several factors contribute to this impact: students in larger classes are more inclined to miss classes, and they often experience feelings of isolation, leading to diminished motivation for learning. Additionally, class size affects assessment methods, including continuous assessment, and hampers the development of effective learning activities. The findings suggest a preference among teachers for smaller class sizes.

Likewise, Androtis (2019, p.77) contends that the level of interaction between teachers and students diminishes in larger classes. He posits that the effectiveness of reducing class sizes hinges on the notion that decreasing the number of students per class fundamentally transforms the overall classroom atmosphere, fostering a more

favourable learning environment. Similar conclusions are drawn by Chang and Suparmi (2020) and Rahmawati (2019) in their respective studies conducted in Indonesia. Chang and Suparmi (2020, p.50) examined the challenges faced by Indonesian EFL high school teachers when attempting to implement Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). They note that 50% of these teachers are still confronted with the need to manage substantial class sizes, with class enrolments ranging from 30 to 39 students. This circumstance impedes their ability to effectively practice CLT, as it necessitates individual attention to each student. Rahmawati's (2019, pp.65-78) argument aligns with this perspective, highlighting how larger class sizes influence teachers' choices of classroom activities and create difficulties in effectively monitoring the entire class during instruction.

However, these findings are significantly different from the conclusions drawn by Yelkpieri *et al.* (2012), who found no correlation between large class sizes and ineffective application of CLT. Indeed, one of the key findings of the Yelkpieri *et al.* (2012) study is that lecturers disagreed with the view that large class size affected the quality of their teaching. They also disagreed with the assertion that large class size makes assessment difficult (Yelkpieri *et al.*, 2012, p.319-332). Likewise, Bokov (2020, p.51) argued that there may not be enough discussions and questions for deeper learning in small classrooms, where strong bonds have formed or where personalities and points of view are too similar.

However, Shaikhutdinova (2019, p.139) posits that employing the small group method in foreign language lessons is a highly effective approach to language instruction. Drawing from Passov's (1998, p.223) definition, Shaikhutdinova (2019) adheres to the concept that a small group comprises a specific number of students, typically 3-5 individuals, who come together either at the direction of a teacher or independently to collaboratively complete an educational task, sharing a common objective and functional structure. According to Shaikhutdinova (2019), this mode of instruction not only enhances students' language proficiency and optimizes classroom time but also plays a significant role in nurturing students' personal development. Shaikhutdinova (2019) asserts that teaching in small groups effectively uses time in class, develops students' speech competencies and significantly develops students' personalities, shaping their readiness to work in a team, cooperation and interaction.

These conflicting viewpoints within the literature highlight the absence of a compelling reason to refrain from researching the impact of new technologies on English teaching using the CLT approach in Ingushetia, where class sizes are typically large. The literature review exploring the definition of large classes and the influence of class size on student performance has yielded contentious ideas, definitions, and opinions. This controversy may stem from teachers' perceptions, varying disciplines, and the age groups of students.

2.3.3 Exam-oriented study

Traditional grammar-focused tests and a lack of effective and efficient evaluation tools for communicative skills pose significant challenges when introducing CLT in EFL environments. Several studies, including works by Tadesse (2021), Almohideb (2019), Albadry (2018), Van Le (2018), and Vongxay (2013), among others, have explored the detrimental role of conventional, form-oriented exams in hindering the integration of CLT within EFL settings.

Al-Khafai (2022, p.31) identified the grammar-based exam format as the biggest barrier to students' interest in communicative activities. He elucidated that the influence of the examination format places teachers under pressure to prioritise exam success, consequently leading students to emphasise grammar-focused teaching and learning. The students' primary motivation in this context is to achieve successful exam outcomes and secure favourable assessments. Similarly, both Karim (2004) and Dong (2007) found that EFL students preferred learning sentence structure rather than communicative activities because the contents of the examination of all language subject tests are grammar-based. As a result, students are "unwilling to be involved in communicative tasks which are not included in the tests" and are more focused on grammar learning as they want to pass the exams and get good grades (Chang and Goswami, 2011, p.9). At the same time, teachers are under pressure to help their students pass the exams because of the examination-oriented system (Dmitrieva, 2017, p.34). Therefore, a grammar-based examination format is identified as the biggest obstacle to both students' lack of interest in communicative activities and teachers' unwillingness to teach using a CLT approach (Vongxay, 2013 cited in Islam, 2016, p.16).

Chowdhury (2012) finds that there is a huge mismatch between teachers' perception on CLT and real classroom practices. Teacher's classroom practices are not typically influenced by their knowledge of CLT, but more by the responsibility they feel to get their students through grammar-based exams. In this context, both Ullah (2015, p.83) and Kabir *et al.* (2014) point out that CLT should cover all the four skills, but found that in Bangladesh, listening and speaking skills were neglected, as they were not tested in exams. English classes mostly emphasise reading and writing skills, targeting exam procedures where those two skills are tested. English is a compulsory subject in schools and colleges in Bangladesh, but due to a lack of motivation most of the learners remain incompetent. True communicative competence is not developing because of an exam-oriented study of English. In the classroom, students faced many problems, such as large class sizes, insufficient opportunities to use the target language, the unavailability of language labs, and lack of proficient teachers.

This situation mirrors the circumstances in many Russian schools. Burlakova (2019, pp.35-75) reveals there is no difference between the approaches taken by trained and nontrained teachers' classes in some Russian regions. The trained teachers faced various difficulties to apply their training, such as limited vocabulary of teachers and students, lack of real-life materials, lack of teaching aids, students' irregularity in attendance and inability to understand English, their shyness, lack of English learning environment, and improper setting arrangement. Consequently, in an exam-oriented environment devoid of a genuine English language milieu, learners predominantly study English for instrumental purposes, focusing on specific skills required for exams, rather than for functional purposes encompassing the development of comprehensive language skills and the ability to engage in listening, speaking, writing, and reading in a foreign language.

2.4 Digital Technology in EFL Education

In this section, an overview is presented on the integration of digital technologies, video conferencing services (VCs), and social networks (SNs) in educational contexts. The focus then narrows down to the application of these tools specifically in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. This detailed examination is intended to offer a broader perspective on the English language teaching environment in

Ingushetia during the period of data collection, highlighting how these technological tools are being utilised and their impact on language learning practices.

2.4.1 Digital technologies in learning

Digital technologies encompass electronic tools, systems, devices, and resources employed for generating, storing, or processing data. Examples include widely recognised platforms such as social media, online games, multimedia applications, and mobile phones (Pavlyuk, 2021). The escalation of internet access has led to a marked surge in the utilization of digital technologies and their corresponding user base. Bhattacherjee's (2021) research underscores this development, demonstrating that a remarkable 96% of students engage with social media, thus highlighting the broad scope and penetration of digital platforms. Complementing this, Wade (no date), corroborates these findings by noting that a similar proportion of students with internet access participate in at least one social networking site. This convergence of data points towards the significant and far-reaching impact of digitalization in contemporary society. Chernigovskaya (2022) aptly encapsulates this phenomenon, observing that the world has undergone an irreversible transformation, firmly establishing itself in the digital age.

Teachers exhibit varying attitudes toward the integration of digital technologies in their classrooms, with some acknowledging significant advantages while others express concerns about potential distractions to the learning process, leading to differing perspectives in various educational contexts. Several studies, for example, Keane (2023), Halem *et al.* (2022), Pinto and Leite (2020), have explored the purposes for which secondary school and university students use digital technologies and their perceptions of technology in different countries over the past decade. The literature reveals that students employ digital technologies for both academic purposes and social communication. However, the effective use of digital technologies in pedagogy depends on the skills and experience of the teachers using them: for example, Dang (2011) discovered that Vietnam's university professors did not have sufficient computer skills, which prevented them from using technology effectively. Moreover, teachers were deterred from embracing technology due to a lack of incentives from their employing organisation. The study also revealed that although most instructors

(66.2%) owned computers, they lacked adequate technology training. Also, many university professors lamented their limited access to technology resources and technical issues. Additionally, they believed incorporating technology would add to their workload. Hue and Ab Jalil's (2013) research involving 109 university instructors examined their attitudes and utilisation of technology. The study found that a majority of teachers (60%) perceived a substantial time commitment associated with learning new technologies, preparing lessons incorporating technology, and integrating technology into their classroom activities. The study established a correlation between the instructors' attitudes and their practical use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the classroom. It is important to note that the study focused solely on general applications of technology and did not delve into specific ways instructors employed technology in their research and teaching, particularly when they possessed adequate skills.

Some researchers have found little evidence of formal IT training being a part of teacher training curricula: Shugal *et al.* (2023, p.81) found that in Russian schools the social and human sciences teachers' computer skills were the main cause inhibiting them from using technology. Hence, for effective teaching, according to Robbins (2022), ICT skill should be a key area of focus to empower teachers. To find out if teachers had received training in ICT as part of their initial teacher training (ITT), Robbins posted a survey to Twitter asking: "Were you taught how to use basic IT tools during your teacher training?". Surprisingly, 90% of the 200 respondents said they had never received any formal training in using any of the useful IT tools that teachers employ every day. This meant that trainees had some basic IT skills before beginning the ITT, it did not guarantee that those skills would be used effectively and fluently (Robbins, 2022).

Researchers interested in the use of digital technologies as a teacher tool in schools have also explored the availability of digital devices to both students and teachers. According to Gosper *et al.* (2014, p.293), there has been a notable rise in students' access to computing devices since 2010. The percentage of participants with access to a laptop or desktop computer at home increased from 87.3% in 2010 to 96% in 2013, and access to university-provided computers rose from 64% to 69%. The most significant change occurred in the increased availability of mobile technologies. In 2010, only 53.6% had access to a smartphone, a figure that rose to 82% in 2013. In

the United States, Li, Snow and White (2015, pp.143-162) found that the majority of secondary school students had access to cell phones (91.23%), desktop computers (84.2%), laptop computers (76.12%), and tablets (34.64%) for learning and communication purposes. Similarly, according to Wang et al. (2014, pp.637-662) research, secondary school pupils in ten schools in New York and nine schools in Utah, USA, possessed computers (74.4%), cell phones (80.9%), and laptops (69%). In many areas, the majority of students own mobile devices and frequently use them while in class. However, the prevalence of mobile devices varies by country (Lopez-Fernandez *et al.*, 2017). For example, according to Anderson and Jiang (2018), a significant percentage of teenagers in the United States, specifically 95%, possess smartphones, as reported by the PEW Research Centre in 2018. Additionally, Gao et al. (2019) found that students are more inclined to own mobile phones while attending high school compared to their counterparts in elementary and middle schools. The ubiquity of specialised mobile applications, including popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, as well as various websites and online tools, is on the rise. Bouchrika (2023) emphasised the increasing mobile-friendliness of these applications. Bouchrika's research revealed that the primary reason students prefer smartphones is their ease of connectivity to cellular networks, ensuring constant online access. In contrast, desktop computers necessitate a stable Wi-Fi connection for internet access, rendering them less practical and popular, especially in environments where Wi-Fi is unavailable, slow, or unreliable.

Wang (2013, p.138) found significant differences in technological resources between rural and urban schools. This included a lack of interactive whiteboards, desktop computers in labs, notebooks, netbooks, and tablet computers in rural schools. Moreover, rural schools were observed to have less integration of high-tech tools among teachers than urban schools. The digital divide between rural and urban schools has resulted in many rural districts being unable to adopt innovative instructional technologies (Sundeen & Sundeen, 2013). For decades, rural education advocates have argued that rural students represent a forgotten minority (Azano and Stewart, 2015).

Perrin and Duggan (2016) reported that, according to a study published by the Pew Research Centre, 85% of suburban residents, 85% of urban residents, and 75% of rural residents have Internet access. This suggests that children in rural communities

may have fewer opportunities to interact with digital devices compared to their urban and suburban peers. Pavlova and Zhirkova (2022, pp.147-152) argue that rural schools face substantial infrastructure challenges, such as limited access to broadband or, in certain cases, a complete lack of Internet connectivity. Even in areas with Internet access, students may remain offline up to 30% of the time (Pavlova and Zhirkov, 2022). Therefore, the availability and quality of internet access in Ingushetia could significantly influence the practicality and effectiveness of the intervention proposed in this study.

Where internet access is fast and reliable, there is evidence that it can be used to help provide a more authentic learning environment for the teaching and learning of foreign languages as it gives access to resources from the target language's culture and allows students to interact with each other and sometimes even remotely with native speakers.

Given the availability of appropriate devices and high-quality internet access, it is important to recognise the uses found for technology in educational settings. In Dabbagh *et al.* (2019), college students in a large public university in the U.S. were surveyed regarding what technologies they used most frequently for learning, what technologies they valued for learning, and how they perceived technology effectiveness to support their learning. The results of this study reveal a variety of implications regarding the use of technology in higher education contexts, particularly as this relates to integrating Web 2.0 and social media technologies as well as how teaching and learning practices should change as a result of the benefits of these technologies. One key finding of this research is that value seems to be closely aligned with usage. For example, laptops were overwhelmingly reported as the most used and valued devices for learning. Smartphones were also reported as frequently used and important or very important to the learning process. These device choices indicate the importance to the modern-day student of being able to use portable and mobile devices for learning. Dabbagh *et al.* (2019) suggest that students are looking for opportunities to learn on the go or anytime, anywhere, without the constraints of a formal learning environment.

Technology provides students with diverse learning tools, as well as providing space to promote interaction amongst themselves and with their teachers. Koroleva (2018)

argue that technology use in education also contributes to the development of critical thinking, and improved speech and academic writing skills. In addition, technology can build or promote the students' respect and tolerance for different responses, promote greater social/emotional support among peers, and allow increased access to different kinds of information. Furthermore, challenging material can be disseminated in a more effective manner to students in order to promote lifelong learning.

The integration of technology in language learning environments has emerged as a pivotal area of research and practice, offering transformative opportunities for effective language acquisition. Sami (2014) underscores the significance of modern internet resources in creating authentic language environments conducive to the implementation of interactive language acquisition strategies.

Cutter's (2015) research highlights the substantial benefits of technology integration in enhancing student engagement and fostering meaningful teacher-student relationships. By incorporating technology, teachers can tailor instruction to individual students' levels while ensuring they achieve their learning goals (Cutter, 2015). Ahmadi (2018) reinforces this point by highlighting technology's role in adapting classroom activities and enhancing the language learning process.

Furthermore, Signore's (2022, p.5) underscores the importance of technology in language learning, emphasizing its capacity to engage students and assess language skills effectively. The push for technology in education aims to prepare students for the future while making the learning experience enjoyable.

Mironova and Fazlich (2023, pp.3-8) provide valuable insights into the audiovisual teaching medium offered by the Internet. They emphasize how Internet resources facilitate teachers in lesson planning and delivery. With the abundance of interactive exercises, game programs, and regional videos available online, students are genuinely interested and motivated. The integration of modern technologies not only optimizes the English teaching process but also adds a creative dimension, eliminating the monotony of traditional teaching methods. As each generation becomes more technologically advanced, the internet becomes a seamless part of the learning experience, enhancing the overall language acquisition process (Mironova and Fazlich, 2023, p.8).

This literature underscores the pivotal role of technology in modern language pedagogy, emphasizing its transformative impact on the teaching and learning processes.

2.4.2 Social Media

Valle et al. (2017, p.10) indicate that social media use in education has increased rapidly over the years, while Imomova and Norova (2022) observes that both students and instructors have taken advantage of social media in education. Social media facilitates social learning, improved self-confidence and communication between students and instructors, which are benefits associated with the active use of education (Nkomo and Nat, 2021). While social media can allow a platform for students to interact with each other outside of formal lessons, its beneficial effects are questionable. For example, Nurutdiniva and Dmotrieva (2018) examined the relationship between Facebook use and student engagement, defined as the time spent preparing for class (academic engagement) and time spent in co-curricular activities (co-curricular engagement). Findings suggest that students' involvement in Facebook can either positively or negatively engage with their education.

Incorporating perspectives from Peters *et al.* (2022), Sunday (2021), Dommett (2019), Bista (2015) and Tiernan (2014), Twitter emerges as a powerful media tool capable of enhancing student engagement. According to Tiernan (2014, p.12), Twitter provides a platform where students can contribute to discussions in a less intimidating manner and actively engage with both peers and course content, indicating that students find social media interactions fulfilling. Sunday (2021) highlights that students utilize Twitter for social as well as educational purposes, echoing Dommett's (2019) findings, which indicate its role in sharing materials, participating in online group discussions, and accessing supplementary educational resources for self-study outside traditional classroom settings, such as watching videos and enrolling in free and commercial online courses. Notably, the incorporation of Twitter in educational settings has been shown to elevate class participation levels, attentiveness, and overall engagement when compared to classes relying solely on traditional methods to foster interaction (Peters et al., 2022). Alshuaibi *et al.* (2018) stated that, in general, social media could enhance students' cognitive engagement in learning as they found the cognitive

dimension had a mediating role in the relationship between social media and academic performance. Onorin (2019) analysed the use of social media sites and learning outcomes regarding community colleges. The study found a relationship between social media use and academic outcomes. Students who are actively engaged in social media tend to perform better in their learning outcomes than inactive students (Onorin, 2019, p.174).

Another important tool for EFL that allow instructors and learners to interact on a regular basis is WhatsApp (Alamera and Khateeb, 2021, pp.6-7). WhatsApp is one of the most popular messaging applications, which can be accessed by using a mobile phone and Personal Computer (PC) and allows the user to make video and voice calls, send text messages, and more using only an internet connection, which means it is virtually free to use and ideal for international calling (Goodwin, 2020). The pedagogical benefits of WhatsApp have been advanced by many researchers, such as Alamera and Khateeb (2021), Ferreira-Meyers and Martins (2020), Ali and Bin-Hady (2019), Kartal (2019) and Betretdinova (2019).

Betretdinova (2019) found that WhatsApp had a positive role in encouraging autonomous and peer learning, repositioning instructors as facilitators, and organising learning communities. Moreover, Betretdinova's findings indicate WhatsApp has emerged a conduit for informal, anywhere-anytime learning; however, such learning must be supported by rigorous guidelines. These findings confirm what was found by Kartal (2019), who argued that instant messaging using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) applications, including WhatsApp, can positively contribute to writing and vocabulary building skills. These interactions increase student confidence and as found by both Kartal (2019) and Alamera and Khateeb (2021, pp.149-175), WhatsApp provides flexibility and freedom for language learning beyond the classroom, which may also consequently boost learners' motivation.

Additionally, Betretdinova (2019) discovered that WhatsApp played a part in promoting peer and autonomous learning, changing the role of instructors to that of facilitators, and setting up learning communities. In contrast, WhatsApp has led to an increase in informal, on-the-go learning, which needs to be supported by strict rules. These results support Kartal's (2019) contention that instant messaging with mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) applications, such as WhatsApp, can help students improve

their writing and vocabulary. Research undertaken by Ferreira-Meyers and Martins (2020) combines an extended desktop review and other qualitative work in the form of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups in order to determine whether learners and teachers welcome interactions beyond the classroom on the mobile tool WhatsApp. It shows the results of a desktop review of existing literature on mobile learning applications in the field of language teaching and learning in general and of Portuguese as a Foreign Language in particular. The tutors enjoyed the interactions on WhatsApp and felt they were able to give additional timely guidance to the learners. Furthermore, learners were happy to interact via WhatsApp and quickly started using the target language for these interactions (Ferreira-Meyers and Martins, 2020, p.6).

These interactions were useful and assisted in the teaching-learning process and, on the whole, they had an impact on motivation and learning. Moreover, they were unequivocally effective in enhancing English language learners' performance and competence, along with lowering their anxiety (Ali and Bin-Hady, 2019, pp.295-298). Furthermore, Kartal, (2019, pp.352-365) argues that WhatsApp positively contributes to writing and vocabulary-building skills. Also, it is possible to access old recordings of any cognitive assessment of the learner's evolution by the learner themselves or by any other stakeholder (Betretdinova, 2019, pp.16-19).

An overview of the literature on tutors' and students' perceptions confirms that teachers have predominantly positive perceptions regarding the use of social media for learning. Therefore, WhatsApp has the potential to be a very useful resource for teaching, learning and practicing an additional language.

2.4.3 Video Conference Tools

Video conferencing tools and communication software (VC), such as Zoom and Skype, allow people to interact with each other in real-time (Khillar, 2020). Consequently, they have the potential to provide links between students seeking to learn a language and native speakers of that language to facilitate real-time interaction in spoken, written form, with the possibility of improving the skills of listening and speaking that are often not met by a traditional, grammar-based approach but which are crucial to the CLT approach.

Aripzhanova and Kostina (2022) emphasise the transformative potential of using VCs, for example Skype or Zoom, in language classrooms, providing both teachers and students with limitless opportunities for global collaboration. Skype facilitates international interactions, enabling students to engage with peers from other countries and practice their language skills effectively. According to Aripzhanova and Kostina (2022), through this platform, teachers can offer essential guidance, assist with homework, and create collaborative spaces for reading, presentations, performances, writing, and research projects. Additionally, Skype opens avenues for professional development activities, both within and beyond the confines of educational institutions.

The research conducted by Levak and Son (2017), Khan *et al.* (2016), and Wu *et al.* (2011) strongly support the efficacy of VCs as a pivotal tool in English language learning. These studies highlight how VC serves as a motivational force, driving English learners to enhance their language proficiency. Specifically, Skype proves instrumental in enhancing students' focus and comprehension, thereby boosting their intellectual capacity for speaking skills proficiency (Khan *et a*l., 2016, p.47). Furthermore, Levak and Son (2017, pp.339-357) found that VCs, particularly Skype, significantly reduce spoken errors. Grammar tasks conducted via Skype outperform those executed in traditional classroom environments, underscoring the superiority of this platform for language learning.

Wu *et al.* (2011) VC application, specifically Skype, to facilitate interactions between Taiwanese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students and native English speakers in the USA. The research revealed that many Taiwanese university students possessed extensive training in English translation, reading, and writing, yet lacked proficiency in verbal and listening skills. Skype was integrated into the classroom setting to provide positive and authentic learning experiences, serving as a motivational tool for Taiwanese EFL students (Wu *et al.,* 2011, p.2).

Similar success stories were documented in the use of Skype for language learning interactions, such as American students learning Japanese and Japanese students learning English, as observed in the study conducted by Kato *et al.* (2016, pp.355-366). These outcomes aligned with the findings of Levak and Son (2017, pp.200-218) in their research on the development of listening comprehension via Skype. Utilising

Skype significantly enhances English language learners' speaking skills, motivating them to engage in further study and correct various pronunciation and fluency errors.

The benefits of using Skype extend beyond enhancing speaking skills; it offers numerous advantages for both learners and teachers. Effectively integrated into the learning process, Skype, along with similar tools, has the potential to substantially enhance students' language learning experiences. Furthermore, it presents teachers with a challenge to innovate and fosters creativity, thereby contributing to their professional development (Aripzhanova and Kostina, 2022).

The studies discussed above highlight VC platforms, like Skype and Zoom as valuable tools for remote education. However, Knipe and Lee (2002) raised concerns about the quality of teaching and learning through video conferencing, suggesting that the experience might not match the standards of traditional classrooms. Their findings revealed that students in remote locations had a lower-quality learning experience compared to their counterparts in traditional classrooms. Similarly, Candarli and Yuksel (2012) explored students' perspectives on videoconferencing in higher education. Their study, involving second and third-year university students attending a 30-minute videoconferencing English class, highlighted a prevalent negative attitude among students toward this mode of instruction.

Kotula (2016, pp.37-51) identified several challenges associated with using such platforms, including issues with establishing audio or video connections and teachers' inability to supervise learners' screens. Despite flexibility being a significant advantage, some students, as reported by Serhan (2020, p.335), viewed Zoom negatively, finding it detrimental to their learning experience and motivation. Serhan's study explored students' attitudes toward Zoom in remote learning, revealing that students believed it had a mostly negative impact on their classroom engagement and did not enhance interaction levels (Serhan, 2020, p.338). The findings indicated overall dissatisfaction among students during the transition period to online learning.

Several factors contributed to these results, including instructors being unprepared for the abrupt shift, technical difficulties faced by users (such as internet access issues and Zoom security concerns), and equity and access challenges (Serhan, 2020, p.340). These factors collectively impacted the students' learning experience and highlighted the complexities associated with virtual learning environments.

More recent research conducted on English learners in Sweden during the Covid-19 pandemic clearly emphasises the scale of the challenge. According to Reinholdsson and Björkman (2021, pp.30–36), communicative classroom activities were less common during remote education, students felt less inclined to participate actively in those activities online, and their willingness to speak had decreased as a result of the latter.

These studies indicate that communicative activities via VC are only effective on language acquisition if students are kept engaged and their motivation is high.

2.4.4 Sociocultural Approaches in Online Learning Environments

Human beings are inherently social creatures, wired to seek and maintain social relationships as an integral part of their existence (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). This innate human trait fuels the necessity for communication and interaction across various domains, including both educational and real-world contexts. Social relationships encompass every facet of an individual's life – encompassing work, family, friendships, communication, politics, and more (Voronov, 2018). These interconnections among individuals significantly influence their self-determination, self-awareness, personal growth, and the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and emotions. In today's world, social networks have evolved into a crucial component of the lifestyle embraced by teenagers and young adults, offering rich and effortless communication opportunities with a diverse spectrum of individuals (Bovina and Dvoryanchikov, 2023).

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory (SCT) views human development as a socially mediated process in which children acquire their cultural values, beliefs, and problem-solving strategies through collaborative dialogues with more knowledgeable members of society. This theory has been extended to a wide number of domains, including second language acquisition (Mustafa *et al.*, 2018, p.168). Second language acquisition (SLA) is concerned with how individuals acquire a language other than their native language (Mustafa *et al.*, 2018, p.168). Vygotsky's (1979) SCT regards learning as socially and culturally constructed through community engagement (Sokolova, 2019; Novik, 2017). SCT theory therefore contributes to the development of student-centred pedagogy in online education (Freeman, 2010, p.2).

According to this perspective, the learning process and outcome cannot be separated from students' interactions with peers, teachers, learning resources, and relevant communities. Novik (2017, pp.25-27) indicates that the socio-cultural perspective maintains that students should be perceived as active learners who develop new social identities through participation in communities of learning. The sociocultural perspective on learning focuses on the interplay between the learner and their sociocultural environment and, more specifically, on how participation in sociocultural activities influences learning (Novik, 2017, pp.31-36).

Newman and Holzman (1993, cited by Barnes, 2008, p.5), explain that Vygotsky's work emphasizes the importance of motivating children to learn. Vygotsky believed 'in extrinsic motivation for children' (Barnes, 2008, p.1). This means that are motivated to engage in an activity or behaviour to earn a reward or avoid punishment (Tranquillo and Stecker, 2016). The theory of extrinsic motivation suggests that giving a child a reward for doing something good will encourage them to repeat that action in hopes of receiving more rewards. However, Vygotsky argued that children must learn in order to be motivated (Barnes, 2008). Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, occurs when a behaviour is engaging and rewarding in itself (Lee *et al.*, 2012). Children who engage in an activity for the intrinsic value of it, rather than for an external reward, find the activity itself rewarding. An instructor can create a motivating classroom environment by introducing novel situations to students, as suggested by Stoa and Chu (2020). Vygotsky suggests that motivation is naturally fostered when children learn simply for the satisfaction of learning. Play can be an effective way of achieving this, as it involves social interaction. Children who are motivated by interactions with their friends and peers do not require a reward for completing a project; they receive the intrinsic motivation of their peers' support and praise. Vygotsky suggests this can boost the child's confidence and motivate them to attain goals they would otherwise have thought unattainable (Mishina, 2017, p.157).

In recent decades, according to Klekovkina (2017), in Russia the acquisition of a foreign language has become fully understood to be a means of communication, mutual understanding and interaction between representatives of different cultures, as a means of familiarisation with a different national culture. She believes that the changes that have taken place in the socio-cultural context of learning foreign languages have led to a rethinking of the goals and objectives, content and

technologies of teaching foreign languages on the basis of already accumulated domestic and foreign methodological experience. Consequently, mastering foreign language communication has become the leading goal of teaching a foreign language (Eskaraeva *et al.*, 2021). In this regard, the content of education at the present stage includes language, speech, sociocultural knowledge, skills and abilities that ensure the formation of communicative competence, for example, the ability and willingness to use a foreign language in the process of intercultural interaction in situations of written and oral communication (FSES, 2019).

A sociocultural perspective emphasizes the uniqueness of each member of society, shaped by their experiences in various communities and the roles they assume or are assigned (Erdogan, 2016, pp.247-251). This perspective is particularly relevant in the context of online learning, where education becomes accessible anytime and anywhere. Bhandari (2020) highlights that online learning is influenced by intricate sociocultural factors, impacting both educators and students. Creating a social collaborative atmosphere in virtual classrooms, with the lecturer serving as a facilitator, optimises the potential of online learning. Thus, online technologies do not isolate students, allowing them to work and study independently. Utilising online sociocultural learning concepts effectively empowers students to work autonomously while engaging collaboratively through active online social interactions (Hamid *et al.*, 2022, p.284). Sokolova (2019, p.108) emphasises the importance of active social interactions within an online socio-cultural learning environment, enabling students to enhance their awareness, planning, and control over their effective online learning experiences. Building on this perspective, Luppicini and Walabe (2021) discovered that the fusion of Saudi culture with online learning has given rise to a novel learning model. This model not only aligns with cultural norms but also delivers a high-quality learning experience for Arab students, positively influencing their motivation to learn English.

In EFL class, for encouraging social interaction, teachers can assign different projects that require students to interact with others in order to complete certain assignments (Rodina, 2019, pp.47-49). If used wisely, diverse online platforms offer opportunities for a free exchange of ideas surrounding guided topics provided by the teacher (Saigushev *et al.*, 2019, pp.50-51). Understanding the roles of an instructor/mediator

and learner could influence cultural and curriculum development within the greater social context and facilitate learners' meaningful relationships with other learners.

Online learning environments in the field of education offer an advantage when viewed through the sociocultural lens. Educators can use online learning environments to cultivate shared culture, values, and ethical standards among students (Petrarca *et al.*, 2022). In the study conducted by Piragauta and Oliveira (2023), it was discovered that values such as responsibility, commitment, respect, solidarity, and tolerance are fundamental in online-learning environments. The research revealed that both students and tutors commonly embraced these ethical principles, shaping their experiences in the realm of virtual education. The diverse cultural origins of online education and its increasing popularity facilitate this process. The beliefs of the community, the identities of individuals, classroom dynamics, and students' extracurricular activities collectively shape their interests, attitudes, and motivation regarding SLA (Erdogan, 2016). These sociocultural influences can be utilised to introduce new elements and domains that capture learners' attention in online learning settings.

Moreover, this emerging culture has the potential to mirror a globalized society. Consequently, in building a community, scholars can engage with individuals from varied cultural backgrounds. The evolving culture within online learning settings should encompass fresh values and ethics that are universally applicable (Erdogan, 2016, pp.246-257). As a result, participants within a community of practice can engage in interactions and learning experiences in a secure and respectful online environment.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored existing literature related to the topic of this research study. At the beginning, publications were used to provide a general definition of CLT. Then, digital technologies and VC platforms in the educational field were discussed to shed light on the best online practices in ELT to promote CLT. Moreover, the use of VC and SNs in classroom, pedagogical approaches and SCT in online teaching were explored. Research studies referred to in this chapter have explored how individual factors influence SLA. Most pertinently, it is clear that factors such as class size and teacher

expertise can have a significant effect on the usefulness of CLT teaching on language skills. However, those studies did not focus on the combination of SCT, CLT and use of technology in EFL classroom for SLA. This research study has therefore sought to address this gap in the research through the development of a new theoretical framework that enabled me to bring together the separate factors identified within my data collection to create a model that can be shared with stakeholders and researchers. Most importantly, the literature demonstrates that VCs and other technologies such as social media have the potential to create a meaningful contribution to the creation of an authentic learning environment for language learners in which they have direct access to the culture of their target language. However, the effectiveness of this access can be affected by issues such as teacher expertise and student motivation and confidence.

The next chapter proposed Socio-Cultural Theory (SCT) and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) as suitable frameworks for explaining the dynamics of online communities.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

A theoretical framework is a way to outline concepts, definitions and existing theories that align with the study being undertaken (Korneeva, 2022, p.12). The theoretical framework in this particular research study is shaped by an ideological position that will help to understand whether the interaction and collaboration with English-language speakers proves to be important for introducing a CLT approach in ELT classes in Ingushetia, to improve students' language skills. Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory (SCT) is adopted as the theoretical framework in this research study and the rationale for this choice is set out below. Moreover, consideration is given to Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), which has an application in this study. The aims of this chapter are to examine how SCT and the application of SCT to MALL and videoconferencing (VC) tools provide a useful theoretical framework for interpreting students' engagement with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning.

3.2 Rationale for Theoretical Framework

The selection of SCT and MALL as the theoretical framework for this research study will be explicated below, drawing a comparison with two alternative frameworks under consideration.

In the context of this research study, the intercultural communication theory proposed by Hall (1959) emerged as a potential framework that would allow the study to analyse the complexities of intercultural communication (IC), encompassing its implementation, potential challenges, and reasons behind communication failures. Annenkova (2009) and Tareva and Budnik (2013) suggest that true intercultural communicative competence requires the ability to navigate intercultural communication in a foreign language, which goes beyond simply depending on

interpreters for those who are not proficient in the language. However, due to the participants' limited English proficiency, this theory was not suitable as a foundation for this study.

Furthermore, digital learning theories such as computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) were considered for the light they could shed on the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching EFL in Ingushetia. CALL supports language learning and teaching through the use of computers (Mirani *et al.*, 2023). It facilitates language learning through computer-based resources, providing access to diverse educational materials online (Timothy and Kukulska-Hulme, 2015, pp.15-25). TPACK, introduced by Koehler and Mishra (2006), explores the interplay between technology, content (topics being taught) and pedagogy (the methods and strategies that instructors use to teach the educational content). Despite their potential, these theories proved insufficient due to participants' limited computer access. As a result, Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) was chosen as the primary theoretical framework. Given the online nature of the study, its principal objective was to facilitate language learning through interaction with English-speaking language coaches based in England. This necessitated the use of internet connectivity and technology since the language coaches and students were geographically separated and located in different parts of the world. Another framework contemplated for the study was Sociocultural Theory (SCT), holding the potential for more comprehensive insights, as elaborated in the following sections.

Hence, MALL and SCT emerged as the most fitting theoretical frameworks for this study.

3.3 Sociocultural Theory (SCT)

Sociocultural theory sees learning as a developmental process that is socially mediated and historically constructed (Varichenko, 2019). Social learning illuminates how instructors may create active learning communities and help us understand how individuals learn in social environments because they learn from one another (Drew, 2023). The sociocultural theory was developed by Vygotsky (1978), who believed that

parents, peers, and the culture at large were responsible for increasing individuals' higher-order functions (Budnik, 2019, pp.90-92). For Vygotsky, learning and development are closely linked to the social relationships that learners, as social beings, enter with their environment (Martazanova, 2020, p.93). Vygotsky's school generated Sociocultural Theory, which emphasises the primary importance of mediation and social interaction in the development of meaning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky (1978, p.57) stressed that higher mental functions have a social origin and to understand the individual. Consequently, knowledge is a social construct that individuals build as they interact with their environment, and learning processes take place through participation in cultural, linguistic and historically formed contexts. Vygotsky (1978) posits that students exhibit greater improvement in performance when they repetitively engage in a task under the guidance of a more knowledgeable other (MKO), such as a teacher, coach, or an individual with greater expertise. This enhancement is achieved through active discussion and collaboration, surpassing the progress made when working in isolation. Accordingly, in EFL classes, learning happens when the task is accomplished collectively. Interactive learning actively involves students and teachers in debates and becoming partners in the process of knowledge acquisition. Therefore, social contact is the foundation of learning (Budnik, 2019, pp.90-92). From a sociocultural standpoint, communicative language teaching emphasises the importance of social and cultural contexts and environments as well as communication with other language users, like peers, teachers, or English speakers, to enhance students' performance and language production.

Ermekova *et al.* (2022, p.16) argue that sociocultural theory highlights that cultural beliefs and attitudes affect how education and learning take place. In addition, they claim that the learning process and language learning in particular happens through social communication. Contemporary research on language learning (Martazanova, 2020; Shchukin, 2006) supports the sociocultural claim that the relationship between individuals, whether learning a native or foreign language, forms a firm basis for cognitive and linguistic growth. In other words, cognitive and linguistic processes in language learning, whether in the classroom or elsewhere, can only be developed in a social learning environment where learners are enabled and encouraged to interact and are supported by others in their language learning.

The positive effects on learning of sociocultural interaction are not confined to the classroom or specific learning environment. Arsentyeva and Rungsh (2019, pp.175-178) argue that any foreign language can be learned faster outside the classroom than in school by communicating with others in the target language (TL). This theory does not apply to the students in Ingushetia in any way because, as mentioned in the introduction, they did not have the opportunity to communicate with people who speak English. When interacting in a learning environment that mixes language learners and native speakers, Pinzón and Norely (2020, p.39) argue that using authentic materials allows students to learn about the TL culture, understand its history and appreciate its cultural background.

The EFL learning environment that facilitates close contact with speakers of the TL is a place where the 'local' and the 'global' can intermingle and is socially unique and educationally challenging (Budnik, 2019, p.115). However, the programmes of EFL in Ingushetia lack specific structures of the local culture and do not correspond very well to the socio-cultural spirit of the TL. Alrubail (2016) addresses the cultural differences and concludes that teaching cannot be disconnected from the social environment and that the introduction of new methods requires adaptations to the social and cultural context.

In this study, English-speaking coaches supported inexperienced language teachers in introducing the CLT approach on SCT using digital technology (Zoom and WhatsApp on mobile phones) for L2 knowledge development through online interactions. Voroshnina and Pimenova (2019, p.15) believe that in online interactions, communicative use of TL is more beneficial for language development than formal accuracy. They see online communities as social places where learners learn languages socially and where social construction of meaning takes place through interaction between users. In line with sociocultural theoretical foundations, learners in this study construct their L2 knowledge by combining their prior knowledge with the new information they receive online through their interactions with English language coaches.

Therefore, SCT holds significant relevance to this study, wherein native language coaches serve as More Knowledgeable Others (MKOs) within the L2 community involving teachers and students. Language coaches aim to inspire and leverage

learners' capabilities by facilitating learning within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a concept explored in the following section.

3.3.1 The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky emphasises the significance of cultural and social surroundings in the learning process. Cognitive development arises through social interactions and guided learning within the zone of proximal development (ZPD), where children and More Knowledgeable Others (MKOs) collaboratively construct knowledge. The evaluation of a student's developmental dynamics can be gauged using ZPD: a child can acquire certain knowledge independently and others only with the assistance of a parent or teacher. Vygotsky (1978, p.86) states that ZPD is:

> The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

ZPD refers to the evolving process through which learners engage in various stages of learning. As a learner becomes proficient in one skill and is able to apply it independently, they embark on a new phase of assisted activity. This phase involves the acquisition of additional skills, strategies, behaviours, and knowledge. Vygotsky (1978, p.57) describes this process as an ongoing cycle of development where each new skill mastered sets the stage for the next level of learning:

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level and, later on, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals.

 Vygotsky's concept of ZPD emphasises that mediation is fundamental to all human development, including learning (Flavian, 2019, pp.35-38). Successful learning necessarily depends on how learners interact with their peers to solve problems that they cannot solve on their own. This is where the role of the facilitator comes in, helping learners to reach the next stage of development. To describe the constant support of a learner by an expert, Vygotsky's work allowed other theorists to coin the term 'scaffolding', according to Wood *et al.* (1976, p.90), who defined it as "controlling those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner's capability, thus permitting

him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence".

The metaphor of scaffolding is extended in educational pedagogy to refer to the process by which teachers or more able classmates help the less able to solve problems. Many scholars agree that Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and the notion of ZPD are at the core of the concept of scaffolding (Mcleod *et al.*, 2023; Castagno-Dysart *et al.*, 2019; Krause *et al.*, 2003). Wells (1999, p.127) referred to scaffolding as "a way of operationalising Vygotsky's (1987) concept of working in the zone of proximal development". Candilio (2015, p.65) suggests that even though Vygotsky never used the term 'scaffolding' in his writings, the ZPD is directly linked to the concept of 'scaffolding'. Martazanova (2020, p.93) held the belief that the use of scaffolding in the classroom and the application of this scaffolding in the ZPD enables any child to learn successfully in any area. Wells (1999, p.127) identified three important features that give pedagogical scaffolding its distinctive character: 1) co-construction of knowledge through dialogic discourse; 2) the choice of activity within which knowledge is embedded is crucial; and 3) authentic artefacts can be used to convey knowledge. Thus, the successful implementation of these functions depends on how skilfully the teacher/stronger peers manage the interaction between the tasks and the demands of the less skilled learners. When teaching new content to the student, the teacher must be aware of the student's position within the ZPD, because when the teacher's knowledge is transferred through cognitive interaction with the student, the pedagogic scaffolding supports the student's learning and growth (Castagno-Dysart *et al.*, 2019).

The teacher may not always provide the support that is specifically designed for the students and learners may ask for assistance from adults or equally skilled peers. As a result, engagement in general serves as a platform for helping students internalise knowledge, direct their behaviours, and learn new abilities (Sokerkina and Zolotopup, pp.402-406). Group work in language learning plays a crucial role in enhancing learners' confidence and fostering a positive attitude towards making mistakes in a social setting. It encourages learners to take initiative and be open to taking risks, essential for exploring and understanding the structure of the target language. Vygotsky's theory underscores the importance of such social learning environments, where students are motivated to engage in group activities and contribute to

conversations. This approach has been observed to significantly influence both the quantity and quality of communication among learners.

Zashikhina (2014, pp.38-46) notes that the use of media and distance learning enables students to reach a new level of thinking. The level of thinking achieved does not imply the attainment of a new level of development but indicates that the student is approaching a new zone of proximal development, characterised by an increased ability of students to apply theoretical thinking skills in practice. According to Zashikhina (2014, p.43), the use of the concept of the zone of proximal development should be broadened, as new levels of development and new levels of thinking are associated with the introduction of new cultural tools and new activities into the learning process rather than with the maturation of learners' mental functions. In this study, the notion of the ZPD is applied in the settings of online communities to explain the assistance provided to learners so that they are able to achieve an increased level of competence in the L2. The ZPD applied in this study is the difference between the level of English language competence Ingush students gained learning within GTM and the potential development of learning in collaboration with the language coaches, in joint activity through CLT.

3.3.2 Tool of Mediation

A socio-cultural view sees language as the primary tool of intellectual development (Mcleod, 2023). Since language itself is constantly shaped and reshaped by myriad social influences, it contributes to dynamic, agentic learning in holistic and complex ways (Yang, 2021; Beckner *et al.*, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978). This view is consistent with the shift in applied linguistics away from language as an object towards language as a dynamic system of human mediation. From a sociocultural perspective, the primary concern is how meanings are created and how language is used by people as a mediating tool when they engage in goal-directed activities (Lantolf *et al.*, 2015; Wertsch *et al.*, 1995).

Vygotsky's original idea of human mediation was that the child should be assisted by an adult in accomplishing a task that they could not do alone. This intervention would help the child enter within their ZPD, defined by Vygotsky (1978, p.86) as:

> The distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

This supports the notion that teacher-student contact is essential for students' cognitive growth and that learning and development occur when the subject matter is relevant and targeted. Additionally, Vygotsky emphasized the significance of peer or small group activities, as the origins of higher mental processes are rooted in interactions among peers. Thus, peer engagement stands out as an effective method for enhancing students' command of the L2.

There are two distinct types of mediation regarding language learning, according to Knodel (2019, p.19). One type of mediation is artefact mediation, which is related to the learning materials utilised (such as a textbook or technological tool), while the other is social mediation, which is related to the discourse patterns, opportunities for engagement, and support offered by MKOs in the ZPD (Knodel, 2019, p.19). By way of example, when it comes to online communication, language in the traditional sense of words and sentences is accompanied by digital extensions and amplifiers of language functions that, when combined with text and acoustic utterances, bring about unique and creative changes in contemporary interactions. In fact, "language is being brought back to its conversational, interactive, here-and-now basis" in general through internet communication (Gee and Hayes, 2011, p.12). Consequently, online interaction suits the skills based, communicative priorities of a CLT approach to language learning.

Vygotsky (1962, p.83) suggests that teachers who teach conceptually rather than functionally achieve little in the way of cognitive development in their students, arguing:

> …direct teaching of concepts is impossible and fruitless. A teacher who tries to do this usually accomplishes nothing but empty verbalism, parrot-like repetition of words by the child, simulating a knowledge of the corresponding concepts but actually covering up a vacuum.

If argument is accepted, the implication is that simply transferring concepts is insufficient to foster learning. Since many L2 teachers are aware of this, they use strategies to help learners mediate between what they already know and what they hope to accomplish to encourage learning among their students (the ZPD).

The role of mediation in language acquisition through technology, which is another way mediation can be developed in the L2 classroom, is supported by mediation

theory. According to Vygotsky (1978), language serves as a symbolic medium via which humans can communicate with the outer world. This is particularly valid if entering the outside world necessitates learning a new language. Because of this, communicating with native speakers of the language using a computer or a mobile device may give students access to context that is difficult to find outside of the classroom, where the L2 is not utilised.

In conclusion, Vygotsky's SCT has contributed to L2 pedagogy in several ways. Language teachers understand the importance of viewing language acquisition as a process mediated by various semiotic factors in the classroom by introducing the concept of "mediation" in the first place. Second, this approach gives teachers a fresh view on students by showing them that they bring their own cultures to learning interactions, because they have developed their understanding and originality through interactions with other people from their own and different cultural communities. Lastly, sociocultural theory highlights the notion that learning, including learning a second language, is situated, which means it can take place in a variety of contexts and methods. For teachers to understand that learners may develop to their full potential with the help of a mediator and support from peers and teachers, the concepts of ZPD and scaffolding are essential in L2 learning.

3.4 Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)

Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), as defined by Lotova (2022, p.2), refers to the use of wireless networks and portable devices to access authentic language resources and facilitate communicative language practice. The term was initially coined by Chinnery in 2006, who emphasised the potential of mobile devices as valuable pedagogical tools in language learning (Arvanitis and Krystalli, 2021, p.14). The concept of integrating mobile devices into foreign language education has been evolving since 1994 (Burston, 2013, as cited in Arvanitis and Krystalli, 2021, p.14).

What sets MALL apart from other digital learning forms is its reliance on portable devices, offering unique opportunities for language learning. This approach emphasises continuous, spontaneous, and context-specific interaction and access to learning materials. MALL provides learners with the flexibility to choose their learning

environment and time, moving beyond the traditional classroom setting (Slepukhin and Semenova, 2018; Troshina and Verbitskaya, 2015). This mode of learning is more personalised, contextual, and authentic.

Mobile technology serves as a cultural tool that aids students in mediating and internalising their learning experiences. Lotova (2022, p.5) suggests that changing learning contexts with technology is a powerful learning activity that contributes to the development of the creativity of teachers and students. According to Kukulska-Hulme (2012, p.7), practising language on a mobile device is a step towards more realistic conversations. MALL is particularly beneficial for language learners who face constraints such as limited time or physical barriers that separate the classroom from real-world contexts. The mobility and connectivity of mobile devices make them ideal for these learners (Troshina and Verbitskaya, 2015).

Moreover, MALL enables the use of diverse language teaching techniques. These include the creation and sharing of multimodal texts, engaging in spontaneous conversations with people globally, recording language use outside the classroom, analysing individual language production and learning needs, and the creation and dissemination of learning artefacts (Kukulska-Hulme *et al.*, 2015, p.7). The hallmarks of mobile learning include personalized, situational, authentic, spontaneous, and informal teaching methods. Students engaged in mobile learning through smartphones or other mobile devices tend to show increased interest in their learning process. (Avazova and Ermetova, 2017, pp.11-12).

Four key traits of MALL were recognised by Troshina and Verbitskaya (2019, p.6): educational, communication, planned training, and technical. The technical element is a resource element that offers the required technical conditions. Modern mobile devices and their qualities allow teachers to choose resources that can be used in training. The component of the planned training is system-forming. The most important thing is that a person understands that they are a part of the process, which can happen inside or outside the educational institution, online or offline, notwithstanding some freedom in mobile education. The communicative element offers further opportunities, including feedback and the potential to broaden the communication range. The educational component allows a teacher to choose material that needs to be given to the participants in the educational process. Due to this, MALL has a

methodical approach to mobile training, despite the more free and unstructured character of mobile learning.

3.5 SCT and MALL

Mobile education of a foreign language is a form of educational process, where mobile communication devices, such as smartphones or tablets, are the basic or dominant technology. Students can use this technology to form and improve language skills, including sociocultural and intercultural competencies in and outside the classroom. Also, with MALL, students can access educational resources anywhere and anytime and participate in new learning situations in different spaces (Arvanitis and Krystalli, 2021, p.13).

The MALL approach significantly enhances the social learning process by fostering social connections. This method promotes knowledge sharing and the informal use of technology beyond the classroom setting, thereby aiding learners in improving their conversational abilities. The inherent characteristics of mobile technologies are notably suited to support learning that is grounded in principles of social interaction, constructivist theories, context-based understanding, and collaborative efforts, as pointed out by Kukulska-Hulme *et al.* (2015, p.16).

Additionally, the utilisation of the SCT in studying MALL is particularly relevant due to the concept of tool mediation, a key aspect explored in detail in section 3.3.2. This concept underscores the significance of using tools, in this case, mobile technologies, as mediators in the learning process, thereby aligning with the core tenets of SCT. Mobile technology, as an artefact mediation tool, which according to Knodel (2019, p.19) involves the use of learning materials, may help restructure and control educational processes. MALL can be used as a supplement to after-school instruction before returning to traditional classroom settings. In this way, students remain connected to the digital world. Learning-in-use liberates students to study in a more engaging and individualised fashion, which in turn enables teachers to provide their pupils with something more satisfying and targeted (Sarka, 2022). Haleem *et al.* (2022) argue that from this perspective, technology is seen as both a product and a process that aids in capturing and directing learning. As a result, mobile technology enables students to improve their language learning, connect with others, discover new ideas,

gather information, access resources, get feedback, and assume more control over their education. By giving students the necessary tools, they can create and specify their own learning experiences.

A key concept of sociocultural theory, as identified by Reed et al. (2010), is the premise that learning occurs within a social framework. This involves the collective reconstruction of knowledge through group collaboration, interaction with others, and sharing, which is facilitated either through direct contact or via mediated instruments. Consequently, there's a natural compatibility between SCT and MALL. This form of social learning plays a crucial role in challenging learners' misunderstandings and aids in broadening their cognitive frameworks.

In conclusion, SCT can be used as both a guiding principle and an analytical framework for designing, evaluating, developing, and implementing a mobile-based language learning program. This approach is particularly relevant given the extensive capabilities of mobile devices and their significant impact on language acquisition. The selected theory lays forth the fundamental ideas that guide the instructional process, which strives to give students the tools they need to advance their language acquisition, take charge of their education, and develop their communication abilities.

The current study investigates the role of mobile devices in facilitating language learning within a MALL framework and examines the changes in learners' behaviours following the introduction of these technologies. This inquiry aligns with Vygotsky's theory of tool mediation. By employing the sociocultural theory's perspective on tool mediation, the research aims to enhance cognitive, metacognitive, and social growth, alongside language proficiency. It specifically focuses on how learners' interactions and communications evolve with others when mediated through mobile technology, such as cell phones, over various periods and in different contexts.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (SCT) and Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). It has also explained why the two theories have been adopted as the theoretical framework for this research study. In each theory, stages and phases along with their associated factors and attributes have been

identified and introduced. In addition, this chapter has described how these stages and phases along with their associating factors and attributes may be used to research the integration of CLT into teaching in Ingushetia, particularly in terms of an understanding of how an authentic access to native language speakers and artefacts can enhance target language learning. Furthermore, this chapter has discussed the application of SCT to MALL to explain how these two theories may support each other and contribute to the research themes. According to the structure of this research study, SCT has been selected as the main approach whilst MALL has been used to support elements of theory where SCT does not provide enough sufficient detail. The next chapter will describe the research methodology and designs for this research study.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach employed in conducting the research study. According to Creswell (2020), before commencing a study it is important to clarify its paradigmatic position, strategies, data collection methods, and analysis procedures. Given the inquiry-based nature of the research context and the fact that my pragmatic approach is underpinned by positivist and interpretivist positions, I begin the review with a consideration of different ontological and epistemological views. Subsequent sections explore the development of the language intervention for English teaching in Ingushetia, elaborating on the approaches used for gathering and analysing data. These parts also discuss the steps taken to guarantee the validity and reliability of the research presented in this thesis, along with an exploration of its ethical considerations.

The study focuses on answering the following research questions:

1. How do the use of Video Conferencing Platforms (VCs) and social networks (SNs) affect English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' Language Acquisition (LA)?

a. To what extent do students think VCs and SNs support or limit language learning?

b. How do teachers perceive the value of VCs and SNs to improve English Language Teaching (ELT) compared to traditional methods?

2. What perceptions do teachers have about the opportunities and limitations associated with implementing the CLT approach in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes?

3. What impact did the interaction with native-speaking language coaches using CLT, VCs, and SNs have on students' English proficiency?

4.2. Philosophical Foundation

Research paradigm refers to the theoretical or philosophical basis for the research work and it is viewed as a research philosophy, as outlined by Khatri (2020, p.1435). This notion, as Creswell (2017) puts it, comprises a set of fundamental beliefs or assumptions that steer the inquiry of a researcher. Almohideb (2019, p.64) further elucidates that this paradigm is shaped by three critical inquiry aspects: ontological, epistemological, and methodological. The ontological perspective, as Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.108) explain, delves into the essence of reality and what humans can comprehend about it. It involves how scholars envision reality and interact with the subjects they study. Epistemology, on the other hand, deals with the nature of the relationship between the knower and the known. Holden and Lynch (2004) discuss how one's view of this relationship impacts research, influencing the third pillar, methodology, which guides the implementation and execution of the research.

Diverse theoretical paradigms are articulated in academic literature, but prominent among them are the realist/positivist and naturalistic/interpretivist paradigms, as identified by Antwi and Hamza (2015, p.218). According to Antwi and Hamza (2015, p.218), the realist/positivist position claims that scientific knowledge consists of facts. The realist/positivist stance, as expounded by Gibbs (2007), posits that scientific knowledge is composed of indisputable facts, existing independently of individual perceptions. This perspective is characterized by an objective view of reality, governed by cause-and-effect laws. Park *et al.* (2020) note that research within this paradigm often focuses on theory testing, quantifiable measurements, and generalising outcomes. However, as Obidina (2017, pp.73-143) observes, the realist/positivist paradigm does not emphasise interpersonal relationships, or moral principles and struggles to explore the complex interactions among factors that influence human behaviour.

On the other hand, interpretivism, as described by Alharahsheh and Pius (2020), perceives the world as a kaleidoscope of realities, co-constructed by participants and researchers through various methodological approaches. Antwi and Hamza (2015, p.218) suggest that this paradigm recognises the distinctiveness of humans in their capacity to ascribe meaning to their experiences. Creswell *et al.* (2003, p.8) emphasize that interpretivism prioritizes understanding the perspectives of

participants within their natural contexts. This study is anchored in the interpretivist paradigm, viewing reality as a multifaceted construct shaped by different elements and experiences.

In terms of ontology, the study posits that reality is not a singular, objective entity but a complex amalgam of diverse experiences and perspectives. Epistemologically, the study aligns with the notion that learning is a socially constructed process. This perspective aligns with Babich's (2013) view of constructionism which posits that individuals actively build knowledge through their experiences and interactions within a social context. Dragonas *et al.* (2015, p. 116) support this view, suggesting that learning is an interactive and collaborative process.

Vygotsky's (1978, p.57) work provides a foundational concept for this perspective, stating that cognitive functions initially manifest in social interactions and are later internalised. This assertion by Vygotsky underscores the vital role of social interactions in the development of higher cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and concept formation. He emphasises that these abilities are not passively acquired but actively shaped through social engagements and experiences within a community, a central tenet of constructionism in the study of learning.

When applied to language learning, this perspective posits that learners do not passively absorb linguistic knowledge but actively construct it through engagement with their environment, peers, and the socio-cultural elements that surround them. In essence, social interactions, classroom dynamics, and contextual influences become integral components in the construction of language knowledge, shaping a more nuanced understanding of how learners acquire and develop their linguistic abilities. This philosophical view suggests that the process of acquiring language is deeply intertwined with a complex network of social interactions, the educational setting, other learners, and the contextual factors that together form the framework of the language learning experience. By establishing this epistemological foundation, this study aims to delve into language learning intricacies exploring the socially constructed nature of knowledge in language learning.

Furthermore, the choice of a constructionist epistemology not only guides the theoretical underpinning of this research but also mirrors the collaborative knowledge-building process I engage in with the study participants. In essence, I acknowledge

that, like the participants in my study, I am an active contributor to the construction of learning and knowledge. This perspective closely aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) viewpoint, which asserts that much like learners rely on more knowledgeable individuals to guide them within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), researchers and educators actively contribute to the cultivation of learning and knowledge. They do so by providing crucial guidance, resources, and opportunities for learning. Essentially, researchers and educators serve as facilitators within both social and educational settings, helping participants or students engage in activities and interactions that nurture learning and the construction of knowledge. In practical terms, this alignment is reflected in the qualitative research methods employed, such as interviews, observations, and participant reflections, aimed at capturing rich, context-specific insights into the social and interactive dynamics of language acquisition. Through this methodological approach, I intend to authentically mirror the participants' own experiences and perspectives, ensuring that the research process resonates with the constructionist principles embedded in the language learning journey explored within the study.

To attain language proficiency, learners must actively immerse themselves in the learning environment, encompassing the classroom or its virtual equivalent, and engage in interactions using the target language (Main, 2023). It's essential to recognise and navigate contextual constraints, including resource limitations, sociocultural factors, learning environment dynamic, time constraints, and individual learning styles (Bokova, 2015). This perspective aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) notion of a 'more knowledgeable other', emphasising the role of guidance in learner development. Hence, learners require tools that empower them to assume command over their language-learning journey, promoting flexibility and motivation within and beyond the classroom.

Sociocultural theory, an inherently constructionist theory, further reinforces this epistemological stance. In this view, knowledge is dynamic, context-dependent, and constructed through social interactions. This aligns seamlessly with the idea that language learning is a socially constructed process, influenced by various factors (Darvin and Norton, 2023, pp.29-40). This study, rooted in these principles, seeks to explore the nuanced interplay between learners, their learning environment, and the

tools employed for language acquisition, contributing to a holistic understanding of language learning dynamics.

Social constructionism, articulated by Crotty (1998, p.42), posits that knowledge and the meaningful reality it signifies are contingent upon human practices. This perspective underpins the interactive process between human beings and their environment, wherein knowledge is actively constructed, developed, and transmitted within a fundamentally social context. Essentially, it highlights the notion that our comprehension of reality is continually shaped through ongoing interactions within the social sphere (Crotty, 1998).

Grounded in a pragmatist approach, my research integrates the tenets of interpretivism and social constructionism, philosophies that assert the active role of individuals in shaping society and culture through understanding and interactions. Embracing pragmatism, I acknowledge the necessity of blending theoretical insights with practical considerations to address real-world issues. This perspective finds resonance in Dewey's philosophy of pragmatism, encapsulated in his statement, "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself" (Dewey, 1897, cited in Shaburov, 2018, pp.87-91). Dewey underscores the practical application of knowledge and the integration of theory with real-life experiences. He advocates for education deeply intertwined with practical, real-world problem-solving. In essence, Dewey's philosophy underscores the vital fusion of theoretical understanding with practical experiences to effectively confront real-world issues.

Furthermore, Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis on social interaction and practical activities in cognitive development aligns with this perspective. Vygotsky's (1978) theory highlights how individuals learn and develop through active engagement with their social and cultural surroundings. It accentuates the significance of melding theoretical insights with practical experiences to facilitate meaningful learning and effective problem-solving. Both Dewey and Vygotsky's philosophies support the idea that the fusion of theoretical understanding and practical engagement is fundamental in addressing real-world challenges, a principle that aligns with my pragmatic approach.

The interpretivist lens facilitates an empathetic understanding of the cultural context, while social constructionism emphasizes the pivotal role of language and social interaction in shaping meaning. Within this framework, my study eschews rigidly

predefined variables or hypotheses, opting for an exploratory journey into students' learning experiences within a specific context. The research methodology aligns with these philosophical underpinnings, employing diverse data collection instruments to gather meaningful insights and multiple perspectives.

This methodological approach, deeply rooted in pragmatism, draws on various methods deemed most appropriate for different dimensions of the research. This pragmatist philosophy allows flexibility in choosing diverse methodological combinations and perspectives, recognizing observations, experiences, and experiments as valuable ways to understand people and their world. Alghamdi and Li (2013, pp.3-10) affirm that pragmatism, devoid of strict philosophical constraints, provides researchers with the freedom to choose methods, techniques, and procedures that align with their needs and scientific research aims. Creswell (2020, pp. 25-30) further emphasises that pragmatists view the world without the assumption of absolute unity, offering researchers the latitude to navigate the diverse and complex nature of reality.

By synthesising interpretivism, social constructionism, and pragmatism, my research aims not only to understand but also to pragmatically address the dynamic complexities of language learning in a real-world setting. This holistic approach, rooted in philosophical underpinnings, guides the study in embracing the multifaceted nature of language acquisition within the intricate web of social interactions and cultural contexts.

4.3 Research Approaches

Research approaches are strategies and methodologies that cover everything from general hypotheses to specific techniques for gathering, analysing, and interpreting data. There are three approaches to research: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Strijker *et al.*, 2020, pp.262-270). This section will justify the choices made in this research, particularly the design of the language intervention undertaken in Ingushetia and how it was implemented in accordance with the approaches examined in the literature review, and its effects were analysed based on the theoretical concepts outlined in theoretical framework.

4.3.1. Quantitative and Qualitative Continuum

According to Strijker *et al.* (2020, pp.262-270), the approaches used in the social sciences and humanities and those used in the natural sciences have historically differed significantly. They are frequently referred to as qualitative and quantitative research in the literature.

Bhandari (2022) describes quantitative research as the quantity or measurement of a phenomenon. This approach is grounded in the principle of precise measurement and demands a structured methodology to yield specific outcomes. Quantitative research is typically seen as scientific and experimental, underpinned by elements like theories, concepts, constructs, problems, and hypotheses. Shuvalova (2019, p.22) notes that its scientific nature enables researchers to generalize and present results systematically, leading to more reliable and replicable data. The philosophical roots of quantitative research lie in positivist deterministic philosophy, concentrating on identifying relationships between variables and examining the causes and effects of phenomena (Creswell, 2020). Positivism advocates for the absolute truth of knowledge through falsification and confirmation processes. Consequently, confirming a hypothesis in language learning requires empirical evidence and valid testing, involving sequential steps of disproving and confirming coupled with corroboration to determine whether the researcher's initial claim or hypothesis is supported or contradicted (Shuvalova, 2019, p.21).

In contrast to quantitative research, there is qualitative research. Creswell and Creswell (2018, pp.50-52) describe qualitative research as a method focused on investigating and understanding the meanings that individuals or groups attribute to social or human problems. A key characteristic of qualitative research is its inherent flexibility and adaptability. This quality anticipates that researchers will be open to making changes, such as modifying and focusing their research questions more narrowly as the study progresses (Shuvalova, 2019, p.18).

Qualitative research is set apart from quantitative research by its methods of data collection and sampling strategies. It focuses on exploring individuals' feelings, experiences, and reactions, requiring data to be gathered from diverse perspectives. This includes but is not limited to, methods like observations, interviews, diaries, and

the collection of notes, images, and text (Mcleod, 2023). These characteristics underscore the comprehensive and empathetic approach inherent in qualitative research.

Additionally, the design of qualitative research is shaped by various factors that contribute to its unique approach. One such factor is the exploratory nature of qualitative research, often applied when there is limited prior knowledge about a phenomenon (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This makes it well-suited for investigating new or complex problem areas. Another aspect is the setting, which is typically natural and uncontrolled, allowing researchers to participate deeply without manipulating or influencing the environment, thereby enabling a thorough examination of the situation (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, pp.293-320).

Moreover, qualitative research usually involves smaller sample sizes due to the intensive nature of data collection and analysis (Shuvalova, 2019, p.19). The underlying philosophy of this approach is based on constructivist views, as noted by Ulz (2023). This perspective emphasises the value of understanding various viewpoints, as individuals strive to comprehend the world around them, a concept highlighted by Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2013). This approach necessitates accessing subjective opinions through various methods that emphasise the significance of word meanings.

Dörnyei (2011, p.39) points out that qualitative researchers often view quantitative research as overly simplistic, decontextualised, and reductionist, especially when it comes to making generalisations. Conversely, quantitative researchers have their critiques of qualitative research, highlighting issues such as small sample sizes, limited generalisability, researcher bias, a lack of methodological rigour, complex or narrow theories, and the time-consuming and labour-intensive nature of the research (Dörnyei, 2011, pp.41-42). Therefore, to build on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data, mixed methods research can be an effective design to use, notwithstanding the difficulties of data analysis and comparison the collection of two data sets entails (Creswell, 2012, pp.534-536).

4.3.2. Approach of the research: Mixed methods

For this study, a mixed-methods research (MMR) approach has been selected to effectively address the research questions. This decision is influenced by the recognition of the contrasting strengths and limitations inherent in both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Creswell and Creswell (2018, pp.340-355) define mixed methods as the integration of quantitative and qualitative data within a study. This approach combines the clarity of quantitative research, which offers a numerical perspective of a phenomenon, with the depth of qualitative research, which reveals individuals' feelings, motivations, and behaviours. A quantitative approach effectively uncovers what people do, while a qualitative approach explains why or how they do it. This study focuses on both aspects: the 'what' and the 'how' of English language teaching using a technology based CLT approach for interactive learning. By mixing methods, the research is poised to gain richer insights into the phenomena under study, insights that neither purely qualitative nor purely quantitative methods could fully provide on their own (Kriukow, 2019). Therefore, they complement each other and allow a research question to be studied thoroughly from different perspectives (Kriukow, 2019). The integration of both methods in a single research effort is grounded in pragmatism. This philosophical approach values diverse interpretations and analyses, advocating for the use of multiple methods to address the chosen research questions or problems (Polukhina and Prosyanuk, 2020, pp.309-318; Kriukow, 2019).

According to Ventakesh *et al.* (2013, pp.21-54), the two methods (quantitative and qualitative) can be combined either sequentially or concurrently. Regarding sequential combination, Polukhina and Prosyanuk (2015, pp.309-318) suggest that a qualitative approach should precede quantitative methods so that detailed information can be collected and more directed, specific quantitative procedures can be developed from analysis of the qualitative data. However, the choice of combination should be driven by research goals and context. In general, if the research goal is to understand the phenomenon as it happens, it seems that a concurrent approach would be better, but if the researcher expects that findings from a method (either qualitative or quantitative) will support the latter (quantitative or qualitative) study, then a sequential approach should be used (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, pp.81-83).

Timans *et al.* (2019, p.212) claim that mixed-methods approach scholars "seem to be committed to designing a standardized methodological framework for combining methods." Dawadi *et al.* (2021, pp.29-31) identifies three designs: 1) convergent parallel mixed-methods design, in which both qualitative and quantitative methods are mixed to obtain triangulated results in this design. At first, two types of data sets are collected concurrently, and secondly, they are analysed independently using quantitative and qualitative analytical approaches. 2) Explanatory sequential design in which a researcher follows up on a specific quantitative finding and explains it with the qualitative data. 3) Exploratory sequential design, in which at first, the qualitative data is gathered and analysed, and later quantitative data is collected and tested.

In selecting the convergent parallel mixed methods design for my research study, I considered the specific goals and nature of my investigation into the use of technology (Zoom and WhatsApp on cell phones) in implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for language learning in Ingushetia. The simultaneous collection of quantitative and qualitative data aligns seamlessly with the complexity of understanding not only 'what' aspects of technology are utilised, but also investigating the nuanced 'how' of their implementation. This design enables me to validate results comprehensively, ensuring a holistic analysis of the current challenges. The integration of both data sets during the interpretation phase enhances the richness of insights, contributing to a more robust understanding of the intricate dynamics surrounding the use of technology in language education.

The mixed-methods approach in the present study adds significant value through its triangulation component, a methodological approach defined as the integration of multiple methodologies to examine the same phenomenon (Doorenbos, 2014, pp.207-217). Polukhina and Prosyanuk (2015, pp.309-318) describe data triangulation in a mixed-methods study as a strategy for validating results obtained with each individual method. A researcher, for example, aims to obtain a more valid picture of a research issue by directly comparing the findings drawn from qualitative data collection with those obtained from quantitative, or vice versa, for convergence and/or divergence (Plano Clark and Ivankova, 2016, p.86). Methodological triangulation comprises two types of triangulations: between-methods triangulation and within-method triangulation (Fusch, Fusch and Ness, 2018, pp.19-32). Between-methods triangulation design combines qualitative interviews and surveys and helps in reducing

the bias of any specific method and increases the validity of the results when data are combined together. The combination of research methods has led to the development of different approaches and strategies. In this study, a questionnaire, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with both teachers and students and WhatsApp message analysis are used to allow for between-methods triangulation, in order to increase the trustworthiness of the conclusions. In addition, mixed-methods research aims to increase the reliability and validity of the research. The mixed methods approach of this study is intended to combine the strong points of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and strengthen results where appropriate, therefore increasing the study's validity and reliability, and supporting readers to understand the answers to the research questions and the issues of implementing the CLT approach in Ingushetia.

4.4 Research Design

McCombes (2022) defines a research design as a strategy employed to answer questions using empirical data. Developing a research design involves making choices regarding the overall objectives and approach, selecting the specific type of research design, determining sampling and data collection methods, and establishing procedures for validating data as well as methods for analysing the data.

4.4.1 Case Study

Gustafsson (2017, quoted in Heale and Twycross, 2017, p.7) defines a case study as "an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit, which is aimed to generalize over several units". A case study has also been described as a type of research presented in the social sciences that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Heale and Twycross, 2017, p.7). In the context of this study, the case involves examining the experiences of a group of students in Ingushetia who participated in a two-month online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course. This course was conducted as part of their regular English lessons at school. The course was delivered using a Communicative

Language Teaching (CLT) approach through video conferencing (VC) via Zoom and social networking (SN) via WhatsApp, under the guidance of native-speaking language coaches. The selection of a case study design was driven by the research's exploratory nature and the focus on understanding the specific experiences of this student group. The aim is to gain deeper insights into the impacts of different teaching methodologies and the participants' perceptions.

Furthermore, there was a need to generate new insights regarding the use of Zoom and WhatsApp for English language learning and teaching, particularly in a way that would not disrupt the existing school curriculum. Before integrating such technologies into a formal course, understanding their efficacy and impact was crucial. The case study approach was thus chosen for its ability to provide a holistic analysis of data from diverse sources, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the issue in its natural setting. For this study, data were gathered through various means, including pre-course and post-course tests, questionnaires, observation, focus groups, and interviews with both students and schoolteachers.

The study further narrowed its focus to 15 students from the focus group after initially surveying the broader use of technology among Ingush students. This specific case study aimed to explore factors such as the students' perspectives and the influence of VCs and SNs on their learning outcomes. To evaluate the effectiveness of the course, the study compared the test results of these students before and after the course and with those of a control group after the seven-week online course. This comparison aimed to provide a clearer understanding of how the course affected the students' language proficiency.

4.4.2 Choosing the Research Sites

This study was conducted at a public school in the region of Ingushetia, Russia. This school teaches according to a unified curriculum of the Federal State Educational Standard (FSES) (FGOS, 2022). The school encompasses the entire spectrum of general education, spanning from elementary to upper-secondary levels. The lower secondary phase lasts for five years, encompassing grades 5–9, catering to students aged 11 to 15. Subsequently, upper secondary education spans two years, comprising grades 10 and 11, and concludes when students are 17-18 years old. Examination

milestones occur in the 9th and 11th grades. To ensure minimal disruption and alleviate the academic load on students, the study was conducted within the context of the 10th grade.

Russian is the language of teaching in the educational field in Ingushetia. Ingush people also speak Ingush, which is their native language. English is taught from the second year of study at the elementary level, which, according to the programme, must include listening, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is recognised as the main method by which English language teachers conduct their lessons. Teaching is conducted in Russian, as the main goal is to explain grammar to students and prepare them for the exams. Under this method, the quality of students' productive skills and their ability to understand spoken English is poor even after learning the language for 10 years as a compulsory subject (Gerap, 2023). According to Gerap (2023), statistical data reveals that only 1% of Russian schoolchildren demonstrate fluency in English, while 12% possess rudimentary knowledge, and 34% can read or write short English texts but struggle with conversational proficiency. A study conducted by the National Research University Higher School of Economics reveals that nearly half (49%) of high-achieving students in schools exhibit language skills at a basic level (Gerap, 2023). Gerap (2023) attributes the low English proficiency in Russia to the excessively formal approach within educational institutions, resulting in inadequate communication abilities among most schoolchildren.

Shamaeva (2023) argues that teachers, who learned the language through reading and translation, also impart knowledge to students in a similar way. Frequently, the predominant language of instruction in foreign language classes is Russian, except for reading activities and exercises. Speaking skills are often neglected due to constraints imposed by school curricula and the substantial class sizes (Shamaeva, 2023). In Ingushetia, the situation is complicated by the demographics of the region, which is mono-ethnic and in which exposure to English is limited. The predominant place students can practice English is in the classroom and in Ingush classrooms, the teacher typically has complete control and focuses on imparting knowledge, with minimal student-teacher interaction. It is customary for Ingush students to not question their teachers' perspectives as this is seen as a sign of disobedience and disrespect.

The decision to focus the research on Year 10 students was driven by the aim to minimise disruptions to their ongoing education. The distribution of questionnaires took place across various locations in Ingushetia. To ensure a comprehensive study encompassing diverse educational settings, including gymnasiums, lyceums, private institutions, and both urban and rural schools, I reached out to multiple schools in the region. Unfortunately, the majority declined outright, and those who initially expressed interest ceased communication after consulting with their leadership. The sole exception was a rural school that agreed to participate under the condition of maintaining anonymity for both participants and the school.

4.5 Pilot study

The envisioned commencement of the study involved an initial pilot study and the subsequent interpretation of the pilot results, initially slated for September and October 2020. Following the completion of this preliminary phase, the formal data collection was scheduled to commence in October-December 2020. However, unforeseen global events, such as the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, disrupted the planned trajectory of the study. At the inception of the study planning, the global community lacked foresight into the potential consequences and transformative impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic, including the significant shift in education towards online education. As a result of the widespread impact of the pandemic on various aspects of daily life, the project faced an unavoidable delay of nearly two years.

I decided to start the piloting online, but the school had trouble with an internet connection. In addition, students and teachers were not familiar with video conferencing services (VCs) and were not comfortable with online interaction, causing further delays. In September 2021 I had to travel to Russia to see the participants face-to-face and carry out the necessary training.

The purpose of the pilot study was to test the research instruments, such as trialling the pre-course and post-course interview questions; determining whether the online materials were appropriate for students in grade 10; piloting online lessons via Zoom and social networks (SNs) and testing data collection techniques that I was planning to use. Unfortunately, this time I did not have an opportunity of piloting online lessons

with the language coaches because one of the students tested positive for Covid-19 and the whole class was dismissed. Staff, who had close contact with the student, were advised to quarantine for 14 days. However, I managed to test the use of SNs for recording, feedback, and activities. The pilot study participants were a group of Grade 10 students, who committed to joining an online course for two lessons every week for two months to learn English via VC and SNs.

4.5.1 Piloting SNs

I became familiar with Facebook (FB) just 10 years ago when I arrived in the UK. FB was not popular in Russia because the main language of the platform was English. For that purpose, I have decided that in the future FB platform would be very helpful for my participants, who are English language learners, to improve their language skills, especially reading and listening. Additionally, the language coaches, who volunteered to participate in the study as English teachers, were registered FB users. I decided to create a closed FB group called 'My English' and invite all participants: fifteen students, four teachers, and two language coaches. The idea was to upload homework, instructions, links, questions and replies that we had at the end of each lesson and interact with each other in English only. Unfortunately, almost all students had trouble creating FB accounts. They received the following messages: "trouble creating your account", "an existing Facebook account associated with your email", "Facebook account needs to be verified. This number is already used by another account", and in the end, my own account was disabled. I tried to resolve the problem and contact FB, but all my attempts ended up ineffectively.

After that, I decided to create a WhatsApp group. The process of creating a WhatsApp group went well and quickly and none of us had trouble joining the group. Also, I realised that WhatsApp gives students even more opportunities for improving their language: they could record themselves, give verbal answers and listen to recordings, which is helpful for speaking and listening skills. Also, I was hoping that we could do a video call via WhatsApp, but group calling allows up to eight participants only to video call with each other. Consequently, I opted to use WhatsApp as an additional English teaching-learning tool for instructions, voice recording, and sharing information.

4.5.2 Piloting Video Conferencing Service

Zoom and Microsoft Teams are both powerful videoconferencing tools that combine real-time chat, content sharing, and video (Bolanda *et al.*, 2021, pp.3-5). Each has its unique strengths. For example, Zoom is better suited for online teaching, whereas Teams is a great fit for large, collaborative projects (Bubnov, 2021, p.3). According to Bubnov (2021, p.4), if some people find Teams more complicated to use, almost everyone is familiar with the Zoom platform. Zoom is the first platform I started to work with and by the time of my study, I had become a proficient user. My colleagues, English language coaches, also confirmed that they preferred Zoom. For this reason, I decided to run online lessons via Zoom. However, when I arrived at the school, I realised that teachers did not have much knowledge about Zoom and its options. They did not practice online teaching and learning, however, a few teachers used Skype for personal purposes. Skype is a VoIP service (voice over Internet Protocol) that enables people to make and receive free voice and video calls over the Internet using a computer, web browser, or mobile phone. Zoom vs Skype is the closest competitor of their kind, but Zoom is the more complete solution for teaching which allows for creating virtual classrooms and conducting group conferences with ease. It comes with MPEG-4 cloud video recording, virtual background, closed captioning, audio sharing during screen sharing, chat, group messaging, mobile collaboration with co-annotation, and many other features to help make the most of the lessons (Bolanda *et al.*, 2021, pp.4-6).

We tried Skype and had problems with delay, echoes, and other annoying audio problems. Also, to be able to share screens, Skype charges for the premium service. Moreover, to record the lessons I had to use third-party software. In addition, Skype does not have the features that Zoom has, for example, Hand Raising which allows the participants to raise their hands virtually to indicate that they need something from the host. This feature helps to communicate without interrupting the meeting.

From the detailed comparison of Zoom vs Skype, I concluded that Zoom is better for educational purposes, and it keeps a meeting engaged and interactive with virtual features. Moreover, language coaches were familiar with Zoom features and had experience using it for online teaching in the UK.

4.5.3 Piloting the Questionnaire for Students

I decided to upload the questionnaire (Appendix B) to the online students' closed FB group. However, we were not able to use FB, and I uploaded it to our WhatsApp group chat. Students were asked to complete the questionnaire. All students finished the questionnaire as instructed. After the answers were received, I asked the students to debrief how they perceived the questionnaire. From their feedback, I found that some digital tools were not used by Ingush students, for example, LinkedIn or Twitter, and all questions related to those networks were deleted from the questionnaire. Those websites and digital tools that were popular in Ingushetia, for example, Viber or Facetime, were added to the questionnaire. Although the school had a website, it did not have an online learning management system; therefore, questions relating to that were taken out.

Also, students did not understand some specific terms in the questionnaire, which meant they had to be simplified; for example, the word 'inefficient' was replaced by 'time-consuming' or the word 'laptop' was explained and in the brackets the word 'notebook' was used because students use this word for the same meaning. Additionally, the questionnaire in the pilot study did not investigate the students' beliefs about technology. Therefore, the questionnaire was adapted with the following amendments:

a) some digital tools that were not used by Ingush students were taken out and replaced by those that were popular in Ingushetia

b) some questions relating to students' beliefs about technology were added to explore students' opinions about using technology for their own study.

c) to ensure the questionnaire was comprehensible to all students, it was simplified and translated into the Ingush and Russian languages.

4.5.4 Piloting the Online Course

Online course materials were created, based on the content of the textbook that students were studying during the academic year. The online lessons covered two

topics "Life and work" and "Success" in the Grade 10 mandated textbook (Verbitskaya *et al.*, 2018). I checked the appropriateness of the materials in stimulating students' interest and developing language knowledge, communication skills, and cultural awareness for teaching via VCs and SNs. In order to do that, I asked students about their interests, hobbies, and learning preferences and checked with teachers about the compliance of the proposed alternatives with the school materials.

Also, I tested the practicability of using WhatsApp and Zoom in teaching English to high school students in Ingushetia. The activities were posted on the WhatsApp group chat and a deadline was set up for students to finish tasks before the following online Zoom discussion with language coaches. The students completed their work and posted it in the group chat. This was followed by an online Zoom lesson with language coaches as planned. There were no issues with using technology in the school for English class.

The other purpose of piloting the online lessons was to enable the evaluation of the teaching materials before conducting the main study. Also, it gave me an insight into teaching online and the effective delivery of the lessons to assist students' learning. I discovered that it was more effective if the lesson plan and the topic that were to be discussed in the lesson were posted on WhatsApp in advance, because students had some time for reviewing their work and therefore felt more confident in the lesson. It also gave English language coaches the opportunity to understand how to conduct online interactive tasks with a group of students.

4.5.5 Language Coaches' Involvement in the Study

The language coaches in this study were two of my colleagues from Gloucestershire College. While their primary roles at the college involved working as teaching assistants, they also had experience teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the college's summer programs. Motivated by their interest in the core aim of my research, which centred on enhancing English-language skills, particularly speaking, my colleagues offered their support. They volunteered to assist with the online teaching aspects of my project. Our daily interactions at work provided ample opportunities to discuss the project's intricacies, allowing for meticulous planning of our teaching strategies and materials.

Initially, we considered using Facebook for the project (discussed in section 4.5.1 Piloting SNs) but it proved unsuccessful. Consequently, the coaches suggested switching to WhatsApp, a decision that proved to be both intelligent and timely. This switch facilitated the creation of a social group dedicated to English language learning, leveraging WhatsApp's voice recording feature to align with the communicative method and sociocultural approach through mobile-assisted learning.

Coincidentally, the period of this research overlapped with the COVID-19 pandemic, a time when the education sector transitioned extensively to online learning. All staff members, including the coaches, underwent training on how to use various online platforms, such as Microsoft Teams. This experience with remote teaching tools enhanced their effectiveness in using Zoom for our project. Furthermore, having access to an expanded array of online resources enabled the coaches to conduct engaging lessons with the Ingush students.

4.5.6 Lesson Delivering an Overview

Initially, language coaches continued the topic and grammar that students had started to learn with their teachers at the beginning of the week. That was done purposefully in order not to interrupt the prescribed curriculum. For the first 30 minutes, students joined online discussions with a language coach synchronously through Zoom. Then students were asked to complete activities that were added to the WhatsApp group within the next 10 minutes. Students could freely choose between text chat or voice chat. After that, they had five minutes to ask questions or give feedback via WhatsApp or verbally via Zoom.

The trial activities for the first Zoom meeting were:

Activity 1: Students were asked to use their phones to make an audio recording introducing themselves and upload it to the WhatsApp group chat.

Activity 2: Students were asked to share a few sentences via WhatsApp group chat about a profession they wanted to follow after school.

In activity 3, I asked students to leave short comments on each other's work.

4.5.7 Insights from the Pilot Study

Feedback from the students showed that the school supplied an internet connection, but students did not have permission to use it. Additionally, there were not enough computers for all students; therefore, some students accessed the internet by using their personal mobile phones. The feedback also indicated that almost all students did not have an internet connection outside the school except for mobile data, which differed depending on the mobile provider and type of the contract.

Concerning the online course, I was worried that students would not feel confident recording themselves speaking English; however, one of the students uploaded his audio recording on WhatsApp group chat introducing himself. This student showed that he had the initiative to learn in a new way with the use of technology. Some other students followed his example. The rest of the students made their voice recordings to introduce themselves the next day. All students said that they needed a lot of time to find the right words or new vocabulary and information to complete these tasks. In response to their request, I provided constructive feedback on their recorded submissions.

Students did not engage in the third activity, where they have been asked to leave comments about each other's work. They explained that they did not want to upset their classmates by writing something their classmates might not like.

During the pilot study, some modifications were made to the technical training and the course design. Students and teachers did not know what Zoom was or how to join the Zoom meeting. Consequently, students were not familiar with the Zoom features, such as raising their hands and sharing their screens. Students had some knowledge of using WhatsApp, for example, recording their voice messages, but they did not know how to upload the files. Therefore, before the course started in the main study, I explained to the students how to use all essential technology features effectively to ensure that they were able actively to participate in the online course.

Additionally, feedback from the students revealed some weaknesses in the course design. For example, students wanted more listening activities, and they were added to the course materials.

4.6 Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at the general education school in Ingushetia, Russia. The school consists of primary, lower, and upper secondary general education. This, accordingly, comprises grades 1-4, from the age of 7 to 10 years, grades 5–9, from the age of 11 to 15, and grades 10–11, from the age of 16 to 18. Students complete secondary education at the age of 17-18 years. While Russian is predominantly used as the language of instruction, the Ingush language is also employed, albeit less frequently. Traditional classroom dynamics in Ingushetia typically involve teacher-led instruction with minimal student-teacher interaction, and challenging the teacher's authority is often viewed as disobedience by local educational norms.

The specific focus of this research was on a group of 15 upper secondary school students, aged 16-17. These participants were native Ingush speakers and had been learning English for seven years. In the preceding year, their English education comprised three 45-minute lessons per week. Despite being classified as intermediate in English proficiency by their teachers, the students self-identified as beginners, citing an inability to engage in conversations in English beyond basic introductions. They encountered difficulties in various aspects of speaking skills, encompassing areas such as grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary range, and overall fluency. Students found it challenging to express their ideas, even when dealing with basic language tasks.

The students' linguistic competence was evaluated using scores from a pre-course diagnostic test administered via foxford.ru, an online platform. This test, prepared by the English department of Foxford.ru/Service, assessed the language skills students had acquired over the year. The use of the Service is free (Foxford.ru., no date). The results from this diagnostic test provided a baseline for the study, helping to gauge the students' English language abilities before the commencement of the research.

4.7 Data Collection Methods

Data collection was conducted through tests, interviews and observations with a total of 30 students and interviews with four teachers at the school. Due to ethical considerations, the personal identities of the participants are omitted (see 4.11.2). This study used quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. From the collected data from the questionnaires, the percentage of respondents offering the same answer was computed using MS Excel to produce research findings. The questionnaires were tabulated to record the responses from each participant for each option of the questions. In the data analysis procedures, the author consistently aimed to identify and elucidate patterns and themes from the participant(s)' perspective. Subsequently, efforts were made to comprehend and explicate these identified patterns and themes, with results presented in both quantitative and qualitative formats.

4.7.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are widely utilised in second language (L2) research, valued for their efficiency and adaptability in collecting data (Dörnyei, 2003b). They are particularly useful due to their ability to save time, effort, and financial resources, allowing for easy administration to a large participant group and facilitating the collection of substantial information that can be readily analysed. However, there are various critiques regarding the data obtained from questionnaires. Issues such as respondent bias, including acquiescence bias or social desirability bias, arise when participants, out of hesitation or a desire to be viewed favourably, may agree with statements. Another concern is the superficial nature of responses, which is particularly evident in closed questions that offer limited response options. Additionally, the accuracy of answers can be compromised by respondent fatigue, as long questionnaires might lead to inaccurate responses due to tiredness or boredom. Furthermore, a discrepancy may exist between respondents' self-reported actions and their actual behaviour, an issue known as self-deception.

The existing Student Experiences and Expectations of Technology (SEET) survey, developed by Gosper *et al.* (2013), was utilised to gather data on the technological habits of high school students in Ingushetia. The survey aimed to determine the types

of technologies used by students, their frequency of use, and their attitudes toward technology. It included five categories and a total of 127 questions. I adapted SEET to collect information about high school students' use of technology in Ingushetia.

In this study, after the questionnaire was piloted, a modified version of the questionnaire was created with three parts (Appendix B) and it was named the "Questionnaire for high school students" (QHSS). Changes included the removal of technological tools that were included in the SEET survey but were not in common use in Ingushetia, the inclusion of additional questions, including questions related to the MALL practices of students, and the use of VCs and SNs, which was of particular interest for this study. Part 1 dealt with demographic information related to gender and age. Part 2 explored what type of technology students used and for what purposes. The last part examined students' perceptions of technology.

I distributed 200 questionnaires to various schools in Ingushetia and collected 165 completed questionnaires after three weeks. The participants were Grade 10 high school students, and the details of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B. The quantitative analysis of the questionnaire involved assessing percentages and frequencies, specifically focusing on the types of digital tools used, the purposes for which technology was employed, and the number of digital devices accessible to the participants. All questions were written in English and translated into Russian. Additionally, the questionnaire was delivered on paper to students in focus and control groups in their classes directly, just before the online course process.

4.7.1.1 Initial and final questionnaire

Questionnaires are widely used in research as a systematic and structured means of collecting data from participants. They provide a way to gather information on specific topics or variables in a standardised format (Taherdoost, 2021, pp.14-17).
In the initial phase of this study, a questionnaire was administered to ascertain the frequency, purpose, and level of interest among students regarding the utilisation of technology for English language learning. Comprising six questions (Appendix C), this questionnaire was designed to systematically collect data on students' engagement with technology in the language-learning context.

Subsequently, a final questionnaire was deployed to investigate students' sentiments toward the new learning environment, their language skill practice routines, and the extent to which technology-mediated teaching influenced their motivation within a novel learning scenario. This final questionnaire, consisting of seven questions (Appendix D), was administered after the post-course test. The sequential implementation of these questionnaires facilitated a comprehensive examination of students' perceptions, practices, and motivational factors, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the interplay between technology and language learning.

4.7.2 Interviews

There are three different types of interviews that can be used as a qualitative research method (Jamshed, 2014; Stuckey, 2013). These are unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were deemed appropriate for this study for several reasons: Firstly, they strike a balance between the structured and unstructured interview formats, allowing for specific information to be gathered while providing flexibility in question formulation. This flexibility is particularly advantageous in exploring new issues and ideas related to the study's focus (Merriam and Grenier, 2019).

The open-ended conversational format of semi-structured interviews is valuable for obtaining in-depth responses from participants about their experiences and perspectives on the topic (King, Horrocks, and Brooks, 2019; Marshall et al., 2013). The method permits interviewees to articulate their thoughts extensively, generating rich and detailed qualitative data. Ambiguities in responses can be clarified, and incomplete answers can be followed up during the interview, enhancing the depth and quality of the information gathered.

Moreover, the use of follow-up questions based on participants' responses allows the researcher to navigate the conversation more structurally, ensuring that the information collected is closely related to the main research topic. This structured approach increases the reliability of the data by maintaining a clear connection to the study's objectives.

However, it is essential to acknowledge some limitations. Semi-structured interviews can be time-consuming, both in terms of conducting the interviews and analysing the

detailed responses. The qualitative nature of the data may also pose challenges in terms of generalizability, as findings may be context specific. Additionally, the success of semi-structured interviews relies heavily on the interviewer's skills in steering the conversation and probing effectively (Roberts, 2020).

In the research process, students' responses were captured using a mini voice recorder. In the course of the interviews, a multi-faceted approach was employed to capture the richness of participants' responses. Simultaneously recording students' verbal expressions and non-verbal cues was paramount to gaining a holistic understanding of their perspectives (Denham and Onwuegbuzie, 2013). To achieve this, I documented nuanced elements such as facial expressions, body language, and pauses.

The transcribing process was conducted meticulously to maintain the integrity of the data. Verbatim transcription was employed, ensuring a faithful representation of the participants' words, as well as the associated non-verbal features. This method allowed for a comprehensive analysis, considering not only what was said but also how it was communicated.

The attention to detail in capturing both verbal and non-verbal dimensions of the interviews aimed at providing a nuanced portrayal of participants' experiences and perspectives. Rigorous transcription practices were employed to uphold the accuracy of the data, a fundamental aspect in preserving the authenticity of the participants' expressions (McMullin, 2023). This approach adheres to ethical considerations and contributes to a thorough analysis of the interview data in the subsequent stages of the research. By thoroughly capturing the verbal and non-verbal dimensions of the interviews, I sought to paint a comprehensive picture of the participants' experiences and perspectives. I utilised meticulous transcription methods to ensure the precision of the data, as it is crucial in maintaining the integrity of the participants' voices.

This rigorous approach aligns with ethical guidelines and enhances the analysis process in the later stages of the research. Subsequently, transcription software Transkriptor was employed to transcribe all interviews, expediting the identification of commonalities and patterns (Transkriptor, 2022). The use of transcription software significantly streamlined the process, ensuring the creation of precise and efficient transcripts, as noted by Otachi (2023).

To uphold confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy, a pseudonymous system was implemented. Pseudonymisation is a strategy involving the replacement of identifiable information with pseudonyms or codes to safeguard the confidentiality and privacy of research participants (Mourby *et al.*, 2018). In this study, the practice of assigning letters and numbers to represent students and teachers aligns with the concept of pseudonymisation. This approach ensures anonymity while allowing for systematic analysis. According to Moore (2019), the principle of anonymisation in qualitative research stemmed from the belief that 'naming is dangerous', driven by the intention to shield research participants from potential harm if re-identification were to occur. In this research, female students were assigned pseudonyms using the letter "F" followed by a corresponding number, for example, F1 to F8 for eight female participants. Male students were identified with the letter "B" and an accompanying number, for example, B1. Teachers were denoted as T1, T2, T3, and T4 for identification purposes.

As outlined by Bryman (2012, p.473), it is vital to employ language that is understandable and pertinent to the interviewees. In adherence to this, all interviews in the present study were carried out in both the Russian and Ingush languages. Firstly, participants, including teachers, may not be familiar with English terminologies. Secondly, students and English teachers at the Ingush school faced limitations in their ability to listen to and speak in English, making it difficult to hold a full conversation in English.

Using participants' native language during interviews helps create a comfortable and familiar environment, promoting a sense of ease and trust (Younas *et al.*, 2022; Al-Amer *et al.*, 2015; Rotman *et al.*, 2007). When individuals are able to express themselves in their native language, they are more likely to feel understood and less inhibited. This comfort can lead to increased honesty in responses, as participants may be more open and genuine when communicating in a language that is natural and familiar to them. A well-structured interview also played a crucial role in making participants feel at ease. According to Lambert (2012, pp.104-106), an education research interview should consist of four stages: introduction, simple start, 'meaty middle', and rounding off at the end. Throughout these stages, it is the researcher's responsibility to help participants feel confident and comfortable enough to express their perspectives on the topic while maintaining ethical standards, which will be

discussed in Section 4.7. To obtain reliable and complete data, I conducted face-to-face interviews with both students and teachers (See Appendix E), following the four distinct stages outlined by Lambert (2012). As a researcher, I began our conversation by discussing the research study and emphasizing the importance of ethical considerations, such as confidentiality measures, to protect the interviewee's identity and voice recordings. To establish a comfortable and reciprocal relationship with the interviewees, I started with some questions about their background in a friendly manner (Lambert, 2012). In the middle stage, I asked key questions about specific aspects such as technology tools, Zoom, WhatsApp, and the CLT approach used in the classroom. I also asked follow-up questions to gather more specific data. The interviewees' perception of the new teaching approach used by the language coaches was the central issue discussed in the interview. In the final stage, I encouraged them to bring up any other important points they wished to discuss. Lastly, I expressed my gratitude and thanked each interviewee for their time. Each interview took approximately 20 minutes.

4.7.3 Pre-course and post-course tests

The pre-course and post-course tests were standardised to ensure comparability of test scores. Following the initial questionnaire, students were required to complete pre-course tests to participate in the online course.

4.7.3.1 Listening and reading tests

A standardised online 15-minute English proficiency test was used to assess reading and listening skills (EF SET, no date). The test was divided into two parts: reading followed by listening. The test is free and registration is not required. Results were analysed in accordance with the criteria specified in the Expected Common European Framework of Reference for English (CEFR) (refer to Appendix F). After the course, students took the same test and scores were compared to identify any progress in students' reading and listening skills after the course.

4.7.3.2 Pre- and post-course writing tests

Students were given a pre-course writing test before commencing the online course. Incorporating both pre-course and post-course writing tests in the research serves various essential purposes. Firstly, it allows for the assessment of participants' progress and development in writing skills throughout the online course (Stake, 2010). This comparison aids in evaluating the effectiveness of the course and understanding specific areas of improvement. Secondly, the inclusion of both assessments enhances the research design by providing a baseline measure (pre-course) against which changes or improvements (post-course) can be gauged. This approach significantly contributes to the validity of the findings by providing a clear reference point for evaluating progress or development (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). Thirdly, analysing individual performance in the pre-course test offers insights into participants' starting points, enabling tailored instruction to address specific needs identified through the initial assessment (Black and Wiliam, 1998). Lastly, the results of pre-and post-course tests provide valuable empirical evidence for the discussion section of the research, supporting or refuting hypotheses and contributing to the overall narrative of the study (Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

In the assessment, participants were required to craft a paragraph within a 30-minute timeframe, responding to the prompt 'Describe your favourite book and explain why?' Following the completion of the online course, students were again engaged in a post-course writing test, mirroring the structure of the pre-course test. However, this time, the prompt shifted to 'Describe your favourite movie and explain why.' Both the pre- and post-course writing tests were conducted under identical testing conditions to ensure consistency in the evaluation process. Students were not allowed to use any digital devices such as mobile phones or any type of dictionaries. Students were informed that these tests were for research purposes, so they should be honest in writing independently without looking at their friends' work or copying from online. Teachers adhered to standardised assessment practices outlined in Criteria for Assessing Writing ECL Examination System (no date), encompassing specified forms of evaluation and assessment criteria to score the administered tests (Appendix G).

4.7.3.3 Grammar testing

The testing process incorporated 50 multiple-choice questions utilising "The Straightforward Quick Placement & Diagnostic" test (Appendix H). This test was chosen for its user-friendly nature, availability in both online and printed formats, and the presence of a diagnostic test answer key, facilitating time efficiency (Appendix I). This structure enables rapid evaluation and feedback on learners' language abilities, crucial for understanding their initial proficiency and subsequent progress. As a standardised test, it yields reliable results, facilitating comparisons across various groups or over time, an essential factor in gauging the language course's effectiveness. The test's comprehensive coverage of a broad range of language skills ensures a thorough assessment of the participants' proficiency in different linguistic areas. These attributes establish the test as an effective tool for measuring language proficiency both before and after the course.

4.7.3.4 Pre- and post-course speaking tests

After the grammar tests, the students were evaluated on their speaking skills. Language coaches conducted this assessment one-on-one in a dialogical format, examining aspects such as pronunciation, vocabulary, accuracy, communication, interaction, and fluency. To determine any differences in speaking proficiency, pre-course speaking test results were compared with those from the post-course period. The language coaches followed the British Council's guidelines (2012) for assessing speaking requirements. To help students prepare and feel confident, coaches provided various worksheets and tips (see Appendix J). The assessment topic was "Talking about Yourself." The evaluations transpired through one-on-one Zoom sessions between language coaches and students, fostering a personalised and attentive environment conducive to comprehensive skill assessment.

4.7.3.5 Group Performance

Each week, the schoolteacher assessed the participation of each student in the WhatsApp chat. At the end of the week, they computed the group's average performance based on these evaluations.

Here is a breakdown of the different levels of assessment and their corresponding descriptions:

1. First level (low):
- At this level, students are expected to recognise, identify, and distinguish concepts.
- These basic requirements are necessary for the lowest grades.

2. Second level (satisfactory): 3−4 points
- Students receiving a score of 3 or 4 have demonstrated the ability to present educational material from memory.
- Memorisation of theory is sufficient for satisfactory scores.

3. Third level (intermediate): 5−6 points
- For scores of 5 or 6, students must not only reproduce educational material but also demonstrate understanding.
- They should be able to describe and analyse actions related to the objects of study.

4. Level four (sufficient): 7−8 points
- Students achieving scores of 7 or 8 are capable of applying their knowledge in practical situations.
- They can provide their own examples, similar to those found in the textbook.
- They should also be able to solve new educational problems based on a generalised algorithm.
- Understanding the essence of the objects under study and performing actions with clearly defined rules is another requirement.

5. Fifth level (high): 9−10 points
- Students aiming for scores of "9" and "10" exhibit a high level of competence.
- They apply their knowledge in unfamiliar, non-standard situations and can solve qualitatively new problems.
- Additionally, they have the ability to independently describe, explain, and transform objects of study.

These levels provide a clear framework for assessing students' performance and understanding across different criteria. To enhance clarity and simplify comprehension, I have created a table that outlines specific points and the corresponding criteria that elucidate these points.

Points	Description
1	Recognition, identification, and distinction of concepts.
2	
3	Presentation of educational material from memory, with memorised theory
4	sufficient for a passing grade.
5	Reproduction of educational material, coupled with understanding. Ability to
6	describe and analyse actions with study objects.
7	Application of knowledge in practical situations. Provision of own examples
8	similar to textbook content. Solution of new educational problems based on a generalised algorithm. Understanding the essence of study objects and actions according to clearly defined rules.
9	Application of knowledge in unfamiliar, non-standard situations. Resolution of
10	qualitatively new problems. Independent description, explanation, and transformation of study objects.

Table 2. Ten-point rating scale

4.7.3.6 Observation

In gathering data, one method employed can be observation, which utilises vision and hearing as its primary sources (Martazanova, 2020, p.122). According to Savin-Baden and Major (2023), this technique allows researchers to observe the daily practices of participants and obtain a better understanding of their experiences. Moreover, observation is valuable in gathering more specific information as it can uncover aspects that participants may not freely discuss during interviews (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017, pp.542-562). Observations are particularly useful for documenting, exploring, and understanding activities, actions, relationships, culture, or habitual practices. For instance, in teaching, observation can gauge the effectiveness of using the CLT approach by observing students' level of engagement during learning. A high degree of concentration among students may indicate the approach's effectiveness. Overall, observation can be a reliable and informative data collection method as it provides complementary data on the research topic, such as the use of digital tools,

teaching approach, classroom size or students' behaviour. According to Gillham (2008, pp.17-19), observations, like interviews, can be categorised as structured, unstructured, or semi-structured. A structured observation involves following a set of predefined rules and procedures, which are commonly found in textbooks but less frequently used in research (Gillham, 2008). This method requires the observer to have a clear understanding of who, what, where, and how to observe beforehand. On the other hand, an unstructured observation involves having some general ideas without a specific observation procedure (Gillham, 2008). A semi-structured observation combines the characteristics of both structured and unstructured observations (Gillham, 2008).

According to Gillham (2008, p.19), semi-structured observation is ideal for research that aims to identify practical issues experienced by people. This study did not fully meet the requirements of structured observation; however, some general ideas had been established beforehand. Therefore, the most appropriate approach was to use a semi-structured observation to gather predetermined information that participants might not freely discuss during interviews (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017).

These observations occurred during lessons conducted by both English-speaking language coaches and schoolteachers, aiming to obtain detailed insights into how students navigated unforeseen challenges in their learning environment. The focus extended to analysing how language lessons were delivered, identifying instances of successful engagement and effective learning strategies. This exploration sought to understand the effects of teaching methods on students' language acquisition and participation in lessons.

The recorded observations were meticulously documented in a Word document, creating a comprehensive record of students' responses and behaviours during the lessons. Subsequently, this observational data underwent rigorous analysis, interpretation, and integration into the broader research findings on learning English as a foreign language. The obtained insights contributed to a nuanced understanding of the dynamics within the language learning process, revealing diverse strategies employed by students in various instructional contexts.

Observational data served to highlight challenges faced by students, encompassing technical difficulties and struggles with specific learning tasks. Moreover, these

findings were integrated with data obtained from interviews and language proficiency tests, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences and performance. The cross-referencing of observational insights with interview responses and test results validated and enriched the overall findings of the study, thus providing a more robust and multifaceted perspective on the intricacies of language learning in diverse contexts (Appendix K).

The observations provided valuable insights into how students handled unexpected issues while learning in a new environment and helped validate the information obtained during interviews.

4.8 Sampling

The selection of a sampling strategy that aligns with research objectives is crucial in evaluating the quality of a research study, in addition to its methodological approach (Morrison, 1993). In many cases, examining the entire population is impractical and may even be deemed a misuse of resources. Therefore, it is crucial for researchers to thoughtfully choose the most suitable sampling strategy, particularly when dealing with a smaller participant group (Dörnyei, 2011). According to Bryman (2012, pp.198-200), there are two primary categories of sample designs: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling entails randomly selecting participants, ensuring each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen. This method is conducive to generalising study results to the broader target population. In contrast, non-probability sampling involves a deliberate, non-random selection process, targeting specific groups for representation in the study (Bryman, 2012).

The participants selected for this study were optimally aligned with its aims and objectives, primarily due to their requirement for a strong command of English to achieve academic success, especially in examinations. Their learning style was predominantly characterised by a passive absorption of information, with a heavy reliance on teacher-directed instruction. This learning dynamic presented an opportunity for significant benefits from mobile learning. The effectiveness of mobile learning for these students was further heightened by the limited scope of their

language education, which was traditionally restricted to textbook-based methods, lacking the enrichment of diverse or supplementary educational materials.

Furthermore, the educational environment of these learners was structured such that classes were categorised based on specific criteria, leading to a segmentation into two distinct groups: 'A' and 'B'. Group 'B' consisted of students who demonstrated lower levels of language proficiency. This division reflects an educational approach focused on differentiated instruction, catering to the varied learning needs and proficiency levels of students. The stratification of students into these groups underscores the necessity for a more tailored educational intervention, like mobile learning, which could bridge the gaps inherent in conventional language instruction methods. This context made the participants particularly suitable for a study exploring the impacts and potentials of innovative, technology-enhanced language learning approaches.

The distribution of research activities among the participants was methodically organised as follows:

The focus group, consisting of fifteen participants (N=15), was actively involved in a range of activities. These included filling out the research questionnaire, participating in both the pre-study and post-study assessments, attending interviews, and engaging in the online lessons that were part of the study's framework. Additionally, this group interacted through WhatsApp as a part of their learning process and completed various tasks assigned to them as an integral component of the study's interactive methodology.

Conversely, the control group, also comprising fifteen participants (N=15), participated in a more restricted set of activities. Their involvement was primarily focused on completing the questionnaires and taking part in the pre-study and post-study assessments. Unlike the focus group, their engagement did not extend to the interactive elements such as interviews, online lessons, or WhatsApp. This delineation of activities between the two groups was critical in establishing a comparative baseline for the study, allowing for a clearer analysis of the impact and effectiveness of the interactive and mobile-based learning approaches being examined.

Furthermore, I conducted interviews involving four schoolteachers who regularly taught Year 10 students in the school. These teachers continued to use their teaching methods during the experiment. As part of the school curriculum, students typically

have three English lessons per week. In this study, one of these lessons was taught by the schoolteachers while the other two were conducted online with the guidance of the language coaches (see 4.5.5). During these lessons, facilitated by coaches, the schoolteachers played a moderating role only. They were responsible for tasks such as starting up computers or laptops and initiating meetings. Although physically present in the classroom during sessions, they did not actively participate as teachers; this was a prearranged agreement. The teachers remained available on standby, in case of emergencies, strictly adhering to our agreed-upon conditions.

Thus, the teachers actively participated only in the qualitative (QUAL) side of data collection, while students were involved in both quantitative (QUAN) and qualitative aspects.

4.9 Data analysis

I collected two sources of data, quantitative and qualitative. Combining qualitative and quantitative data can enhance understanding and reduce confusion (McCombes, 2022). Reports become more impactful and interesting when both types of research are used. Qualitative research can provide in-depth and emotional insights from personal perspectives of the individuals interviewed, while quantitative surveys offer a wider and more comprehensive view based on statistical data. By combining these two types of research, the researcher can gain deeper insights and compare results.

The best way of analysing qualitative data for me was to begin the analysis at the same time as the data collection (Merriam and Grenier, 2019). As a result, I was not overwhelmed by the amount of data that needed to be processed at the end of the research. This study utilised a thematic analysis approach using Braun and Clarke's framework (2006). Thematic analysis is a flexible qualitative data analysis method used by researchers to describe data in detail, identifying and reporting themes (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2011). Furthermore, it is used to interpret various aspects of the research topic through its theoretical freedom, providing a rich and detailed yet complex account of data (Braun and Clarke, 2013). However, thematic analysis is often criticised for its flexibility, labour-intensive nature, descriptive approach, and susceptibility to researcher bias (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). Also, it has limited

generalisability and presents difficulties in establishing reliability and validity (Parahoo, 2014). However, despite these limitations, I found it best to use this framework to identify the participants' perceptions of the study as the framework can be used across a range of philosophical paradigms. A summary of the data collection and analysis is presented in **Table 3** below.

Stage	Phases	Tasks completed
Stage One	**Familiarising yourself with the data** Participants narrate their experiences in language that is taped and transcribed	Interviews were transcribed verbatim, a time-consuming process. I took notes and listened to the audiotapes of the interviews to assure the completeness of the data collected
Stage Two	**Generating initial codes** Repeated and careful listening to the experiences and reflections allows the researcher to gain a general idea and meaning of these experiences.	The transcripts were read through several times, and recurrent ideas were highlighted as codes. Comments were made in the right margin
Stage Three	**Searching for themes** The researcher reading through each transcript to immerse in the data	The transcripts were re-read highlighting each theme abstracted from the codes with a different coloured pen: modern technology-blue; language learning-green; human interaction-yellow; negative aspects-red.
Stage Four	**Reviewing themes** The essential themes are then transformed into a meaningful	Themes were grouped according to unifying central themes, which constitute the findings of this research and a

	written document that enables new understandings to be publicly expressed.	thematic map of the analysis was generated.
Stage Five	**Defining and naming themes** The final process of understanding is performed by the reader when interpretations are created out of the experiences of the participants.	Reading of individual transcripts continued, names for each theme were generated ensuring no relevant information had been missed.
Stage Six	**Producing the report** Involves the final analysis and write up of the report	The analysis and presentation of the findings provides a coherent, logical and concise account within and across the themes and is supported with data extracts from educators and students

Table 3. Stages of Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis

Each transcript was then reviewed for themes that emerged, both in the original text of the interview and in the notes in the right margin. These themes and notes were then compiled into a Word document according to their chronological appearance in each interview. This document was then scrutinized for similar themes that emerged across interviews. These themes were further grouped according to unifying central themes, which constitute the findings of this research. These narratives form the results section of the research.

In this research, a comprehensive approach was adopted to amalgamate data from various sources, facilitating a holistic understanding of the learning environment and students' experiences in English language acquisition. The integration involved the systematic combination of observational data, interview responses, and results from language proficiency tests. Concurrently, I analysed and interpreted the quantitative data by using Microsoft Word. The variables in the quantitative data were the students' test scores, the percentage of time spent online, frequencies of tweets and frequencies

of the use of different networks. A summary of the process of data collection and analysis is presented in **Table 4** below.

Phase	Phases	Tasks completed
Phase 1	**Data management** **Data was collected through the questionnaires**	I familiarised myself with appropriate software, systematically logged in and screened the data: entered the data into a program;
Phase 2	**Organizing data sources** Different data types demanded discrete treatment	I distinguished variables by both cause and effect and by their measurement scales. Like sources were grouped, and any necessary copies were made.
Phase 3	**Reviewing data sources** Read through and take overarching notes	I read through the data as it came in and took a variety of notes to decide on the best way to sort and categorise the data I had collected
Phase 4	**Data Preparation for analysis/transcription** Depends on the program that a researcher uses	I selected to use Microsoft Excel to display the data in tables and graphs
Phase 5	**Enter data/get analysis tools prepared** The data needs to be entered into the program	I created graphs using Microsoft Excel

| Phase 6 | **Producing the report** | I made inferences and |
| | Involves the final analysis and write-up of the report | convincing arguments based on the analysis of a variety of graphs |

Table 4. Modified table of stages of O'Leary's quantitative analysis

4.10 Validity and Reliability

In academic research, reliability and validity are central concepts that evaluate the quality of research, indicating how effectively a technique, method, or test measure something, as highlighted by Zohrabi (2013, pp.258-259). Reliability concerns the consistency of a measure. Jupp (2006, p.262) describes it as the degree to which an instrument, such as a test, yields consistent results across different instances. Validity, on the other hand, pertains to the accuracy of a measure, defined by Jupp (2006, p.314) as the extent to which a variable or indicator accurately represents the theoretical concept it is intended to measure.

To determine if a research study is valid, there are different methods to use. These methods include content validity, internal validity, and external validity. Content validity means assessing whether the components of a research tool, like questionnaires or tests, actually measure the intended concept effectively (Anastasi and Urbina, 2009, p.68). It can involve consulting experts to ascertain if the test items are relevant and representative. In the context of the current study, content validity was ensured by evaluating the three questionnaires used – general, initial, and final – to confirm they accurately reflected the strategies being investigated.

Internal validity, as defined by Zohrabi (2013, p.259), refers to the alignment of research findings with reality, while external validity, according to Brown and Rodgers (2002, p.294), concerns the generalisability of these findings. Internal validity is crucial in this study involving mobile learning, Zoom, and interaction with native speakers, as it determines whether the observed changes in language proficiency are truly due to these interventions. External validity, in turn, assesses whether the results and

methodologies effective in this specific educational setting could be applied to other contexts.

Internal reliability, as noted by Brown and Roger (2002, p.294), addresses the consistency of results analysed by different researchers, while external reliability pertains to the reproducibility of the study's findings. However, given the unique nature of this study, external/internal validity and external reliability were less relevant due to limited generalizability and the difficulty in replicating the study.

To ensure validity and reliability, content validity and internal reliability were established for the quantitative aspects, while the qualitative component was validated using trustworthiness (see 4.7.1), an approach more suited to naturalistic inquiry. Trustworthiness, as per Bryman (2012), involves applying methodological processes that serve as indicators of research quality, enhancing the credibility of the findings.

Therefore, the study meticulously applied these concepts to ensure the findings accurately represent the reality of the educational context, with mobile learning tools, Zoom, and native-speaking language coaches, while acknowledging the constraints in generalizing these findings to broader contexts.

4.10.1 Trustworthiness of this study

Seale (2004, p.266) stated that the 'trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability'. In this study, a number of strategies were employed to ensure trustworthiness and provide a dependable account of the extent of the implementation of the CLT approach in EFL classes in Ingushetia. The mixed methods approach in this study was used to gain multiple perceptions from diverse sources of data so that they provided a convincing story of reality (Burke and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The current study was also concerned with achieving a qualitative, fine-grained understanding of teachers' and students' perceptions of CLT approaches to teaching English. Consequently, the data from different tools, such as questionnaires, observation, interviews and pre-and-post study tests, supplement and complement each other. Hence, classroom observations supported the interviews and questionnaires regarding both sets of participants in the study, as the observations were conducted before the interviews and completion of

the final questionnaire. This was done in order to ensure that I was conscious of the behaviours and perceptions of both students and teachers in the EFL classroom, before holding direct discussions in the interviews and asking students to complete the final questionnaire. This was also intended to secure the trustworthiness of this study.

Baker (2014, pp.65-86) stated that in research, it is essential for the findings to be acceptable, credible and reliable; consequently, it is important for both qualitative and quantitative research to be tested and shown to be believable. Therefore, in the following sections, credibility and transferability will be discussed.

4.10.2 Credibility

Guba and Lincoln (1989, as cited in Nowell et al., 2017, p.3) suggest that the credibility of research is enhanced through various strategies, including member checking, persistent observation, triangulation, and peer debriefing. In this study, to facilitate triangulation, a combination of methods was used for data collection, such as tests, teacher interviews, focus group discussions, observation and questionnaires.

This approach aimed to mitigate the limitations inherent in using a single method and enabled drawing well-rounded conclusions by analysing data from multiple sources. Triangulation was particularly effective in this context, as it allowed for a thorough cross-verification (see Appendix K) between the qualitative and quantitative data. This method was particularly effective in reducing the subjective nature of the qualitative data, thereby strengthening the overall results of the study.

Additionally, peer debriefing was utilised, which involved engaging an independent expert, who critically assessed and verified the research findings. A key focus was to ensure the accuracy and validity of the coding process used for the student test results and focus group interview data. Applying these techniques in this research was designed to ensure a more robust and credible study, aligning with the best practices suggested by Guba and Lincoln for increasing the credibility and reliability of research findings.

4.10.3 Transferability

According to Nowell *et al.* (2017, p.3), transferability refers to the generalisability of the inquiry. The researcher cannot know who may wish to transfer their findings; however, the researcher is responsible for providing thick descriptions, so that those who want to transfer the findings to their own environment can judge transferability (Lincoln and Guba,1985, cited in Nowell *et al.*, 2017, p.3).

In qualitative research, the concept of transferability refers to the potential applicability of study findings to other contexts or groups. This is achievable when the researcher offers a comprehensive and detailed account of the research setting, assumptions, objectives, and methodologies. Such in-depth descriptions enable other researchers to evaluate the extent to which the findings from one study may be relevant to their contexts, thus determining their transferability (Merriam and Grenier, 2019; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

In this research, the goal of achieving transferability was met by providing an in-depth, comprehensive and detailed account of the study's context and background. This approach ensured a thorough understanding of the research setting and its nuances. This detailed portrayal assists readers in discerning similarities between the research context of this study and other potential contexts, thereby aiding in the judgment of whether the findings can be generalized. Moreover, an elaborate explanation of the study design, implementation, data collection methods, analysis procedures, and interpretation of data was given. This level of detail aims to preclude perceptions of subjectivity in the findings.

Theoretical transferability holds significant relevance in this study. The findings extend beyond the mere contextual application of sociocultural theory, allowing for the extrapolation of this framework to other similar issues and research questions. Such an application is viable regardless of the specific characteristics of different contexts. This methodology highlights the wide applicability of the study's theoretical basis, enhancing its relevance to a variety of settings beyond the immediate scope of the research.

Regarding the potential transferability of this study's findings, despite the research being conducted in a single school, it is reasonable to suggest that these findings might extend beyond this specific setting. Given that the education system in

Ingushetia adheres to the centralised Russian education framework, the insights obtained could be relevant to other schools within Ingushetia. Furthermore, these findings may also hold applicability in other regions or territories where English is not the primary language of instruction.

4.10.4 Confirmability and Dependability

In this research, confirmability was a crucial aspect in assessing the objectivity and neutrality of the qualitative data. As outlined by Bryman (2012), confirmability entails ensuring that the research findings are not coloured by the researcher's personal biases or interests. To achieve confirmability in this study, several steps were taken. Comprehensive details of the findings were provided, including data from focus group interviews and pre-and-post-tests. Transcriptions of the focus group and teacher interviews were meticulously checked for accuracy, facilitating a consistent re-examination of the data. Additionally, any translated data was carefully verified for accuracy, following Brislin's method (1970, 1973), to ensure that the findings remained objective and reliable.

Following confirmability, the study also focused on the reliability of the data, specifically through the lens of dependability. Dependability is concerned with the consistency of the research findings over time. Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out that there is a significant link between credibility and dependability, suggesting that establishing the former naturally leads to the latter. Therefore, by ensuring the credibility of this research through previously mentioned methods, the dependability of the study is also affirmed.

4.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethics, as Brown (2008) observes, is a field where various research methods and techniques find common ground. In this research, which necessitated extensive cooperation and coordination among a diverse group of individuals, ethical standards were crucial in upholding values essential to collaborative work, including trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness. From a paradigmatic viewpoint, Kubanyiova (2008) notes that within the positivist paradigm, adherence to rigorous

procedures and obtaining ethical clearance are key to ensuring ethical practice. Aligning with this, the present study received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Gloucestershire (Appendix L), with design decisions being informed by the Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2018) and the Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics (BAAL, 2016).

Head (2020) describes ethics as a framework of guidelines established within a professional discipline that shapes thinking and behaviour. These guidelines are crucial in defining what is deemed appropriate and inappropriate for researchers in their interaction with subjects. Adhering to established norms in educational research, this study maintained various principles and procedures throughout its course. Yakimova (2022) underscores that in research, relationships are multifaceted, requiring attention to aspects like potential harm, access, and the dynamics of power. Furthermore, these relationships involve navigating issues of deception and secrecy, while also emphasizing the crucial need to maintain confidentiality.

Being aware of the potential risks this research could pose to students, every effort was made to mitigate these risks, which is elaborated in the 'Planning for Equal Access' section (4.7.4) of the study. In tackling ethical concerns, safeguarding participants' rights, and adhering to the guidelines of relevant authorities, the research implemented numerous measures on both an official and personal level to ensure ethical integrity and responsibility throughout the study.

4.11.1 Informed Consent

To begin with the principal of the school, where students were studying, was informed about the purpose as well as the procedure of the study explicitly and clearly. I requested permission to access a sample for the study, which is detailed in Appendix M. In order to maintain communication, I sent a letter that outlined the overall objectives of the research. To provide context and details I included documentation such as a study proposal and research outline. Following this I followed up with the principal to ensure they received all the information.

Next, we scheduled a face-to-face meeting to discuss the research and its procedures. The primary aim was to secure access to the field of interest, encompassing classes, teachers, and students. Additionally, I explained that I believed there would be educational benefits that I was hoping to be able to offer the students and the schools, such as sociocultural interaction, and learning from native English-speaking language coaches, which might improve the education of the students in the school. I hoped that by participating in my research the students would gain valuable knowledge. This collaborative approach fostered understanding and agreement, establishing a basis for a productive research undertaking. The principal duly gave their consent to the research being conducted.

I obtained written consent from parents or guardians, as per the guidelines set by the BERA (2018, p.12), for the inclusion of students in the research study. The methodology used for securing consent and assent aligns with recommended procedures for educational research conducted within classroom settings. It's worth mentioning that I contacted 30 families, and all 30 of them granted their consent for their children's participation in the study (Appendix N).

Ethical concerns are at the forefront of any research project, and it is paramount to obtain "the subjects' consent to participate in the research", secure their confidentiality, inform them about the character of the research, and "their right to withdraw at any time, to avoid harmful consequences for the subjects, and to consider the researcher's role" (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2005, p.167). In order to obtain consent from the participants in my PhD research, I conducted a comprehensive explanation session with all 30 students involved. The purpose of the session was to provide clear information about the study's objectives, procedures, and associated activities. During a collective meeting, I presented the time commitment required for each activity, tailored to ensure that the students fully understood the research.

Each student was individually approached and offered the opportunity to voluntarily agree to be part of the study. This occurred after they were provided with, and fully understood, all the necessary details, ensuring their affirmative assent. It is important to note that all students willingly agreed to participate in the research activities. As part of ethical research practices, written consent was obtained from all participants, including Year 10 students, prior to their involvement in the study (Appendix O).

Participants were explicitly informed that they retained the option to discontinue their participation in the study at any point, and they were not obligated to provide any clarification or reason for doing so. This assurance aimed to emphasise the voluntary nature of their involvement and to respect their autonomy throughout the research process (BERA, 2018, p.9).

A plain language statement, in the participants' mother tongue and Russian clarifying the purpose of the study, was given to both teachers and students (as shown in Appendix P). As discussed in the Introduction part, the Ingush people speak Russian as it is the official language in Russia, and they speak the Ingush language as their mother language. In rural areas of Ingushetia, people prefer to speak Ingush. The plain language statement also defined how the participants' interviews, questionnaires, zoom lessons with native English-speaking language coaches, WhatsApp group chat, and classroom observations would be organised.

The researcher monitored students' comfort and willingness to participate through careful observation. During the research activities, non-verbal cues, including body language, facial expressions, and overall engagement levels, were observed to assess whether students appeared comfortable and willing to continue with the activities. In addition to this observational approach, informal discussions were conducted to inquire about the students' experiences directly and whether they had any desire to withdraw from any aspect of the study. The aim was to establish a supportive environment that prioritises the autonomy and preferences of the students throughout the research process. All participating students opted to continue and did not withdraw from the study. Transcripts of the interviews were shared with each interviewee to assure them of the accurate recording and interpretation of their responses, and participants expressed satisfaction with this aspect. This practice aimed to enhance the validity of the data. To prevent potential interruptions, individual interviews were conducted in the headteacher's office. All participants willingly volunteered for this study and were informed of their right to withdraw at any time.

The students were informed that English language classes with language coaches would conclude after the 8-week experiment, emphasising that these sessions were conducted solely for experimental purposes. It was agreed that a farewell online meeting would be organised after the 8 weeks.

4.11.2 Protecting Anonymity

In this study, every step was taken to ensure the confidentiality of the school and to reduce any influences on the learning and teaching activities at the school. The school is referred to as Ingush school to keep its identity confidential.

Participants were assured that the questionnaires, classroom observations, and interviews did not contain any data that might possibly threaten the teachers' reputations or careers or the students' grades. I informed students that all the pre-and post-course test scores would be sent to them through private messages if they inquired about their test scores. The test scores were not disclosed to anyone else except the individual students they applied to. From the beginning, students shared with me that they thought their grades might go down as they needed to interact with native speakers, and they would not like other students to know if this happened.

Throughout the whole research process and interviews, coding was used to preserve confidentiality and privacy. For female students, I used "F" followed by the number, for example, from F1 to F8 as eight girls participated in the study. For male students, the letter "B" and the corresponding number were used, for example, B1. To identify the teachers, I used T1, T2, T3 and T4. I explained to the participants that I would be using an audio recorder in their interviews, and no one apart from me would have the opportunity to access the recordings and I would not be sharing any personal information. Participants in this study, in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998), were reassured of their anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality regarding all the data collected. Any recorded information, interview transcripts, and electronically stored information are securely locked and only accessed through a password, which was known only to me.

Participants were guaranteed that all data would be securely disposed of once it was no longer needed for the research. This entailed shredding any paper documents with an office shredder and permanently deleting any audio recordings. Additionally, they were given the contact details of both the researcher and supervisors, ensuring they had access to further clarifications or information if required.

4.11.3 Enhancing Online Safety Measures

To minimise risks associated with online learning for the students, several precautionary measures were implemented. For every online session, a unique Zoom meeting ID and passcode were created and shared with the language coaches shortly before the lesson commenced. Additionally, a secure WhatsApp group was established to ensure that students' written, spoken, or other materials remained confidential and inaccessible to outsiders. As the group administrator, I ensured that only authorised members were added to the group. The group consists of fifteen students, four schoolteachers, and two language coaches to prevent unauthorised access by outsiders. Within this group, students were regularly reminded of the importance of not sharing their peers' work beyond the group, reinforcing a commitment to privacy and mutual respect among participants.

4.11.4 Planning for Equal Access

I conducted a workshop aimed at cultivating an understanding of participants' backgrounds and cultures with the primary objective of establishing a basic rapport to enhance communication efficacy between English native speakers and Ingush students, given the cultural differences. For example, the tone of someone's voice may not accurately reflect the intention of their communication (Agieva, 2020, pp.5-12). The key was to respect those differences and to work with them or around them. I discussed with the students the main principles of effective cross-cultural communication, focusing on what brings us together, empathy, and no judgment. All participants were informed that if any questions or misunderstandings arose during the conversations, they could speak to me or the teachers.

The experimental group, instead of the initially planned 8 weeks, had 7 weeks of English Zoom and WhatsApp lessons with English coaches. The experiment had to be halted when one of the teachers fell ill and subsequently passed away due to COVID, with students consequently not being in a condition to continue their studies.

As per the sampling section, it was decided that the control group would also be given an opportunity to engage in Zoom and WhatsApp group sessions after the experiment

was over. The students, language coaches, and teachers had agreed to this plan. Originally, the sessions were scheduled to take place in January 2022. However, due to the situation between Russia and Ukraine, the sessions had to be postponed to the end of July 2022.

During the experiment, students in the experimental group participated in two 45-minute Zoom lessons with English language coaches every week. This was followed by 15 minutes of WhatsApp tasks. Therefore, in July and August, the control group was given the same number of lessons with identical content. The only difference was that these sessions took place daily and were completed in two weeks, starting from July 25, 2022. This arrangement was discussed and mutually agreed upon by students, teachers, and coaches.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter has comprehensively outlined the essential steps required to conduct rigorous scientific research. It began by laying the philosophical foundation of the study within a pragmatist approach, facilitating the integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The discussion then progressed to describe the specific research approaches and strategies employed in the mixed-method approach, followed by a detailed explanation of the stages involved in quantitative and qualitative thematic analysis. Subsequently, the focus shifted to examining the selected research design and the various data collection methods utilised in this study, which included questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and tests. Each of these components played a crucial role in ensuring the study's robustness and its alignment with the established research objectives.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present and analyse the study's results and discuss the findings in answering the questions below.

1. How do the use of Video Conferencing Platforms (VCs) and social networks (SNs) affect English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' Language Acquisition (LA)?

a. To what extent do students think VCs and SNs support or limit language learning?

b. How do teachers perceive the value of VCs and SNs to improve English Language Teaching (ELT) compared to traditional methods?

2. What perceptions do teachers have about the opportunities and limitations associated with implementing the CLT approach in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes?

3. What impact did the interaction with native-speaking language coaches using CLT, VCs, and SNs have on students' English proficiency?

This study administers quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. These include questionnaires, students' interviews, teachers' interviews, lesson observation and informal research journals. I identified themes and subthemes from respondents with similar answers throughout the data analysis process. Discussion of the sub-themes is supported by quotations from the interviews and these are presented in italics. The table below illustrates the themes and sub-themes which were generated from the data.

|	Access to the technology
Modern technology	Social and educational purposes
	Technology as a teaching-learning tool

Language Learning	Test scores for reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Quant)
	Grades and other motivations; pronunciation; novelty; enjoyment (Qual)
Human Interaction	Sociocultural
	Communicative

5.2 Modern Technology

The importance of technology in modern education lies in empowering teachers to seamlessly integrate new technologies into their classrooms, thereby enhancing the learner-centred approach. This not only enables teachers to engage students in innovative and inclusive ways but also broadens their professional network, connecting them with educators both nationally and globally (Popescu, 2022).

5.2.1 Access to the Technology

A questionnaire was completed by 165 Grade 10 high school students (Appendix B) and in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 students in the focus group to answer the first research question. Data from the questionnaire explored digital tools students used and the students' perceptions of technology in helping them learn English.
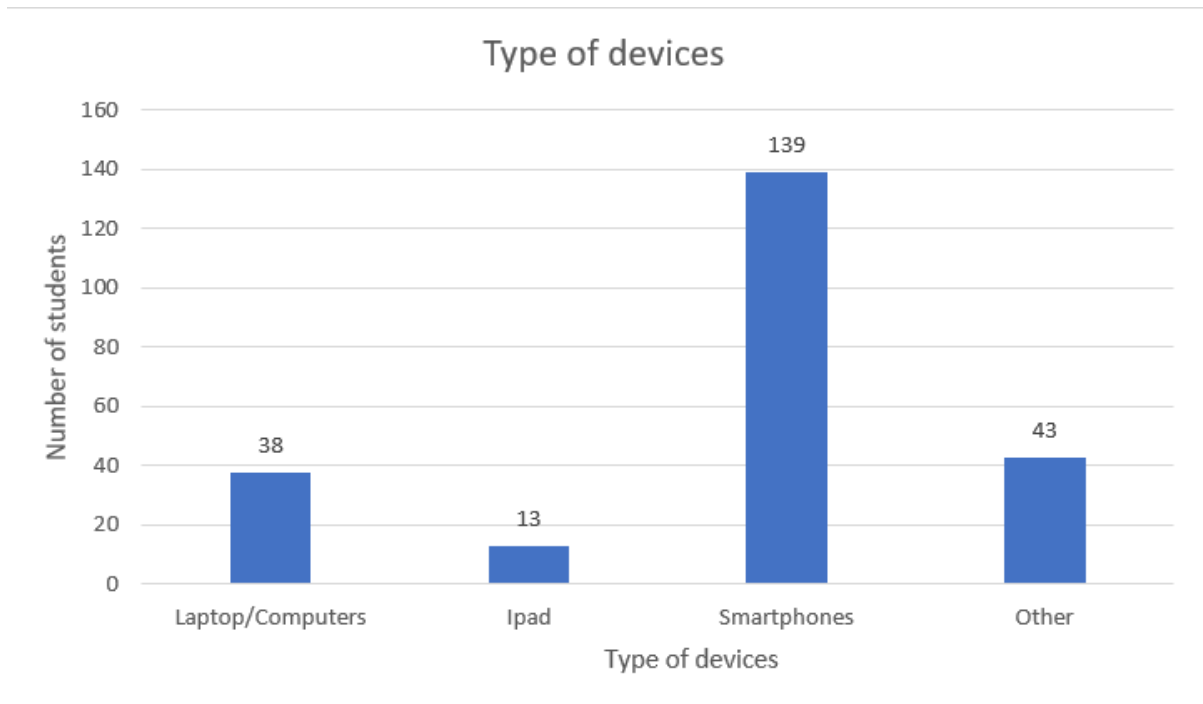
Figure 1. Digital devices possessed by students.

Of the 165 students surveyed by questionnaire, 82% had digital devices that could access the internet, and they employed their digital devices for a variety of purposes such as entertainment, education, and other social purposes. Some students possessed more than one device. Figure 1 shows that 84% of the students possessed smartphones; 23% of the students had a computer or a laptop; 8% of students owned iPads; 26% had other digital devices.

In a focus group, when asked 'What computing equipment do you have access to?', three students out of 15 in the interview reported that they had access to computers at home and a broadband connection. All 15 students confirmed that they possessed personal smartphones with a mobile SIM card that allowed them to make standard phone calls, send SMS, and connect to the internet via mobile data. This indicates that students had access to the internet, although, for those who had mobile data only, its usage was possibly limited because the phone's mobile data allowance is far more expensive if the limit is exceeded.

5.2.2 Digital Tools for Social and Educational Purposes
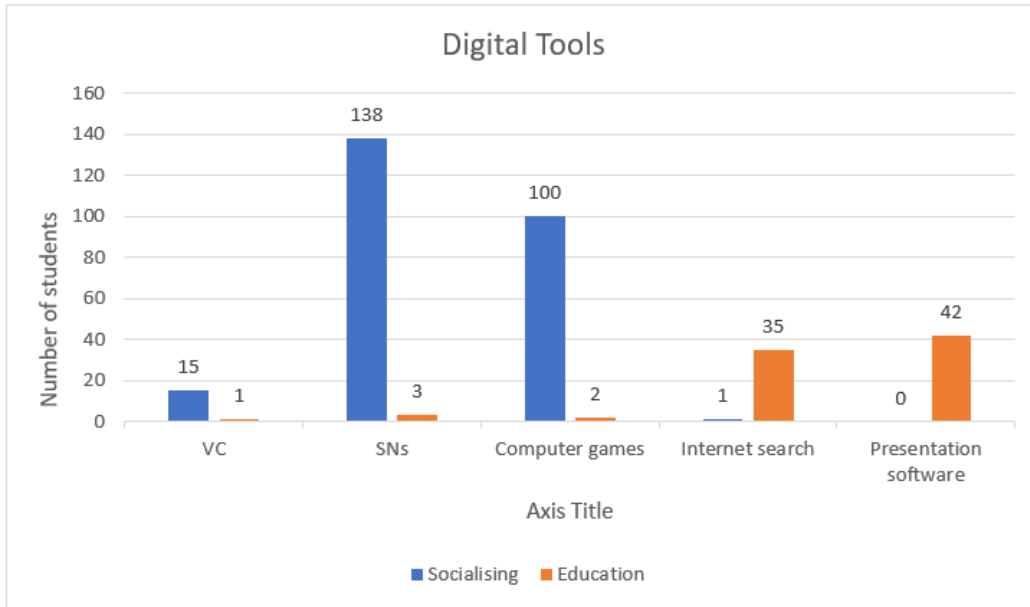
**Figure 2. Digital tools for social and educational purposes**

Almost all students in responding to the questionnaire indicated using technology for social purposes, mainly communicating with their friends/relatives, sharing photos, playing online games, watching online videos/films, and listening to music, as seen in Figure 2.
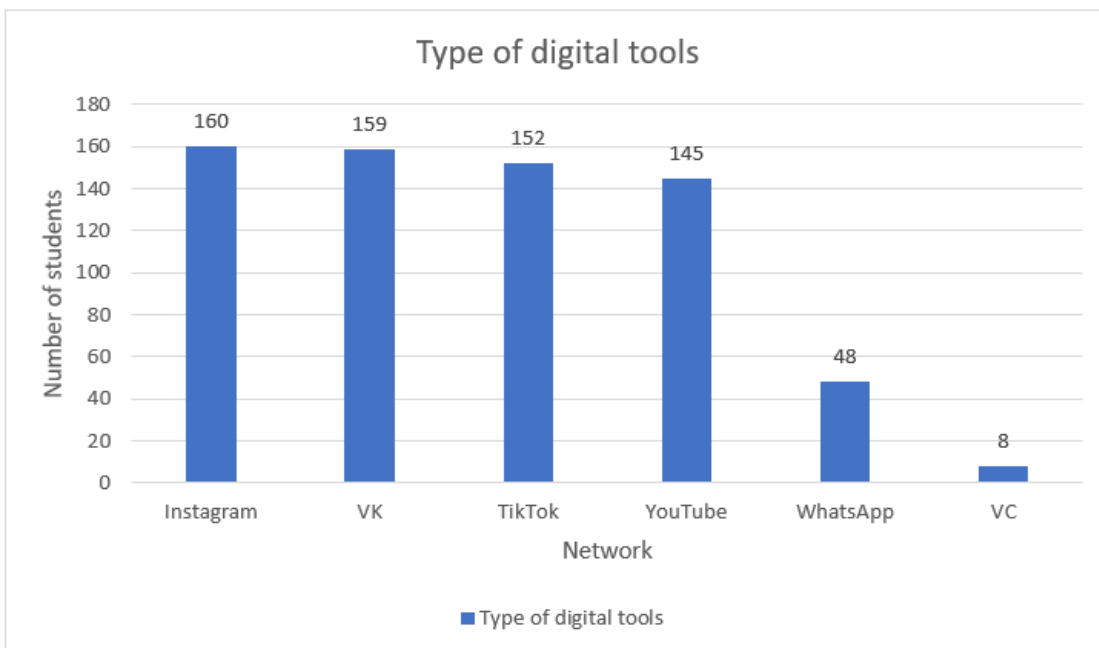
Figure 3. Type of digital tools

The diagram shows that WhatsApp and VC were the least popular services among high school students in Ingushetia. Among the 165 students surveyed through a questionnaire, Instagram emerged as the most popular tool, followed by VKontakte (VK). VK, short for InContact, is a Russian online social media and social networking service headquartered in Saint Petersburg. Although VK is accessible in multiple languages, it is predominantly used by Russian speakers (Lynch, 2023).
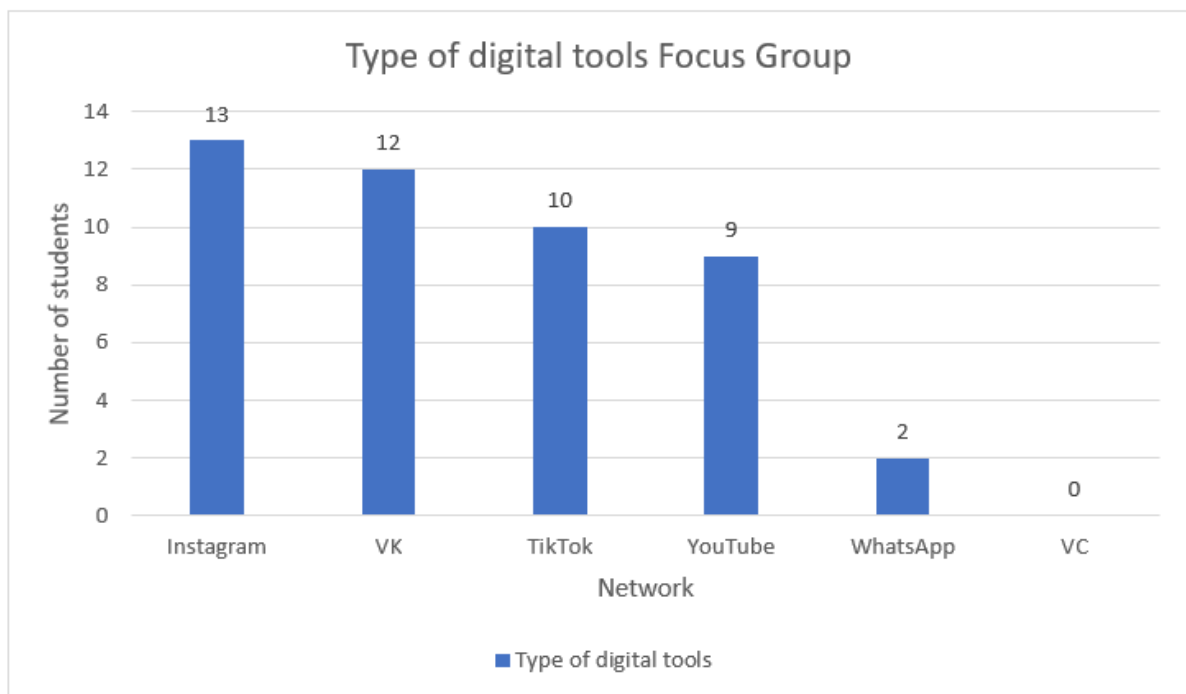
Figure 4. Type of digital tools (Focus Group)

The focus group of 15 students also took part in the questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire (see Appendix B) demonstrated that all participants, 15 students, used Instagram, and two students used WhatsApp to make phone calls. However, they did not use these tools for educational purposes (see Figure 3). All 15 students in the initial questionnaire (Appendix C) reported using technology for social purposes, mainly messaging friends, sharing photos, listening to music, and watching YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok videos (VK is a popular social media network in Ingushetia). Those three students, who had computers, said that they preferred playing games, and most of the time they played together.

B4: *I play online games with my other classmates. My mum says that I play a lot* (he smiled and blushed)*. Also, I like watching online videos such as gameshows and listening to music.*

The student's comment above and the fact that he blushed, probably showed that he agrees with his mother's comment to some degree. He immediately explained that he not only played but watched some interesting videos and music in YouTube. Until the project, internet resources were not used by teachers during lessons. This shows that the student was aware of different uses of technology, even though they were not offered in class.

Thirteen learners could be identified as social networkers, most of whom were girls. They also did not use online possibilities for educational purposes and spent a lot of time participating in social networking in the Russian language. Instagram and VK are the two most popular social networks in Ingushetia that allow followers to maintain contact, and share information, photos and videos. Two students liked spending time reading others' posts and sharing some information about themselves.

F1: *I can spend hours between Instagram and VK on my phone. It's a lot of fun, you know. I don't post but I follow many others.*

F4: *When being happy, I post 'happiness', when being sad, I posted 'sad' on my VK page. I love getting likes from others. We all have VK pages, but others prefer to keep their accounts closed.*

As it has been discussed in my literature review (see 2.4.4), being inherently social creatures, people naturally form and maintain social relationships. F4's desire to maintain and enrich these relationships may be a motivation behind why she shared online. F4 wanted to share with others how she perceived the world and how she defines herself. Also, the answers show how F4 used social media to stay in touch and to expand her social life beyond family boundaries. It was important for F4 to express how she felt and get feedback from others. By doing the same in English, her activity on social networks could be perceived to have a duel social and educational purpose.

Social media provides an easy and convenient way to stay in touch with friends. This was especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic when people were more separated

than ever. F1 and F4's comments showed that social media has filled in the gaps in their social lives and provided them with a way to regain missing connections from their daily school lives.

T2: *Due to Covid-19, our school is mainly closed for students, so they communicate on several platforms instead of face to face. Therefore, social media is now a part of everyday life. I see a positive result of using WhatsApp not only for collaborative learning but also because it unites students inside and outside the classroom. For some students, communication is more important than for others and therefore some of them are more active in group chat than others.*

The students already used their mobile phones and other devices day in and day out, therefore, the use of technology for language learning could be integrated into a student's daily life. 10-15 minutes of language practice could be spent on social networks and browsing the Internet in English.

One of the students shared her experience of using WhatsApp and the way she used it to interact with her friends and family via mobile phone:

F3: *My uncle lives in Germany, and he frequently calls via WhatsApp video. My mum wants me to say hello and I feel awkward. Our generation prefers texting, unlike your old generation. Sorry, I didn't mean to* (she closed her mouth with her hand and we both laughed). *It's just not cool, sorry.*

This student talked about the communication patterns of teens and said that they preferred texting instead of making phone calls. When asked: What resources do you use to communicate with your friends? (Appendix E), all 15 students answered that they usually text via phone or social networks such as VK.

Two students highlighted that they used their phones for social media to find a piece of additional information as otherwise, it was time-consuming.

B2*: Sometimes I look up answers to my homework, especially mathematics. It's much quicker. I ask my friends in VK. We all do but don't tell our teacher, will you?*

F6*: I like cooking* (pause for a few seconds*) and there are many good new recipes on YouTube and Instagram that I can find quickly. I save those I like. When I finish school, I want to open my bakery.*

The answers above show that students sought more information relating to their hobbies, in other words, what they were interested in. They used social media to find suitable materials for their own learning. Many popular chefs and cookbook authors are available on social media platforms like YouTube, and, since it is social media, F6 also tended to get faster responses to her questions. The range of potential sources of advice is astronomical.

To summarise, students used digital tools for social purposes such as browsing social networks, watching video clips, updating their status, texting their friends, listening to music, or playing games. Only two students used digital tools for educational purposes, such as learning new skills or finding additional information. As a result of technological advances, information is now accessible and transferable in new ways, for example, YouTube, VK, or WhatsApp service can be used for personal communications. Additionally, students can store and retrieve information in a short period of time.

5.2.3 Technology as a Teaching-Learning Tool
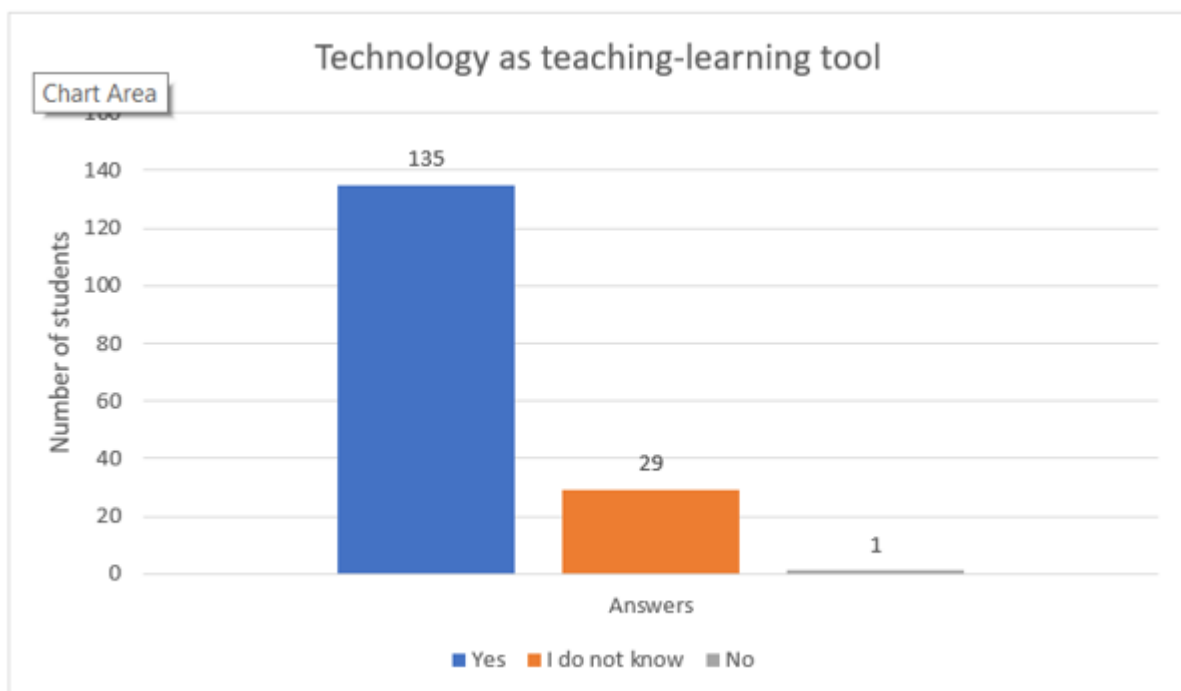
Figure 5. Students' perceptions of technology as a teaching-learning tool. 165 students

The question 'Do you like technology as a teaching-learning tool?' in a questionnaire was designed to determine the students' perceptions of using technology as a teaching-learning tool in the classroom. Figure 4 shows that 82% of the students, which is 135 out of 165, answered that they liked digital technology integration in classroom teaching/learning. A small number of students, 17%, were unsure if they liked digital tools in-classroom study. Possibly, due to a lack of the use of technology applications in the teaching process in the classroom. One student responded 'No'. I could not ask for clarification as the questionnaire was anonymous.

To the same question, all 15 students in the focus group indicated a positive attitude to digital technology integration in the classroom for teaching/learning the English language.

F8: *In some schools in town teachers use YouTube and something like that in the lessons. Students are lucky there; I think it's cool. It's different from what we do here. Our teachers could do the same. I really like that we can use technology now. It helps me to concentrate better. And it's fun.*

The fact that F8 perceived her concentration to have improved suggests she was better engaged with all the content in the lesson. This is in line with studies by Sami (2018), Le (2018), and Onorin (2019), who have shown that incorporating technology into language learning can enhance students' engagement and promote active participation.

B6: *I can't memorise those texts that I have to retell at lessons and always get '2'. It works better for me when we watch some YouTube videos with Diana or videos that Dave records himself and then we match pictures with sentences. I enjoy doing that. Also, I enjoy voice-recording something about my day.*

The use of technology, namely Zoom and WhatsApp, in language learning transformed B6 from an unengaged to an actively engaged learner and allowed more profound and enriching linguistic immersion. According to Alamera and Khateeb (2021), Ferreira-Meyers and Martins (2020), Ali and Bin-Hady (2019), Kartal (2019), and Betretdinova (2019) there is a positive correlation between students' perception, knowledge, and motivation and the impact of technology on their learning outcomes. However, these studies discuss undergraduate students and the outcomes of those study results not from classroom activities but from additional or distance learning.

Online videos, such as structured language learning videos available on YouTube or simply something of interest to the student, were perceived as helpful for B6 and F8 to improve their comprehension skills.

B5: *In every movie about students, they do something with the internet during the lessons. What's that called? Yes, presentations. I wish we could always use computers at the lessons. I would love to do presentations. There is much more there than just books.*

B5 was aware of the differences between what was happening in his class and the modern classes that he saw on TV. It could be seen that he pictured himself in a technologically advanced classroom, where he could demonstrate his knowledge of the English language and IT skills. In the perception of this student, books have been superseded as a learning resource and new technology meant that the classes could be much richer in content and more interactive than before. Other students shared the opinion that the use of technology in a classroom provides positive changes, for example:

B1: *It would be great to use computers in the classroom. Anyway, we're not allowed to use phones in class. But it seems to me that I've learned much more by exchanging information on WhatsApp.*

A teacher shared her attitude toward using phones in a classroom environment:

T1: *Phones are a no-no! I wouldn't be so sure that students are not messaging friends, cheating, or on social media.*

T1 implied students could use their phones inappropriately in the classroom and it could be distracting. However, T3 had different feelings about whether students were using phones inappropriately:

T3: *Students enjoy messaging on the WhatsApp group. I believe some shy or weak students would improve their learning if we included mobile devices earlier.*

Also, she suggested how the situation could be improved:

T3: Possibly, staff training is needed.

Two students reported their preference for the use of technology in the learning environment, which helped encourage them to ask questions in less stressful situations:

B2: *It is convenient because I can use different virtual tools, for example, some words or sentences I need could be copied quickly and used. Also, I am able to ask a question and get a reply without attracting additional attention. It's interesting also.*

F1: *I don't really like interacting with others in English because my English is rubbish* (she blushes and looks down during the conversation) *and I need some time to find the right words*, *and that's embarrassing. But I really enjoyed answering questions, commenting, or sharing new ideas or information in WhatsApp chat.*

From the classroom observation and interviews with schoolteachers, B2 and F1 were identified as being shy. Therefore, hosting discussions online was an effective way to encourage these shy students to participate in class. The use of technology enabled them to be able to take part and contribute their views without drawing attention to themselves in a classroom. Engaging students via social media, in this case, a WhatsApp closed group, was a great idea because the students were already familiar with the platform and its features.

The teacher facilitated the discussions on this WhatsApp group to help alleviate the discomfort that shy students experienced when speaking up in the classroom. Aside from giving them a voice, online discussions also provided shy students with time to think before participating:

T3: *I doubted that B2 would take part in WhatsApp chat. Usually, he did not participate in the lessons. I gave him two days after the lesson to upload a recording about himself and he did so later on the same day.*

Another teacher also noticed that shy students became more interactive if they were able to use technology for learning:

T4: *The use of WhatsApp is motivational and encouraging, especially for students who tend to be shy in class.*
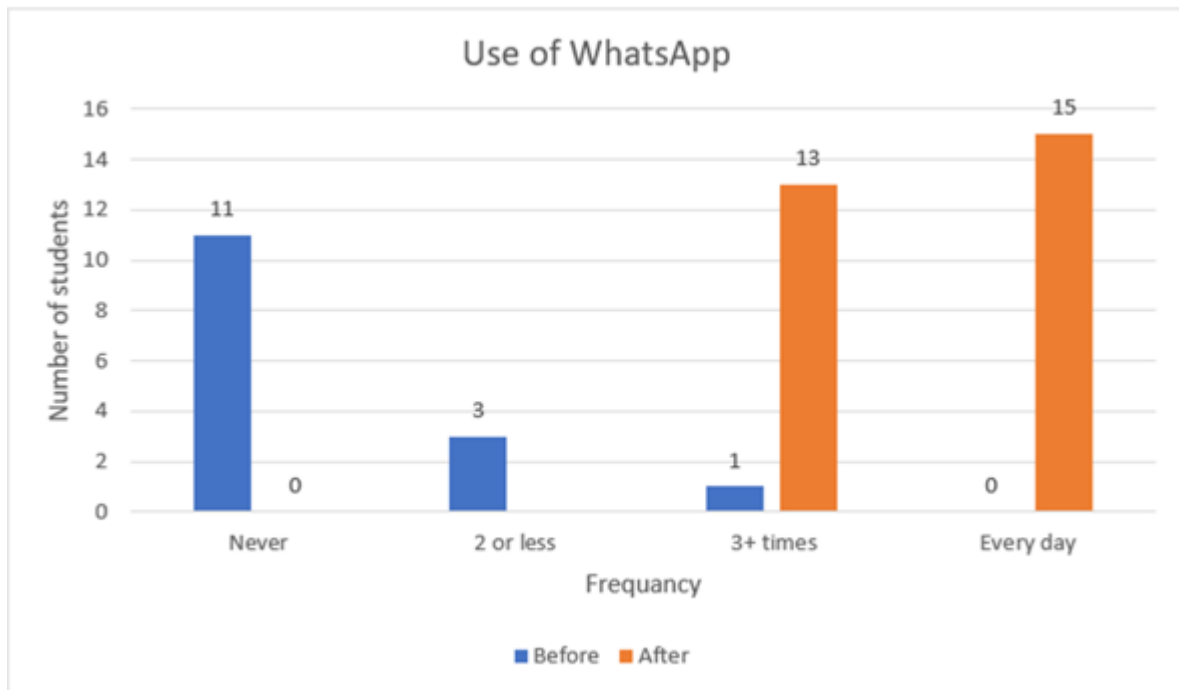
Figure 6. Frequency of the use of WhatsApp

According to the results of the initial questionnaire (Appendix C), the participants did not actively use WhatsApp in everyday communication. 11 out of 15 students said that they had never used WhatsApp before, 3 students used it twice or less per week, 1 student used WhatsApp more than 3 times per week, and none of the students used it every day. However, during the experiment, students used WhatsApp for 15 mins every day in class under the instruction of their teacher and language coach, for the purpose of learning. Moreover, after 7 weeks of the experiment, the final questionnaire (see Appendix G) revealed that 15 students started using WhatsApp every day for educational purposes. Figure 6. shows the increase in WhatsApp use for learning and interaction during the study.
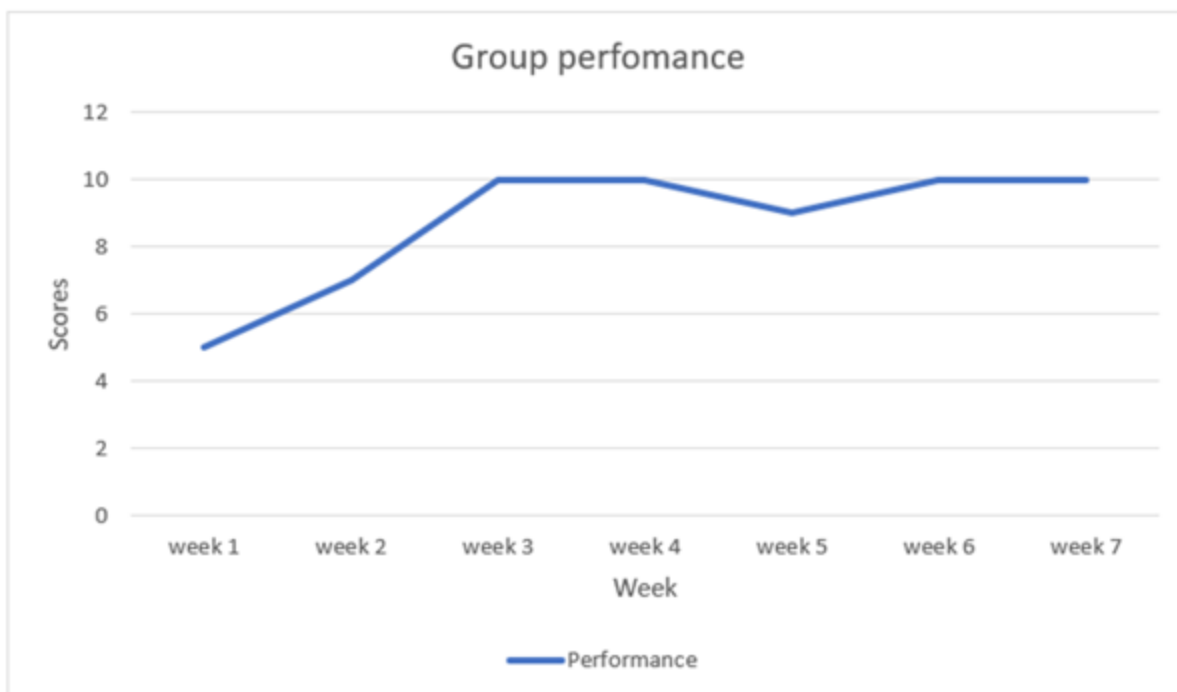
Figure 7. Group Performance

The study was conducted for 7 weeks. At the end of each week, the teacher evaluated each student's work on WhatsApp chat. At the end of the first week of the study, the average score of the participants was 5 points (see Table 2). However, at the end of the second week, the group's performance increased to 8 points. Based on the results of the last two weeks of the study, the average score of the group was 9 points (Figure 6).

On the whole, there was a stable relationship between the frequency of chats and the increase in the level of scores that the teacher evaluated. A small drop in activity could be seen in the fifth week. I associate this with the fact that at that time one of the teachers fell ill with Covid and students were worried about the health of their teacher.
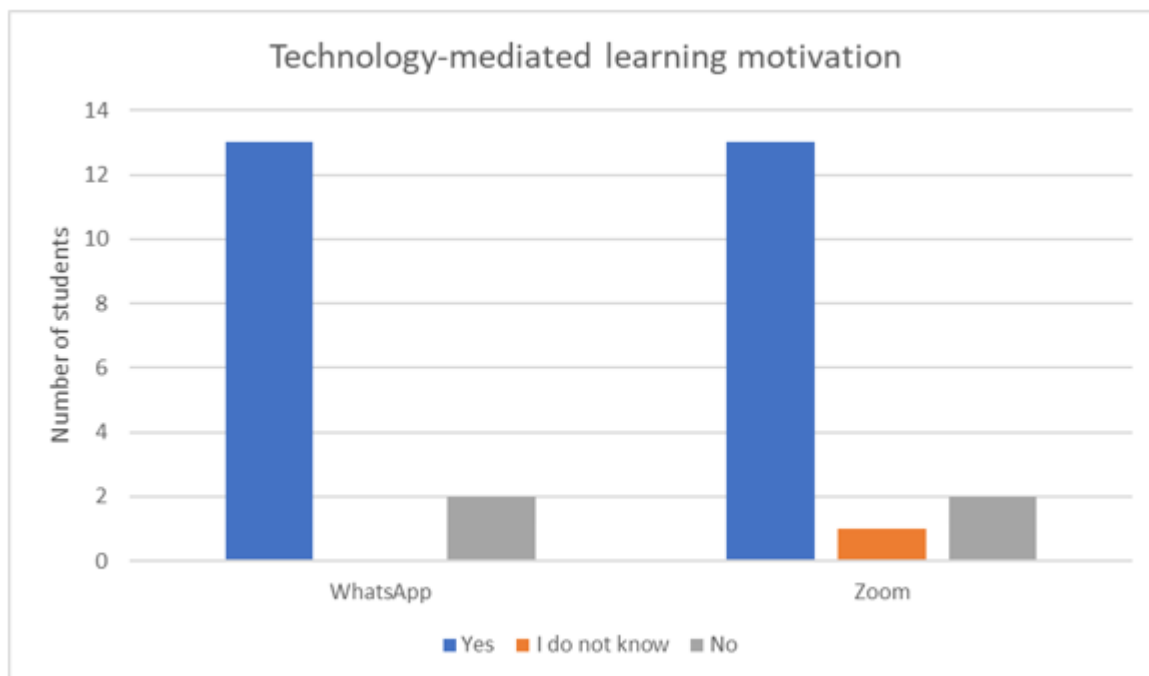
Figure 8. Does technology-mediated teaching-learning motivate you toward a new learning situation?

According to 13 out of 15 students (see Figure 8.), the technology-enhanced teaching approach created a new learning situation that captivated and motivated them to learn the English language. This indicates that the efficacy and appropriateness of technology-mediated teaching-learning in EFL classrooms was driving students into a new teaching/learning situation. However, B7 did not like WhatsApp as a Learning tool as he needed more time to respond. B5 did not like WhatsApp as he did not like texting or writing, and he was not sure about Zoom because of his lack of English speaking-skills. Similar to B5, B3 also felt unconfident having Zoom conversations, although both enjoyed listening and other Zoom activities:

B3: *Actually, I found the WhatsApp group more beneficial than the school* (laughs).

MA: Why?

B3: *Because I can easily type my question or answer, and nobody is looking at me. I can't always ask questions in the classroom because everyone is looking. I feel silly.*

MA: And what about Zoom? B3: *No-no-no-no, it's so embarrassing. Talk to native-English-speaking teachers? How? No-no-no. Though I like listening to how they speak, and I like watching the videos they share. It's so cool.*

Unlike B3, student B7 did not like WhatsApp interaction, especially at the beginning of the project:

*B7: Zoom was great but WhatsApp… (*he rolled his eyes up*), I needed more time to read, think, translate and finally type something that would make some sense. It was frustrating, and at the beginning, I didn't really enjoy this part.*

The other student, B5, did not like any type of writing in general and felt unconfident speaking with native speakers via Zoom, however, he enjoyed the rest of the other activities, such as listening and participating in different tasks.

B5*: I don't like messaging. To be honest, I don't like any type of writing. The tasks on WhatsApp I found difficult, but I did my best.*

MA: And what about Zoom? Did you like interacting with language coaches?

B5: *It's yea and no, you know. I never talked to them except by saying 'Hello'. I liked their stories, interactive tasks, and videos but I don't really speak English, just basic phrases.*

B5 showed interest in another culture, listened attentively and actively followed the instructions given in English. Perhaps, if his vocabulary or self-confidence were a little higher, he would have been able to participate more in conversation.

In the interviews (Appendix E), almost all students stated that lessons became interesting, engaging, informative, and progressive. Students also mentioned that they had learned a lot in a short period:

F1: *We constantly learn something new and watch something interesting. Mum says that we are lucky. She says that when she was at school, she even couldn't dream about these types of lessons. I love Zoom lessons and I love our WhatsApp tasks.*

F2: *Yes, Zoom and WhatsApp are really fantastic. Every lesson after a conversation with Dave or Diana, we do interesting quizzes, different tasks and I feel that the lessons are too short, like five minutes. Lessons are not boring anymore. It would be so good if our teachers could do something like that.*

B1*: I think in one week's time I've learned much more than last year. I wish we had similar lessons before. I wouldn't miss a lesson.*

MA: Do you often miss school?

B1*: If there is any chance to do that, I do* (he smiles).

Teachers also noticed an improvement in students' attendance. It is possible that the new teaching methods and introduction of technology influenced students' attendance; certainly, this was the perception on one of the teachers:

T4: *The attendance is hugely improved. Students have a huge growing interest in technology. Lessons with the use of technology are much more exciting for students. And yes, I can see the progress they've made in a short period of time.*

Although the students' main aim was to participate in tasks in lessons for 15 mins, their level of activity was increased by the mobility of smartphones and the ease of access that WhatsApp offered; therefore, their attitude towards WhatsApp use for teaching and learning became positive. Additionally, students appreciated the easy accessibility to WhatsApp from their smartphones:

B1: *It's easy to send videos and audio files, leave a voice message, and more. Also, all these features are completely free!*

F4: *I really enjoy participating in our group chat. Maybe even too much (laughing). Diana responds straight away. She sends voice messages and I love listening to them and when no one can hear me, I repeat what she says. I try not to exceed my mobile data allowance otherwise I wouldn't be able to do the given tasks. Usually, I try to be connected to a free Wi-Fi network.*

English teachers highlighted the fact that WhatsApp enhanced interaction among students and between students and language coaches.

T3: *Message exchanges take place not just as 15 mins tasks but also outside school hours. Luckily, the coaches replied immediately.*

T4: *If Zoom is for a limited time only, WhatsApp messaging is unstoppable. I can see that students enjoy doing tasks through technology.*

Taken together, these results suggest that students perceived technology as useful for their language learning, which implies they developed positive perceptions about technology-enhanced teaching practices. Moreover, the teachers perceived that a technology-supported learning situation captivates and motivates students' immersion

in learning activities more than traditional pedagogy and positively affects students' attendance. Some students expressed a wish that teachers explain new topics with videos in the class. In this way, the lesson would be more enjoyable and interesting. Technology also reduced students' anxiety in raising questions, however, in two answers there is uncertainty about the use of technology in the classroom. Their responses revealed that these students are not confident in their speaking and writing skills. However, the reasons for this lack of confidence remain ambiguous.

5.3 Language Learning

### 5.3.1 Test scores for reading, writing, speaking and listening.

This study represents exploratory research in terms of the geographical context it was conducted within. There is currently no published research to indicate that either SNs or OVPs have previously been used in language learning, either inside or outside the school environment, in Ingushetia. The study therefore sought to provide some preliminary findings in this respect.

As described in the Methodology (section 4.4.3.2), students were asked to do the pre- and post-course tests and this section presents the results and students' interview answers.
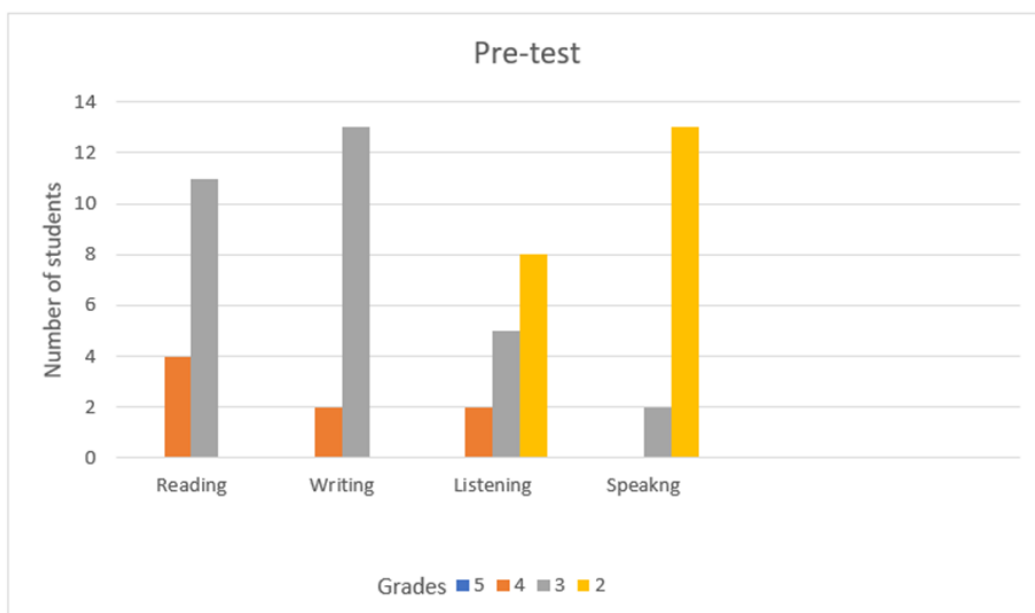

Figure 9. Pre-course diagnostic

Figure 9 shows for the 15 students in the focus group, students' reading and writing skills were better than listening and speaking, however, none of the students was graded '5'. Teachers tested students using the diagnostic test foxford.ru (see sections 4.4.3.2-4.4.3.4), analysed their mistakes, and graded them in a usual way that is accepted by the school. Grades are used as evaluations of student work on a scale of 2, 3, 4, and 5, where 2 is unsatisfactory and 5 is excellent. After the diagnostic test, language coaches and teachers gave feedback about the task performed and skills used to help students to understand their current areas of improvement.
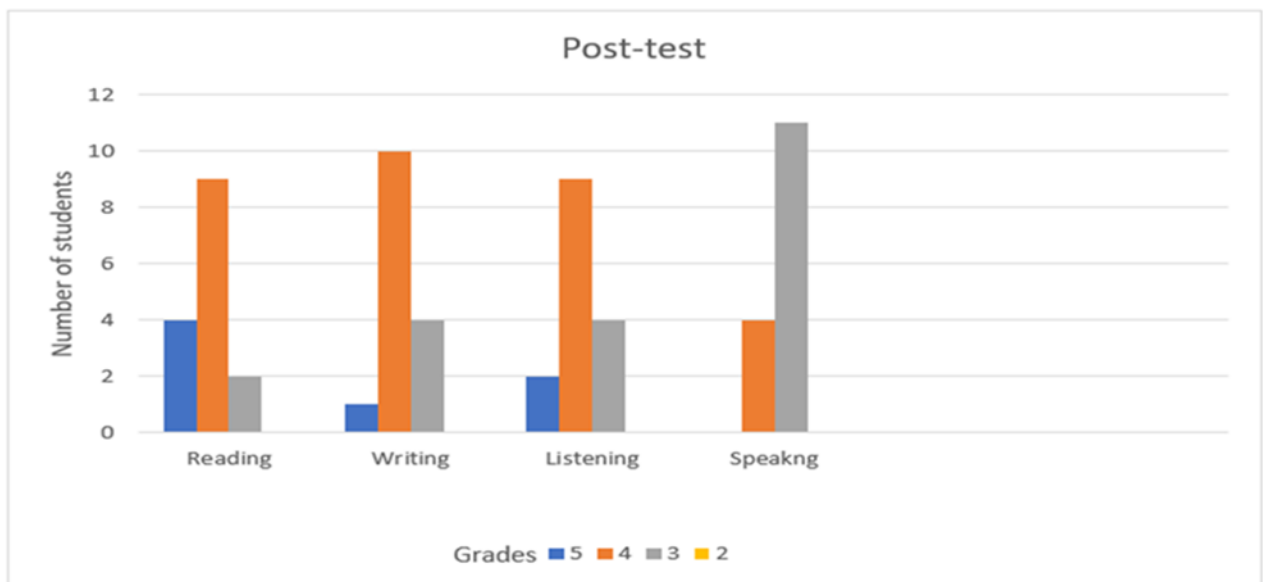

Figure 10 Post-course diagnostic

Figure 10 demonstrates a noticeable improvement in every language skill after seven weeks of Zoom lessons with English-native-speaking coaches (including some students who were now graded 5), after the use of WhatsApp as a learning tool in the EFL classroom.
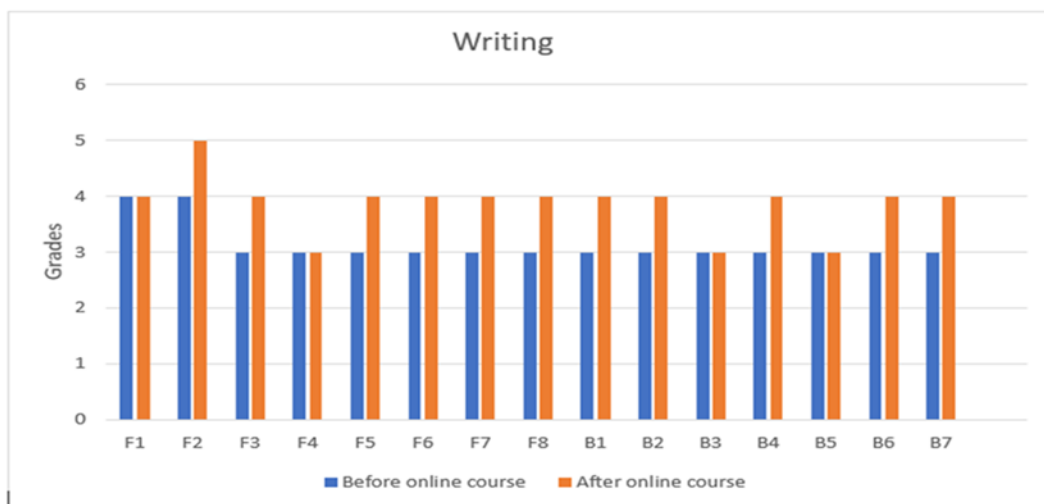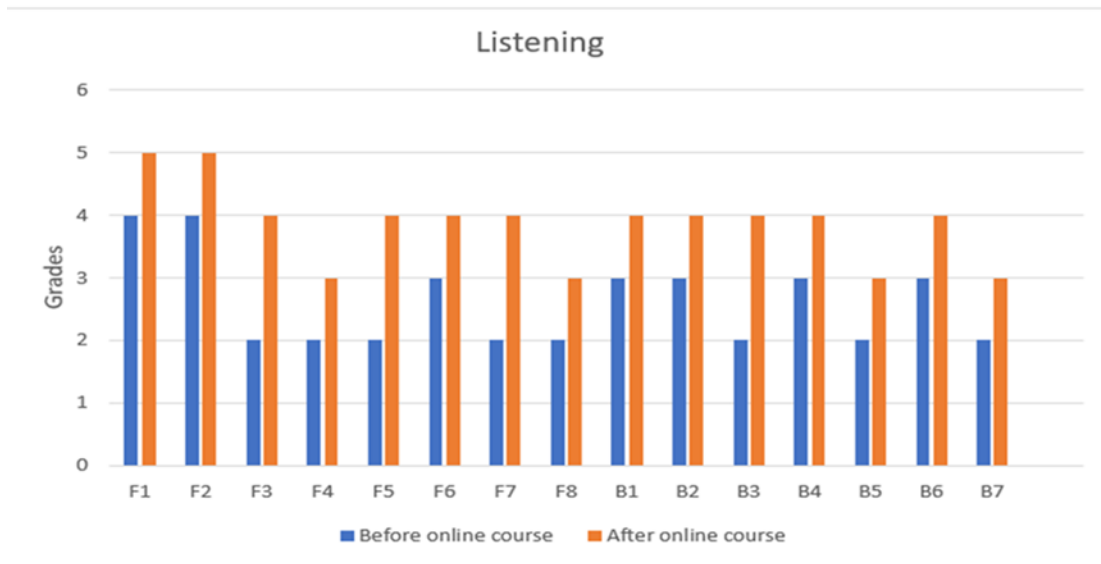
Figure 11. Writing test results before and after the online course and WhatsApp

Figure 11 shows that most of the students improved their writing skills. Only four students (F1, F4, B3, and B5) did not make any progress.
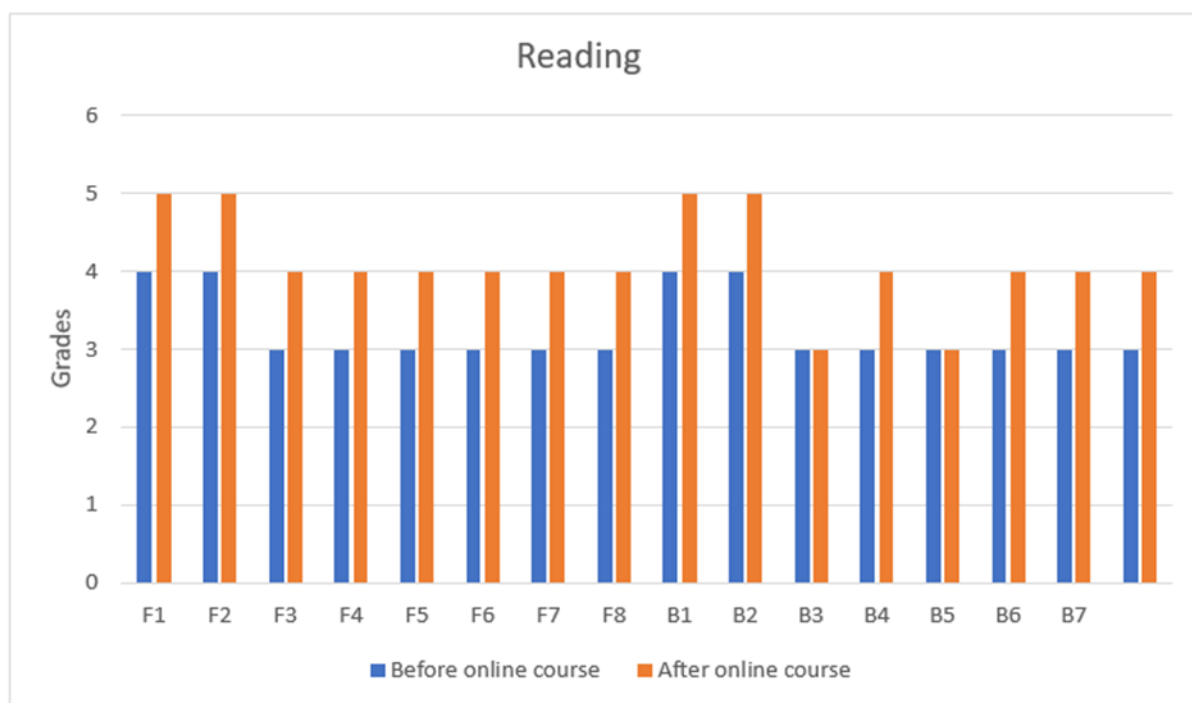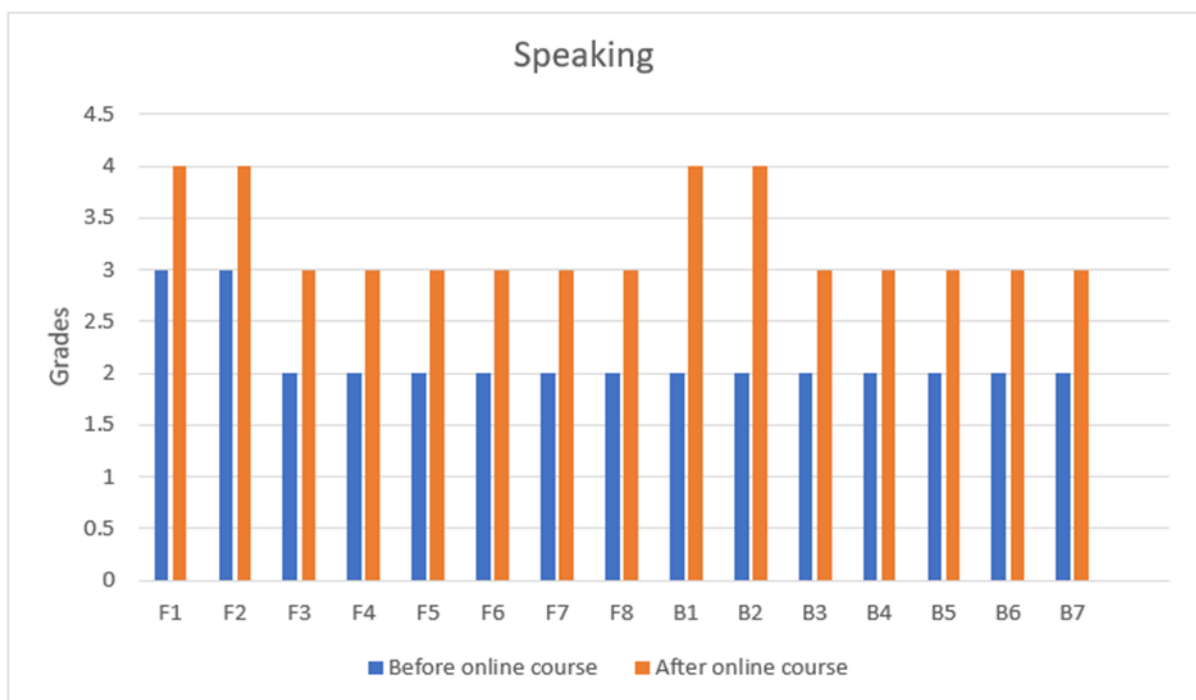

Figure 12. Reading test results before and after the online course and WhatsApp

The results showed that the majority of students, except B3 and B5, progressed in their reading after the seven-week course with language coaches. It is worth mentioning that reading and writing were students' favourite practices even before the online course.

Figure 13. Listening test results before and after the online course and WhatsApp

Figure 13 shows all 15 students made progress in their listening skills. To be more accurate, these students had many more correct answers in the post-course listening tests compared to the pre-course listening tests. The listening test scores of four students (F3, F5, F7, and B3) indicated improvements of two grades. B3's writing and reading test results did not show any changes during the course. However, the speaking test also revealed some improvement in B3's grades for this skill.

Figure 14. Speaking test results before and after the online course and WhatsApp

Speaking tests were employed to compare student speaking skills regarding language complexity and fluency before and after the course. Figure 14 shows that all 15 students progressed in their speaking after the online course; however, none of the students achieved the highest grade '5'.

The control group also undertook the same tests and were tested using the same Diagnostic test foxford.ru. I compared the results of both groups at the end of the online course. I did not run a complicated statistical analysis as I had a small sample size. Excel provides powerful ways to analyse and present data and I used Excel templates. I calculated the average, precisely the mean. I found the sum of the grades by adding them all up and dividing the sum by the number of students in the group.

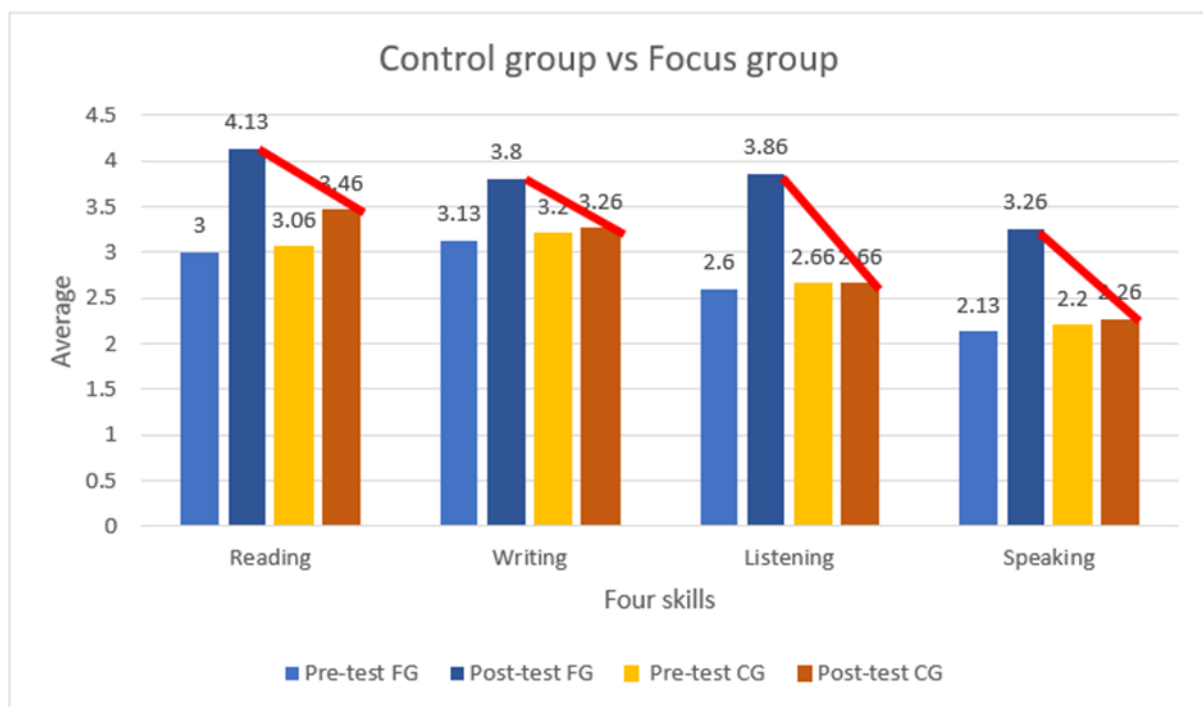**Figure 15. Comparison of Focus and Control groups' pre- and post-course tests.**

The results showed that students in the focus group progressed better in their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills after the seven-week online course when compared to the control group. Figure 15 shows no significant difference in the pre-test results between the two groups. After seven weeks, the difference became

noticeable. The red lines visually demonstrate the differences in each skill of the post-test.

5.3.2 Novelty

The unique experience of learning English through Zoom and WhatsApp may have enhanced the students' motivation, as indicated by their expressed enthusiasm for English learning compared to other subjects.

B6: *I now find myself enjoying this language and giving it more attention than I do for other subjects.*

B5: *I made sure not to miss any of the lessons.*

Teachers also observed a noticeable improvement in student attendance, suggesting a favourable effect on their learning:

T4: *There's been a significant increase in attendance.*

Additionally, students' feedback reflected an overall positive response to this innovative approach to learning.

F1: *Nothing like that has ever happened in our school. I'm so lucky to have these lessons.*

At the school, teachers did not use any additional internet resources for teaching English.

F2: *I know that students watch YouTube in other schools but until now we used our books only.*

Students were enthusiastic about new methods of teaching.

F2: *My friends from other schools keep asking me about our lessons. I said that we're really lucky to have these types of lessons.* (She speaks loudly with excitement).

F5: *It's like a breath of fresh air. Lessons are fun and interesting now.*

B1: *These lessons bring purpose to learning English.*

Students' responses demonstrate a positive attitude to the novelty in the classroom. This novelty brought positive changes to the everyday school routine. Students who had not previously had an experience interacting with English speakers became more interested in the material, and the subjective perception of novelty may also increase performance and, presumably, attendance.

B2: *This is fantastic! My mum says that nothing like that ever happened here.*

Zoom lessons and WhatsApp interaction with native speakers was something that had not been experienced before and so was interesting.

T3: *I'm proud to be a part of the experiment. I think we should keep running these types of lessons or at least try something similar.*

Thus, encouraging curiosity and celebrating novelty in the classroom increased intrinsic motivation, and T3 formed the intention to implement an instructional style that emphasises and enhances the perception of novelty.

By implementing unfamiliar situations in the classroom, such as novel technology and interaction with native speakers, an instructor can potentially create an environment that fosters students' intrinsic motivation. However, it is also possible that students are unfamiliar with many activities and topics, which could increase anxiety due to perceived difficulty, as happened with B3.

B3: *In the beginning, the lessons with coaches were too difficult for me and I really wanted to quit. I'm glad I didn't. I like the way they speak and explain things. I especially enjoyed a week where we talked about our dreams.*

Slowly expanding what the student is capable of and offering low-stake assignments and quizzes with which students can test their learning based on previous learning experiences, increases the students' engagement and motivation.

B5: I use every chance to have small talk with Diana and Dave when they are online. I upload pictures and describe them according to the instructions. Hopefully, this year I can improve my English grades.

B5 was a student who did not like any type of writing and avoided interacting with language coaches at the beginning of the study.

Several students highlighted that the language course conducted via Zoom and WhatsApp provided a distinct and refreshing change from their usual learning experiences. For example, F3 conveyed her excitement about participating in the English class, highlighting a shift in her motivation driven by the innovative approach.

F3: *Now I'm really feeling up for it and excited about trying something new. Before, I didn't really care if I missed a class or not, but now I definitely don't want to miss any of our Zoom sessions or the stuff we do on WhatsApp. It is something new, there is a difference.*

F6 echoed similar sentiments, explaining that her motivation to learn had grown due to interactions with native English speakers. This newfound interest in the language had subsequently heightened her eagerness to put in more effort.

F6: *I've been putting in more work now. I really enjoy listening to and having discussions with English speakers, and I find it fun to record myself on WhatsApp in my spare time.*

5.3.3 Authenticity

Usually, in the class, students use textbooks, which they find boring at best and demotivating at worst.

F1: *Our textbooks are about Marilyn Monroe or ordering lunch in restaurants. These texts are not interesting at all.*

T4: *Books are not interesting for the students because the situations are not relevant.*

T3: *Some of the topics are not interesting or simply irrelevant for Ingush students; they do not match their interests and culture.*

T3's and T4's comments above showed that they were aware that some topics in the textbook were unrelated to the students' interests. They pointed out that the content or examples were irrelevant or inappropriate for the students and did not reflect Ingush students' needs, since textbooks are often written for global markets and often fail to reflect the interests and needs of all learners. Despite the recognition that many of the texts were 'authentic' or based on meaningful topics, teachers perceived that the students felt bored and struggled with irrelevant tasks. The text, dialogue, and other

features of the content included inauthentic language that was often unrepresentative of real language use.

B7: Usually, in our books, we read 'Mr or Madam'. From Dave, I learned 'my mate or pal'. If it wasn't for him, I would never know these words.

To solve this problem, language coaches created material that was adapted to their classroom of learners and still close to the textbook. Language coaches were open to suggestions, and above all, encouraged students to participate in the resource-selection process and create or find interesting learning material on their own.

F4: Many stories were funny. We could choose what story to read. I chose funny stories.

F6: I liked that these stories were about hobbies and were short and easy to read.

Students' comments show that they enjoyed reading because the stories were interesting, funny, short, authentic, and easy to read. Reading is an important part of language learning because it helps to develop other related skills like grammar, vocabulary, and writing. Possibly, this might explain B7's (the student, who did not like writing or texting in general) improvement in reading and writing. His scores improved from "3" to "4" in reading and from "4" to "5" in writing (see figures 11 and 12).

F1 chose stories for self-development to get more clarity about the world and herself.

F1: I liked the short stories about teenagers in the UK. It's different from what we do here.

B4: *I've learned many new words that I've never seen in our books such as 'yep-nope, dude'.*

Students' answers show that they were interested in knowing what was happening contemporaneously, and not what is written about in textbooks that were compiled without considering the interests of today's youth. Authentic and modern videos and the stories that language coaches used, allowed students to explore topics that they loved and stories that engaged them. T1 noticed that students are interested in discussing the similarities and differences between English and Ingush culture and traditions. She commented: "*The use of authentic materials stressing relationship*

between language and culture seems to me the most adequate means of teaching a foreign culture since it develops a sense of language".

T1 may have observed, after examining the level of student engagement, that the development of appropriate communication and mutual understanding with native speakers entails a certain level of socio-cultural competence, which includes knowledge of the background of the country studied as well as the relevant language units as they relate to national and cultural characteristics of the national culture.

Possibly, students can acquire a new language and develop language skills better if they understand and are interested in what they read, watch, write or hear. A similar point of view was expressed by other teachers. T3 commented:

T3: Videos and stories from language coaches are about children of their age and everyday situation. Perhaps, this is what they want to know and hear.

5.3.4 Enjoyment

Five students stated that they preferred the way language coaches explained topics and therefore they remembered more of what they had discussed.

F1: *I think Diana explains more clearly than our teachers.*

F7: *Diana explains things through videos or experiments and I so enjoy it.*

B3: *Dave virtually brings us to many different places every time.*

B1: *I know, as soon as Dave demonstrates us something, it's going to be my turn. He says: 'Your turn'. I always want to surprise my classmates and it's always interesting to hear what they have to say.*

Possibly, the methods that the language coaches used for explanation worked better for F1 and she felt that the online teachers explained the topic in a more detailed way than her Ingush teachers. For B3, language learning began to seem like a fantastic adventure. Perhaps the native-speaker language coaches found some inventive ways to push students to use their target language in any way they enjoyed and liked. Therefore, students stopped being passive participants in their language classes and began to engage more actively.

B7: *Lessons with coaches are so interesting. I feel we just started five minutes ago and it's fishbowl time already. Dave says to write a question on WhatsApp about today's topic, which means 40mins already* (he whistles*) and I even didn't notice* (he made a funny surprised face).

B7 found lessons with language coaches and their methods so interesting and engaging that he even lost a track of time. Language coaches significantly inspired students to participate in challenging learning tasks, such as engaging in activities like WhatsApp-based fishbowl discussions. Fishbowl conversations can serve as a means to disseminate information and encourage dialogue among participants, directing the collective attention of the entire group. This technique facilitates language learning and improves communication skills by allowing students to actively participate in discussions, observe others' interactions, and provide feedback. It provides a structured and interactive environment for practising language skills, promoting fluency, and fostering a deeper understanding of conversational dynamics.

5.3.5 Pronunciation

Some participants with an interest in music listened to songs by popular English-speaking artists on YouTube focusing on the music and rhythm rather than language and pronunciation. They did not watch English-language films, and English was not utilised outside the classroom. Before the introduction of online language coaches, these students also did not actively practice language skills. They mentioned a lack of experience in conversing with native speakers, which limited their exposure to English pronunciation. However, they expressed a strong appreciation for the pronunciation of the language coaches. B4 was excited about new words and native speakers' pronunciation.

B4*: I like how Dave says "Yep" and "Nope"* (imitates Dave's pronunciation with a stress on the letter 'p'). *I hope my pronunciation became a bit better.*

 B3: *If I won a lot of money, I would buy a Ferrari.*

I have noticed that he tries to imitate Dave*.*

MA: Let me guess, are you imitating Dave?

B3: Yep, mate, If I won a lot of money, I would buy a Ferrari, a house, and golden earrings for my mum (He imitates Dave again. We both laughed).

Possibly, B3 concentrated on his pronunciation and communication skills and did not pay enough attention to reading and writing as the results of his tests did not indicate any changes in these skills (see Figures 11 and 12).

B7: *When no one can hear me, I repeat recordings from WhatsApp. I like the way they sound. I try to find an English movie on YouTube and maybe I watch it.*

F6: *The way language coaches speak is different from our teachers. I couldn't understand a word at the beginning. Now I know that's how an English person speaks. I wish I could sound like them.*

The schoolteachers' primary focus was on presenting language structures, and as a result, they did not arrange activities that encouraged students to engage in spontaneous language production.

T2: *I don't have time for speaking activities as I must deliver grammatical aspects and prepare the students for English exams.*

T1: *We have a strong Russian accent in English and don't have experience in speaking English. That explains why students were confused and couldn't understand native speakers.*

5.3.6 Grades and Other Motivations

Students within the focus group reported a heightened motivation for learning English. The academic achievements of the two students particularly fostered their interest, with their excitement being more about their improved grades than their actual progress in language proficiency:

B5: *This learning was fun and different. I didn't speak English in class before. Nobody really did. I can speak a little bit of English now and I'm glad I've got a '3'.*

F7: *I want to pass exams with better grades.*

Possibly, some students sought to improve their language knowledge not only because they were interested in communication with native speakers, but also

because grades were important to them. Good grades are important because they give students an indication of their academic strengths, interests, and ability to learn new things and as a pathway to status at school and success in later life, as T2 stated:

T2: *Grades are important at every step from getting admission to good colleges to getting a decent job to succeeding.*

F3, F5, and F8 were motivated by their interest in a topic or by their drive to succeed or in the completion of their tasks, and it helped to develop students' listening skills.

F3: *I love listening to new teachers' recordings. Now my listening is better than it was before the online course.*

F5: *I like Diana's stories. There are about students, schools, food, and English traditions. Very interesting. After that, it is easier to do the listening test.*

F8: *I listen to recordings before I go to bed and early in the morning. I understand what they are talking about.*

B7, however, had a more personal reason for his interest in English. He wanted to improve his skills to communicate confidently with his cousins living abroad:

B7: *They know three foreign languages, and I don't know even one! I want to speak English without them making fun of me.*

English was often seen by students as a valuable tool for international communication, offering opportunities for future travels:

B1: *With English, I can travel anywhere and converse with people.*

This sentiment was echoed by F2, who saw mastering English as a key to both global communication and academic opportunities:

F2: *Speaking English well and getting good grades could open doors to studying at a prestigious university abroad.*

Post-course feedback from students like B2 and F6 reflected an increase in both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for learning English with the new teaching format:

B2: *English has become really important and enjoyable for me.*

F6: *It was an amazing experience. I've never been as involved as I was in these last two months.*

In summary, the students' remarks post-course revealed a significant positive change in their motivation towards learning English.

5.3.7 WhatsApp Practice

When asked 'How do you believe your learning changed when you used Zoom/WhatsApp?', B7 answered:

B7: *I think I texted and I read in these seven weeks more than in the last two years. I've learned a few interesting new phrases.*

After seven weeks, B7 became more fluent in his writing. Possibly, this happened because the student widened his English vocabulary and was motivated and interested in interacting with others via WhatsApp chat. WhatsApp groups could be an effective environment for students to get extensive practice not just in the classroom but also outside the classroom.

The use of WhatsApp facilitated more active participation in group activities among students. This was highlighted in their comments:

F3: *I'm able to record my answer and listen to others' recordings as many times as I need. Often language coaches are online, and we can discuss anything as a group at once.*

B4: *I feel that we are together with WhatsApp chat. It makes the tasks much easier. My listening skills are definitely better now.*

F8: *I still don't understand a lot of what language coaches say but I'm much better at it than I was before. I try not to miss a word. It's easy with WhatsApp because I can listen to recordings later at my place, but difficult with Zoom.*

F3 listened to the recordings on WhatsApp many times as she liked the native speaker talking and was interested to understand every word of the recording. Most of the students perceived that their listening improved because they listened to recordings on the closed WhatsApp group.

Some of the students stated that they did not completely understand the sound recordings. The students' English level was mixed, but the recordings for the online course were the same for all the students; therefore, that might explain the reason why some of the students found them too difficult.

Like F3, F8 also listened to the recording in her own time. Conceivably, extensive listening outside the classroom could improve the students' listening skills.

B3: *Dave advised me to plan, practise, record, and upload.* (While B3 speaks, he bends his fingers counting from one to four. I see how he tries to imitate Dave and use his exact words). *I practised a lot before I uploaded anything.*

Possibly, B3's speaking skills improved considerably because he rehearsed many times before he recorded himself.

B1 and B4 noticed significant changes in their spoken English practice. Initially reluctant to speak in class, they experienced a shift during the course. They became more confident and willing to express themselves, as B4's comment illustrates:

B4: *I lacked the confidence to speak English initially because I never practised it much, and I wasn't fond of how my voice sounded. However, practising with the language coaches gradually built my confidence and gave me more experience.*

Most students identified learning English through Zoom sessions with native speakers and participating in WhatsApp groups as being more beneficial than conventional teaching methods. These digital platforms were especially helpful in enhancing their listening and speaking abilities. The interactive and immersive nature of these tools offered a more effective approach to language practice compared to traditional learning methods. B2 shared their preference for WhatsApp, valuing the flexibility it offered:

B2: *WhatsApp is better for me because I can listen to recordings whenever I want, unlike being limited to just the class time.*

B1 also expressed satisfaction with his improvement, finding that interacting with native speakers via Zoom encouraged him to focus more on his studies to improve his communication skills. He noticed a notable improvement:

B1: *There's been good progress. I'm happy they understand me now, and I understand them. In the first few lessons, I used a lot of hand gestures and stuff to get my point across* (he laughs, showing some of the gestures) ... *but after I started recording my voice for homework, it got way easier to just talk without using my hands.*

5.3.8 Feedback

Incorporating WhatsApp group chats into the assessment process introduced a novel aspect, as it enabled both students and language coaches to exchange immediate, constructive feedback in English. Within the scope of this study, three students highlighted the importance of feedback as a critical post-activity process that fostered a sense of community among them. They showed keen interest in obtaining feedback from language coaches, not only on their own work but also on their peers', recognising this as a significant tool for their linguistic advancement. For example, B6 commented:

B6: *I liked that language coaches recorded their feedback for each of us. I listened to feedback for other classmates and tried to avoid their mistakes.*

Furthermore, the students attributed part of their progress to the prompt and constructive feedback provided by the language coaches. The feedback received by students, as evident from their comments, was not only informative but also motivational, encouraging deeper engagement and a more diligent learning approach:

F2: *I really liked Diana's feedback shared in our group chat. It feels like we are one family.*

F5: *Diana always being like 'well done' and telling us 'you could do even better' was really inspiring. It made me want to keep getting better and better each time.*

5.3.9 Shyness and Fear of Mistakes

Overall, students observed a notable boost in their self-confidence concerning language learning. They shared insights into their initial experiences, highlighting feelings of shyness and discomfort, especially when it came to making mistakes in front of native-speaking teachers:

F1: *Every lesson language coaches asked me questions. I made so many mistakes, but they praised me for any answer. This helped me to overcome my fear of mistakes.*

T1 and T2 indicated that they noticed how language coaches encouraged students to participate even if they gave an incorrect answer. The Ingush teachers indicated that they also encouraged their students to participate in and engage with the Zoom lesson and WhatsApp recordings.

T1: *There is no problem if you make mistakes because "we learn through mistakes"* [this is Diana's phrase]. *It's okay to make mistakes.*

T2: *I know some of you don't like speaking in class, so you have a great opportunity to record your voice and upload your answer.*

Students were motivated and spent more time than usual reading, listening to WhatsApp recordings uploaded by language coaches, completing given tasks, and recording their voice messages. Additionally, students enjoyed listening and imitating pronunciation from WhatsApp recordings or Zoon lessons, which expanded their vocabulary. Later, students were able to activate new vocabulary quickly and use it in their writing. For example, B5 managed to start conversations in English as he had significantly expanded his vocabulary.:

B5: *…and instead of simple 'Hello' I prefer saying 'What was the highlight of your day today?'*

B2 did not like speaking English in front of their classmates and teachers. Shyness could be a source of the problem in students' learning activities in the classroom, especially when they were asked to practise speaking in class. Communication with language coaches has helped improve those students' self-esteem.

B2: *Speaking in class, usually, makes my mind go blank and I forget what to say and then others start laughing. I'm no longer as timid or anxious as I used to be. While I may not be able to express everything, I can now communicate to some extent. Diana and Dave always support and encourage me to speak.*

Students, who initially felt shy or uneasy about speaking in front of others, began to gain more confidence, showing a willingness to embrace the challenge and make an

effort. B2 shared that his confidence had grown, particularly evident in his improved presentation skills:

B2: *Diana asked me to do a small presentation about my dog. I was really pleased with how it went and my performance; I didn't expect to feel that confident.*

It is possible that confidence is not directly linked to actual proficiency in the English language. Nonetheless, this heightened sense of confidence could lead students to use English more frequently, which in turn, might enhance their language skills over time. Additional remarks from the students also demonstrated how they overcame their initial shyness and observed enhancements in their speaking abilities. This progress was not just in their confidence levels but also in the overall quality of their spoken English:

B3: *I don't like speaking when many people can hear me, but it wasn't nice to stay silent when foreigners ask you something. In the first lesson, I felt so shy but now I can do small talk.*

In conclusion, the focus group of students perceived notable progress in their English language abilities following the online course. They observed improvements in their speaking skills, particularly in fluency and pronunciation. Most of the students deliberately practised their pronunciation and fluency imitating the accent of the native speakers and incorporating new vocabulary into their speech. The students highlighted a lack of opportunities for practising spoken English in traditional classroom settings. Before the course, classroom activities primarily focused on language structures rather than free language production. The online course, however, provided them with ample opportunities to practice English beyond the classroom, particularly through voice recordings. While preparing these recordings, students engaged in repeated practice, refining their ideas and pronunciation before sharing them in the secure WhatsApp group.

In terms of writing skills, students sought innovative ways to express their thoughts and reported increased writing practice during the online course. Furthermore, there was a discernible correlation between the time students dedicated to practice and both their self-assessed progress and actual improvement in language skills. This underscores the effectiveness of the online learning environment in enhancing students' English language proficiency.

The incorporation of online lessons boosted student engagement and interaction in the focus group. This not only facilitated improved speaking and writing skills but also fostered a more dynamic and participatory learning experience compared to traditional classroom settings. The students particularly valued the feedback they received from language coaches within this online setting, finding it both fascinating and instrumental in enhancing their language proficiency. This feedback, coupled with the novel learning methods, contributed significantly to a marked increase in their motivation for learning English. The unique opportunities for practising pronunciation, fluency, and writing skills in the online course and the encouragement and guidance from coaches were key factors in the students' overall language development and increased enthusiasm for English learning.

5.4 Human Interaction

Human interaction, as described by Rodina (2019), encompasses various aspects such as interconnectedness, influence, support, exchange, and the formation of social ties and relationships. This represents just one dimension of social interaction within the educational process.

5.4.1 Sociocultural

The majority of the feedback indicated that students perceived the course as enjoyable, innovative, and stimulating:

F1: *These two months were the best time of my life.*

F2: *It was different from our daily routine.*

B3: *In the beginning, it was difficult because we had to keep up with conversations, but before we usually did exercises from our textbooks.*

Students greatly appreciated the novel teaching approach, expressing a desire for its extension over a longer duration. B1 remarked:

B1: *The course was incredible and productive, yet it felt brief; I wish it could have lasted longer.*

Students perceived that the online language training had not only improved their English language skills but also given them a broader perspective on the world. Before it was necessary to travel to learn something about other cultures, and other languages, or make friends from a country far away. In the opinion of both Ingush teachers and students, video conferencing in the classroom has become an advantageous educational tool for learning the English language and interacting with a person from another part of the world. Teachers shared their thoughts about how online communication with native-language speakers affected students' worldviews.

T3: *The Zoom meetings with language coaches are an invaluable experience for students. These live lessons with English native-speakers immersed students in English and integrated them into the system of national culture, ensuring direct access to the enormous spiritual wealth of the people of another country.*

T4: *I observe that communication with English-native-speaking professionals increases the level of mutual understanding and interaction not only between the instructors and students but also between the students themselves. This helps to overcome national cultural centrism and increase the level of humanitarian education, which includes not only the English language and history of the UK but also the native language and history of Ingushetia.*

McAuliffe and Milliken (2009, p.119) explained culture-centrism as a tendency for individuals to judge people of other groups, societies, or lifestyles according to the standards of one's own in-group or culture, often viewing out-groups as inferior. In this context, T4 raises an important point since 99.8% of the population of Ingushetia are Ingush (Introduction 1.1). The dominant religion in Ingushetia is Islam. Therefore, communication with people of different nationalities, cultures, and religions is an important factor that might help to overcome national cultural centrism. Communication with the online teachers modified the worldview of students. In the beginning, it was important for them how they were dressed, but after a few lessons students realised that the content of the lesson was much more important than clothing choices and fashion. Students also considered the fact that they had different traditions, perceptions of the world, and religions.

F6: *At the first lesson I was uncomfortable with Dave because I concentrated on his appearance. Now I know I was silly. He knows a lot and he is an interesting tutor. That matters. Actually, his T-shirt is okay because he is not here, and he is catholic.*

B7: *I was sceptical at the beginning. I thought the teacher should be dressed* formally*. I've been silly. The main thing is that the lessons are cool.*

Students also noticed the difference in the norms of behaviours, for example, the etiquette of making conversation:

F5: *Discussion is a difficult part of the lesson because we usually don't discuss anything with teachers or older people. Usually, they ask and we answer the questions. And usually, the shorter the answer, the better. But it was different in these lessons.*

Possibly, F5 found the discussion part difficult because, in Ingushetia, students must be silent in class and can answer questions only after permission. Also, in Ingush culture, younger people may not be permitted to speak unless spoken to.

B2: *I am happy that we had lessons with Dave and Diana. By the way, we are similar in many ways. I think, even the word 'Ingush' sounds like the word 'English'.*

B1: *Like in Ingush tradition, after greeting a person the British also ask 'How are you?'. I wonder what else we have in common. I would love to be able to discuss it with Dave and Diana. I Googled it but couldn't find much.*

F3: *What I found interesting is if you meet someone, you answer positively to the question 'How are you?' at the beginning of the conversation, as we do. In Ingush tradition, we also say that everything is going well, even if it isn't at the moment.*

F1: *I thought that British people are weird because of the phrase 'To take English leave' that we use if someone leaves without saying goodbye. Diana explained that the British follow the rules of etiquette. I and Fatya Googled and found that this phrase appeared during the Seven Years' War of 1756-1763. In it, the main opponents were England and France. We told it to Dave and Diana. They didn't know. At that point I felt important and that I, too, could do something useful. By the way, the English say goodbye exactly as the Ingush do. We have so much in common.*

As can be seen from the words of F1, at some point she felt herself a significant member of the group, which increased the student's self-esteem. These discussions with students were linguistically and culturally responsive. Students were interested in knowing about similarities between themselves and English language coaches. To find out more and understand another culture better, F1 and B1 were motivated to use additional resources. Interaction with language coaches helped students accept people from different races and ethnicities for their uniqueness and taught them how to accept beliefs different from theirs. Such tasks/activities, where students can read and discuss traditions, are not included in their class books/lessons.

F6 liked her lessons and found them interesting. Such lessons motivated her to study. Perhaps, in turn, F6 wanted to tell language coaches something that might interest them, so they could consider continuing their online classes.

Language coaches used the target language (TL) throughout the lesson resulting in more TL use for the students. Although English was available via the media, perhaps the classroom was the only place where learners were able to use the language themselves. Language coaches maintained a good relationship with students and created a classroom setting that supported expectations of TL use. However, the schoolteachers preferred to use the students' L1 to explain and organise a task in order to simplify their understanding of the material.

T2: The extent of TL use affects students' target language improvement. Yes, I make them read and write in class. Actually, with native speakers, students don't have a choice and they have to use English to be able to interact. I am glad that students enjoy speaking English though it takes a lot of effort from them.

T1: I use Russian and Ingush languages to give instructions and clarify the issue.

L1 may be useful at the beginning and at low levels when students have little or no knowledge of the TL. However, the use of L1 to teach TL could be discouraging in language classrooms. Also, from students' comments, they enjoyed communicating in English and seeing their progress. Additionally, the improvement in language skills is demonstrated in Figures 11-14.

F6: *In every lesson with Dave and Diana I learn something new and interesting. In the last lesson I talked about some of our traditions they might find remarkable. They liked it. I hope they continue their lessons with us.*

Following the conclusion of classes, an online session took place where the coaches expressed gratitude to the students for their commitment to language learning and their adherence to instructions. In return, the students conveyed their appreciation for the "unforgettable experience" and the "engaging lessons", expressing a desire for similar future classes. Every student highlighted that they would "miss online meetings and discussions with language coaches". They shared their enthusiasm about the effectiveness of the classes and asserted that, in their perception, their English proficiency had significantly improved. The exchange of gratitude and positive sentiments left a lasting and positive impression on both parties. Schoolteachers also expressed their appreciation, noting that they gleaned valuable insights from observing how language coaches conducted lessons and interacted with students. In an unanticipated result, the parent committee's representative conveyed appreciation to the language coaches for their assistance in English education. Furthermore, the representative relayed feedback from other parents, reporting that their children happily shared their school learnings, engaged with class materials with enthusiasm, and found the new learning experience enjoyable.

5.4.2 Communicative

To facilitate task completion and promote the use of the target language (TL) in class, language coaches implemented the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. This involved interacting exclusively in the TL and assigning tasks that encouraged students to speak and collaborate in groups. For practising speaking, language coaches used video materials and presentations and did not use exercises from the textbook.

School teachers acknowledged students being fully involved and interested in learning English through conversation with language coaches.

T3*: Interaction with native speakers allows students to quickly get used to the sound of speech, prevents the appearance of a language barrier, or, as I've noticed,*

eliminates it with time. Students are active in the lessons. They enjoy communicative tasks and try to be involved in the conversation as much as they are able to.

Teachers' further comments indicate that they learned some new teaching methods from language coaches. Also, they described them as more knowledgeable because the language coaches were native speakers and language experts in comparison with schoolteachers.

T3: *I think that what language coaches did is the communicative method, as their teaching was aimed at developing the ability to speak spontaneously on various topics. These lessons were useful for me as well. Only the English language was used in the lessons with coaches. In contrast, our lessons, let's say 90% of the lesson is conducted in Russian, and the rest is reading and translating texts from the textbook.*

T1: *Regarding speaking skills, I believe communication with native-speaking teachers is much more effective for students. Moreover, it's good language practice for me as well.*

T4 comments suggest that observing native-speaking coaches' teaching process improved their professionalism as teachers do not develop their knowledge and skills exclusively on their own:

T4: *The language coaches used modern authentic resources. This increases students' interest in learning by making lessons interesting and close to reality. Interaction with native speakers is a positive contribution to improving teaching and learning not just for students but for us, teachers.*

During the lesson observation, I noticed that T4 and T2 started the use of YouTube videos in English in their lessons. This might be an indication that this experience would impact the teachers' practice going forward.

F7 reported different experiences when interacting with her schoolteacher compared to the language coaches:

F7: *It's different with Diana and Dave. They always say 'You continually improve. Well done' and I feel that I'm doing well and could do better next time.*

She highlighted how anxiety about making mistakes hindered her ability to engage in discussions with her schoolteacher. This indicates that shyness and the fear of

embarrassment were significant obstacles to her participation in discussions with Ingush teachers. F7 explained:

F7: *I preferred this course because I often get nervous speaking with my schoolteacher. Perhaps it's because she's Ingush too, and I feel more self-conscious about making mistakes.*

Students could see the benefit of having access to native speakers and reaching the stage that allowed them to get comprehensible input from the real world:

F5: *I like the way they speak and look (smiling). I like that we discuss different and relevant topics and not those strange texts from our books.*

School teachers agreed that teaching language for communicative purposes, by involving students in using the interactive approach and promoting collaborative learning, made a positive contribution to improving Ingush learners' ability to speak English for everyday purposes. Despite these beliefs, T1 and T2 said that they did not use such an approach in their own practice due to several obstacles and difficulties. Firstly, they believed that it would be too time-consuming in the class with a large number of students; and secondly, they were concerned about the pressure of the exams. Additionally, T1 stated that she concentrated on teaching grammar and believed that the use of CLT does not involve teaching grammar; therefore, she preferred to use GTM in her teaching rather than the CLT approach.

T2: *I believe it is very important and good for students to have this opportunity to interact with native-speaking teachers. The approach the language coaches use is most likely to improve students' performance on exams. Native speakers can have spontaneous conversations and make interaction useful and enjoyable. In turn, communicating in English for everyday situations increases students' confidence. I have a problem related to the number of students, so I would like to use collaborative learning, but I don't have as much time.*

T1: *I need to cover certain grammar, and specific types of texts, and prepare for exams which is a priority and more important. However, collaborative learning is good and effective as additional learning, and I can see a huge advantage in working together with language coaches for both students and teachers. Perhaps, we need to find a "golden mean" between the communicative teaching method and traditional.*

This response indicates that to help the students to achieve their aim of passing the exam, T1 focused on ensuring that they could master the grammatical rules rather than using the target language to communicate.

The interviews clearly presented that the teachers were unwilling to use communicative strategies in class, although teachers understood the potential benefits of CLT for the students. T1 stated:

T1: *I am not able to give all students equal opportunities to practise their skills and use the interactive method in teaching.*

Her concern was echoed by T3, indicating their dilemma, as they endeavoured to be fair regarding the amount of attention each student received while recognising that interactive practice for the students in a more learner-centred environment might lead to more fluency and confidence but less individual attention. Because of the teacher-centred ethos of the classroom culture in the school, this caused them some issues. T3 mentioned that learners who lack personal attention will have little motivation to speak English.

T3: *I don't have time to talk to every student and some of them stop being engaged in class activities.*

It is commonly understood that students' lack of confidence usually occurs when they realise that their conversation partners have not understood them or when they do not understand other speakers, such as in the situations described by F1 and B2. Therefore, they preferred to keep silent while others talked, demonstrating that the students lacked the confidence to communicate.

F1: *I didn't communicate in English with others before. I start enjoying speaking English even if I make mistakes. Diana easily understands me and paraphrases what I want to say. I am happy with my progress.*

Overall, the students were pleased to participate in the course and content with the progress they made during the two months of Zoom lessons with native-speaking language coaches. However, B5 expressed dissatisfaction with his own progress in English, attributing it to not taking the course seriously from the start:

B5: *I didn't try hard enough from the beginning as I couldn't believe that all this is possible.*

He also conveyed his intention to dedicate more effort to studying and practising in the future:

B5: *I hope we can have more communication lessons with native speakers.*

In summary, students perceived classes with native speakers as new, interesting, and challenging at the same time. They were happy to communicate with language coaches, performed tasks, and prepared interesting presentations in English. Students believed that they had improved their English. Some developments in students' English skills were also confirmed by tests that were carried out before and after the online course. Teachers also confirmed positive changes in the students' knowledge, behaviours, and attendance. Teachers also observed that the students were actively involved in communicating with the language coaches. Moreover, they noticed changes in the worldview of students and in their own. Additionally, teachers reported that these classes helped them understand other methods of teaching to improve the quality of their lessons.

The language coaches used the CLT approach and schoolteachers described it as an effective method. Moreover, the students' responses endorsed that this style was effective and enjoyable for learning English in the classroom.

5.5 Negative Aspects

While the course was generally well-received, some students did raise concerns, particularly regarding data usage and limitations:

F5: *I don't have the internet at home, and I can use my phone only. I worry that I wouldn't have enough data.*

B1: *I am afraid I might exceed my data allowances.*

Issues with slow internet speeds and occasional lack of connection due to electricity problems were also evident among the students:

F8: *I experienced some difficulties. The internet is often slow where I live, and sometimes we completely lose connection because of electricity issues.*

Unexpectedly, even students who encountered difficulties with their internet connections expressed satisfaction and viewed these challenges as opportunities for enhancing their learning and putting in more effort. For instance, B1 shared their approach:

B1: "*I stopped watching YouTube on my phone to manage my data usage. I used my dad's one.*"

This demonstrates B1's dedication to improving their learning experience despite internet challenges.

B6, B7, and F7 reported irritation and frustration with the whole group work process. They stated they would have preferred to study with students who were at the same level, especially in speaking and listening activities.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

The present research aimed to explore and answer the following questions:

1. How do the use of Video Conferencing Platforms (VCs) and social networks (SNs) affect English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' Language Acquisition (LA)?

a. To what extent do students think VCs and SNs support or limit language learning?

 b. How do teachers perceive the value of VCs and SNs to improve English Language Teaching (ELT) compared to traditional methods?

2. What perceptions do teachers have about the opportunities and limitations associated with implementing the CLT approach in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes?

3. What impact did the interaction with native-speaking language coaches using CLT, VCs, and SNs have on students' English proficiency?

The main purpose of this chapter is to review and discuss the major findings of this study in the context of the literature and theoretical framework. This study is significant because it provides current information about English language learners in Ingushetia. Specifically, it sheds light on the nature of students' engagement with learning a second language (L2) in terms of their interaction with and learning from native-speaking language coaches from the UK through implementing CLT via VC (Zoom) and SN (WhatsApp).

6.2 Implementation of CLT

The current spread of English is closely associated with the acknowledgement of the language as a world *lingua franca*, and as a means of international communication, it is a very convenient way to communicate with representatives of different countries (Mzhelskaya, 2017, pp.58-61). In Russia, such exceptional spread is often attributed to the social, cultural, and economic prestige afforded to English speakers. This presents itself in a variety of domains such as education, the workplace, media, entertainment, advertising, creative, and identity sectors (Lazaretnaya, 2013, p.8). According to Lazaretnaya (2013, p.8), in Russia, English is used as a foreign language and, more broadly, as a *lingua franca*, and serves as a language of expression of national and cultural identity, including such local varieties as Russian English, Runglish, and/or Ruslish, depending on the level of proficiency of its users and the situation involved. In 2017, the Russian Ministry of Education announced it was aiming to improve English teaching by September 2022 (MESRF, 2017).

Notwithstanding the intention of Russian Ministry of Education to foster better English language skills in Russia, there are certain barriers to achieving this aim. Meirbekov and Begaidarova (2021, pp.204-210) believe that the problems of Russian teachers and students lie in poor knowledge of spoken English and in teaching methods that fail to foster motivation to learn English.

One of the qualitative aspects of this research probed Ingush EFL teachers' attitudes toward the principles of CLT. The results suggest that these teachers hold positive attitudes towards CLT and are convinced of the value of CLT in an EFL environment. This finding corresponds with that of previous studies conducted in different countries to investigate how and why instructors employ the CLT approach in EFL classrooms (Wahyuni, 2021; Pavlova and Sakharova, 2019; Almuhammadi, 2019; Zaikova, 2019; Rahmatillah, 2019; Passov, 2018; Prus et al., 2018; Banartseva, 2017; Garova, 2016). However, it is important to remember that the teachers in those studies agreed with the major principles of the CLT approach and already used these features in their teaching at schools to varying degrees, unlike those who participated in Ingushetia.

In the educational landscape of Ingushetia, as previously outlined in the Introduction, teachers predominantly employ the grammar-translation method (GTM), a traditional

approach emphasizing grammar and vocabulary with less focus on communication skills. As noted by Rubtcova (2015, p. 125), while GTM establishes a robust foundation for writing and reading abilities, it falls short of developing sufficient spoken language skills. This inadequacy is further echoed by Martazanova (2020) and Pavlova and Sakharova (2019), who argue that GTM alone is insufficient for comprehensive language learning. The interviews with Ingush teachers revealed a dichotomy: they recognize the limitations of GTM but feel compelled to adhere to it due to the pressure of preparing students for high-stakes exams. These teachers expressed concern that a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach might not equip students adequately for these examinations.

This situation underscores a significant challenge in implementing CLT within the current educational framework in Ingushetia. For CLT to be effectively integrated into the language curriculum, there needs to be a paradigm shift in the evaluation methods. The assessment of students' language proficiency would need to evolve to accommodate and reflect the communicative competencies developed through CLT. Without this change in testing methodologies, the transition to a more communication-focused approach remains constrained by the traditional exam-oriented education system. Therefore, the adoption of CLT requires not just a change in teaching methods but also a corresponding adjustment in the way language proficiency is evaluated in the academic context. This study also demonstrates that integrating the CLT approach alongside GTM improves students' language skills and, according to their class teacher T2, is "*most likely to improve students' performance on exams*". The GTM approach allows teachers to explain grammar and vocabulary and provide students a general knowledge about the language, while CLT enables students to also apply these meaningfully to develop broader language skills. The teachers came to this opinion after the results of the tests that the students took after seven-weeks of study with native speakers using the CLT approach. According to T4, the CLT approach "*increases students' interest in learning by making lessons interesting and close to reality*". A particularly important point is that after introducing CLT, the Ingush students researched recognised the language not just as a tool to pass their English exams but as a tool for international communication and for the natural processing of ideas and opinions.

The findings of this study, combined with Wahyuni (2021), Pavlova and Sakharova (2019), Almuhammadi (2019), Zaikova (2019) and Rahmatillah (2019), indicate that it is not necessary to move from a GTM to a CLT approach overnight, but that these approaches can be integrated and operate alongside each other to an extent. These findings may reassure teachers who are concerned that they cannot use or are not using CLT because of examination pressures. Therefore, what students stated about their perception of CLT in the classroom may well have implications for those attempting to implement this approach in Ingushetia as well as in other countries where English is taught as a foreign language.

The study also revealed some of the challenges that the teachers and students associated with attempting to use the CLT approach. The data analysis suggests that these difficulties could be categorised as pedagogical factors, CLT factors and educational system issues, based on their influence on the teachers and the students. These challenges are discussed below:

6.2.1 Pedagogical Factors

The results of the students' and teachers' interviews show that teachers play a vital role in implementing the principles of CLT. Furthermore, the results of the interviews suggest that communicative incompetence, lack of teacher training, and a traditional reliance on GTM-led methods hinder the implementation of CLT in the Ingush ELT classrooms. Moreover, a lack of training leads to an insufficient understanding of CLT. These results are consistent with studies conducted by Knodel (2019), Islam (2016), Ignatovich (2014), and Alseghayer and Zhang (2011), suggesting that teachers need better targeted teacher training in adopting CLT in EFL classes. However, training is not the only constraint: in contrast to the participants in the above studies, the participants in this study were teachers in a village school who worked in poorly equipped classrooms and with limited access to fast internet.

6.2.1.1 Teacher Language Experience

In the context of the extent to which they were prepared for a CLT approach, teacher interviews revealed that they had learned the English language by reading and

translating texts, and therefore, they taught children in the same way. Since the teachers graduated from the same schools, they were imbued with the same traditional approach. The teachers said that the main part of an English lesson was taught in Russian, except for reading texts and exercises. It is clear from the teachers' statements that they believed they could not conduct a lesson in English, as they themselves do not have enough conversational experience.

During the interviews, teachers revealed a significant barrier to implementing the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in their classrooms: their own lack of comfort and fluency in communicating in English across a variety of topics. This hesitancy and self-perceived inadequacy in language skills among teachers is a critical factor inhibiting the adoption of CLT, which emphasizes interactive and conversational teaching techniques. This finding is in line with Rubtcova's (2015, p.13) observation that not all educators entering state schools possess the necessary competence in a second language. The reluctance of teachers to employ CLT methods, therefore, can be partly attributed to their own limitations in language proficiency, underscoring a need for professional development in this area. Teachers need to be fluent in the language they teach (Karabaev, 2015, pp.50, 141). The ability to correctly form a verb and translate a word does not mean an individual can speak the language because the main use of language, as Martazanova (2020, p.21) highlights, is "to transfer thoughts from one mind to another". Therefore, without the introduction of words and word forms into consciousness, it is impossible to use the target language. Of course, in order to integrate the word into thought, teachers must speak fluent English themselves.

Teachers noted that they believed that their level of fluency needed to be improved. Indeed, the observations indicated that the teachers were, in fact, using English as a second language periodically, but in a limited manner. The target language was used mainly for instructions, for example: "Read the text on page..." or "Translate the sentence from Russian into English", but there was a problem with using the language conversationally or for more complex reasoning. The findings indicate that it is not the quantity of exposure to the target language (TL) that is important, but the quality of exposure. For example, giving students a glimpse of his real life in England outside of the classroom helped Dave form a connection with students. His personalised instruction piqued the students' interest, resulting in greatly enhanced effort invested

in comprehending the TL. A similar method was used by the other language coach. As a result, in just a few lessons, students made better progress than listening to schoolteachers' instructions and reading English texts during a long period of study at school.

Furthermore, since they have never spoken to or practised their English with any English speakers, the teachers themselves acknowledged that their pronunciation was not their strongest suit: "*This was a great experience not just for students but for us, the teachers, as we have never before communicated with native speakers*", commented T2. The only English that Ingush students heard, until the online study with language coaches, was short instructions from their teachers in class, which also did not help them improve their listening skills. It is through listening that many students are exposed to new language necessary for overall progress in their L2. From observations in the course of conducting the interviews, the students lacked language characteristics like intonation, natural speed, blurring of word boundaries, and the requirement that speech be processed in real time. Teachers in Ingushetia concluded that communicating with native speakers was of benefit to students and teachers themselves and demonstrated the need for this kind of training. One teacher observed that Zoom interaction with native-speaking language coaches "*is a positive contribution to improving teaching and learning*" (T4).

6.2.1.2 Student Language Experience

Class observations and students' interviews revealed that students were hesitant to communicate or convey their views in English because of their limited vocabulary, pronunciation issues and over consciousness of being criticised for making mistakes. Students explained that initially, they did not feel comfortable speaking with native speakers and that they found it difficult due to their lack of confidence in the grammar and vocabulary available to them. Many students commented that they felt more comfortable using the TL once they were accustomed to online interactions with the language coaches. This result was achieved by introducing a context that carefully helped to achieve the learning objectives and actively involved students in the learning process, making it easier for them to practise and complete their tasks. Also, learners were involved in the process of analysing learning objectives and learning outcomes.

Useful feedback was provided where students played an active role in improving learning during and after the lesson and optimising TL.

6.2.1.3. Textbooks

According to teachers, although the textbooks provided for their use had become more colourful in the last decade, the content had not changed much. The school had a developed methodology for teaching English and a set of textbooks with which they worked, in accordance with the federal state educational standard of basic general education (FGOS, 2021). From the observation of students in their lessons with the schoolteachers, I concluded that as a result, it appeared that the method of teaching using only these books was not stimulating, motivating or engaging for most students. They do not like to work with those books, especially if it is not well matched to their age, interests, and needs. Most importantly, it does not ultimately lead to the results that "*students would like to get after many years of studying the language*", as T1 mentioned. Unlike the resources provided by the language coaches, the textbooks used in Ingushetia are outdated and do not provide students with opportunities to discuss traditions or compare the lives of modern teenagers in different countries. For example, to find out more and better understand another culture, F1 and B1 were motivated to use additional resources. F1 said: "*I and Fatya googled…*" and B1 commented*: "I googled…"* As a result, students found a lot in common with their culture and shared their discoveries in class. The students simultaneously learned many new words and phrases, which in turn increased their English language skills, especially speaking (see Fig.14).

Using additional resources, interacting with language trainers, and watching videos and materials shared by language trainers sparked students' interest in language learning. B7 concluded: *"The main thing is that the lessons are cool".* It helped students to accept people of different races and nationalities because of their uniqueness and taught students to be tolerant of beliefs other than their own. F6 said: "*At the first lesson I was uncomfortable with Dave because I concentrated on his appearance. Actually, his t-shirt is okay because he is not here, and he is catholic".* B7 also shared his opinion: *"I was sceptical at the beginning. I thought the teacher should be dressed*

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formally". These quotes indicate that even in an online interaction, students gained an insight into a different cultural approach to teaching.

The language coaches provided authentic materials that corresponded to the topics in the textbooks for effective communication competence to accommodate learners' communicative needs, a concept supported by the research of Zaikova (2019), Ulyanova (2018), Garova (2016), and Richards and Rodgers (2001). This body of research underscores the idea that incorporating authentic materials into language education enhances students' motivation, interest, and communicative skills, ultimately leading to improved language proficiency. The need for effective communication competence and improved language proficiency among learners resulted from the artificial repetition of words and grammatical structures in textbooks, the absence of logical and grammatical connections between sentences, the crude content, and the lack of any appeal to students' interests. By contrast, the language tutors online teaching took an informal and even colloquial approach to language teaching, which was matched by the informality of the way they presented themselves and where they taught. Dave, for example, taught in the street, shop, garden, or while walking his dog. Of course, this freedom of action was facilitated by the fact that the classes were held online. This suggests that perhaps it is possible to combine the possibilities of online and technology with textbooks and thus upgrade schoolbooks to be produced to align with that approach.

The way that English is taught in schools in Ingushetia is not aligned with current practices elsewhere due to a number of factors, not the least of which may be the textbooks. F1 commented about schoolbooks: "*Our textbooks are about Marilyn Monroe or ordering lunch in restaurants. These texts are not interesting at all".* Students should find their textbooks engaging so that they are entertained and captivated by the cognitive process at the same time, forming their own ideas about the world and coming to their own conclusions about it and themselves in the world.

F1's comment led to the consideration that modern textbooks should be designed to engage and empower students in their learning journey, promote critical thinking, and facilitate access to a variety of educational resources. The goal of education is not just to impart knowledge but also to inspire intellectual curiosity and critical thinking. This concept aligns with the educational philosophy of Vygotsky, which emphasises the

importance of social interaction and cultural context in cognitive development, suggesting that learning is an inherently active and exploratory process. Vygotsky believed that effective education should not only provide information but also stimulate students' desire to explore and understand the world around them (Vygotsky, 1978). In line with F1's vision, the objective is for students to view textbooks as interesting and engaging tools that not only entertain but also stimulate their cognitive abilities. This approach aims to encourage students to develop their own perspectives about the world and form independent conclusions about their place in it, thus promoting a sense of ownership in their learning journey.

The insights derived from F1's perspective have led to the contemplation that modern textbooks should embrace a diverse and adaptable approach to presenting subject matter. This approach is seen as instrumental in fostering the development of unique educational journeys for each student. It underscores the importance of equipping students with the skills to exercise autonomy in their learning, make informed choices, and actively seek opportunities to enrich their educational experience. Therefore, it is suggested that textbooks should be designed to accommodate variable presentations of subject content, catering to individual learning styles and preferences. The textbook should provide the opportunity for group, pair, and individual work for students, as well as the ability to go beyond the scope of the textbook, integrate educational material from the textbook with educational material from the internet (more authentic resources). Each student must have the chance to discover themselves, to express themselves, and to ask questions. As a result, exercises in textbooks should allow for an interactive component; to do this, students must also be connected to the internet, which they can access using a variety of devices, including smartphones. As a result, they would be able to access innovative materials. However, the study recognises the practical challenge of internet access, particularly in regions like Ingushetia, where consistent connectivity remains an issue, necessitating further exploration of equitable educational opportunities. This problem will be discussed below in section 6.2.2.1.

Given that the textbook is designed for use by teenagers, special consideration should be given to this group. For example, the findings show that the lives of teenagers in other countries piqued the interest of the students. T3 observed students at the lessons and said: *"Videos and stories from language coaches are about children of their age and everyday situation. Perhaps, this is what they want to know and hear."*

This became evident as the students asked the coaches questions about teenagers' lives in England. They wanted to know what interests and hobbies English teenagers had, what they did at school and what they preferred to do in their free time.

In order to comply with the new Federal State Education Standard of Russia (FSES, 2022), which was discussed in the Introduction (1.1), students must learn to build a dialogue, compose a monologue, and perceive and understand an authentic text by ear. Therefore, the emphasis is on communication skills. Thus, for the development of students' educational and cognitive activity, the textbooks should clearly show on what basis conclusions should be drawn; the texts should contain guidelines for unfolding the narrative, "hooks" that allow students to understand a train of thought: "Let's imagine ..., think ... what conclusion can be drawn... ", and in the tasks students can describe the situation and ask questions, such as: " What conclusion can be drawn from…?", "How did you come to your conclusion?", "What knowledge do you lack?", "How did you reason?"; "What knowledge did you rely on when drawing conclusions?", "Could it have been thought differently?", "What happens if you do this and that?", "Let's analyse the consequences. If they are negative, how to avoid them?". Additional tasks for independent criteria development and object evaluation from the perspective of students could be made available. These tasks could be for students to independently develop criteria and evaluate the object from their perspective.

Integrating interactive online textbooks and online CLT may be a suggestion for future research since the work on updating textbooks to reflect the widespread changes in teaching methods that occurred during the period of COVID-19 was not the aim of this study.

6.2.1.4 Training

In addition, the findings from classroom observations suggest that teachers should change their emphasis from lecturing to learner-centred teaching, from being a classroom controller and knowledge provider to being a facilitator and mentor. Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Richards (2006) highlighted that CLT instruction requires teachers to embrace the role of facilitator and be responsible for creating opportunities

that stimulate communication. It was noticeable that teacher talk did not empower students or allow them to share responsibility in the learning process. However, when language coaches acted as facilitators, then the focus was on the facilitator-learner interaction and both parties had equal responsibility, as was carefully planned by the language coaches. F1 commented: *"I felt important… I, too, could do something useful".* Planning activities in this way, which gives students more participation rights, provides an opportunity to take more initiative and thus take responsibility for their own learning. When teachers adopt such a position, in which they interest the student and encourage them to find new information, helps students to master the language, since it is authentic speech. As can be seen from the words of F1, at some point she felt herself a significant member of the society, which increased this student's self-esteem. Students also mentioned the difference between lessons with language coaches and schoolteachers *and* spotted that language coaches' methods were *"especially interesting and engaging"* as B7 said, so that he even lost track of time. *"I feel we just started five minutes ago",* he said. B1 commented: *"I wish we had similar lessons before".*

All of the above points indicate that teachers would benefit from teacher training in adopting CLT and improving their fluency in the target language. Lack of CLT training has been reported to be a key barrier to implementation in the classroom in research studies, and much research suggests that EFL teachers should receive CLT training to enhance their instructional strategies (Knodel, 2019; Passov, 2018; Banartseva, 2017; Islam, 2016; Ignatovich, 2014; Alseghayer and Zhang, 2011). The findings of this study indicate that to make CLT more integrated into their approach, Ingush teachers required assistance from native English-speaking teachers. The teachers expressed their opinion that communication with language coaches was in some ways a substitute for the training in authentic English production they had not received in their own schooling or teacher training. T3 said: "*I think that what language coaches did is the communicative method, as their teaching was aimed at developing the ability to speak spontaneously on various topics. These lessons were useful for me as well".* T1 comments demonstrated a similar attitude*: "Moreover, it's good language practice for me as well".* Training with native speakers, who were familiar with this method and had experience using CLT in their lessons, benefited teachers in many ways: they

were able to learn a new teaching methodology from more experienced colleagues while also improving their language skills.

Evidence gathered during this study suggests that CLT and an English proficiency improvement course taught by native English speakers could realistically take place online, which is a crucial tool for today's knowledge and education exchange for teachers. So that they can successfully incorporate ICT into their daily practices, Ingush teachers need to improve their ICT skills. This finding is consistent with other research studies that have expressed a favourable opinion of teacher technology/ICT training (Shugal *et al.*, 2023; Robbins, 2022; Le, 2018; Sami, 2018; Bista, 2015; Hue and Ab Jalil, 2013; Dang *et all.*, 2012). Teachers who took part in this study, however, lacked both training and access to the school's internet. Obstacles related to the quality and availability of technology/internet required for successful integration in the EFL classes are discussed in 6.2.2. However, both teachers and students were able to use their smartphones and mobile data. Despite the teachers' positive evaluation of digital technology, T1 shared their worries that phones could be used inappropriately in the classrooms. T1: "*I wouldn't be so sure that students are not messaging friends, cheating, or on social media*". It is vital that training providers and schools think carefully about what IT skills their teachers need. Training is needed to ensure all teachers can use essential IT software efficiently and effectively. ICT training for teachers should equip them with the knowledge needed to make the best use of the internet and technology in a safe, considered and respectful way, so teachers and their students are able to reap the benefits of the online world.

Igna (2019, p.25) stated that numerous components of formal and informal education systems have changed as a result of the growing use of web-based digital technologies. This effect is most noticeable to language learners and their teachers because conversing with someone, when you are not in the same room as them, is not always easy. In order to integrate CLT into the classrooms learning, I conducted this inquiry using technology. Teaching remotely clearly presents significant challenges for language educators, who are looking to build conversational fluency to equip their learners to use their language skills in the real world. That being the case, more training on how to integrate CLT and technology use would be beneficial for teachers. Without the proper understanding of CLT and use of technology, it can be challenging to ensure that everyone stays on task, speaks in their target language,

gets a fair chance to speak, and that there is a true two-way interaction. This is in addition to obvious challenges such as variable internet connectivity and poor sound quality (Serhan, 2020; Kotula, 2016).

CLT makes it possible to use the internet for learning to communicate and building intercultural understanding, as demonstrated by this study. This implies that a CLT approach via the internet has the potential to advance the study of foreign languages. Additionally, authentic materials are more easily produced via the use of technology, as this study has demonstrated. When teaching a foreign language using the communicative language teaching (CLT) method, the focus is on enhancing the students' knowledge and experience by teaching communication, information transmission, and information perception. The use of the internet in this approach is justified as it motivates students to learn and offers real-world examples and authentic materials. Language coaches combine traditional teaching aids with a variety of materials that are relevant and interesting to students. By combining CLT and internet resources, students are better prepared to use the language in authentic situations outside of the classroom, such as when travelling or interacting with foreign visitors. This approach also promotes intercultural competence by familiarising learners with different cultures and helping them develop the necessary skills for effective communication and mutual understanding.

Overall, this training would benefit not only teachers but also administrators, schools, and students overall, enhancing teaching and the educational system as a whole, because competence in English opens up access to a wealth of other resources useful to students in areas such as science, technology and culture.

6.2.1.5 The Golden Mean

In the interview, teachers discussed that "*the goal of our language learning process is to enhance the students' ability to communicate*" in TL. According to T1, teachers should find a middle position, *"a golden mean between the communicative teaching method and traditional"*.

According to Klikova (2021), in Russia, teachers continue to rely on GTM because it is still the fundamental method of training language specialists in universities.

Observations revealed that English courses are based on grammar topics that are analysed with the help of a deductive approach and taught through rules and translation exercises. Translation, with a wide use of a multilingual dictionary, was used in the class as the most important method for semantisation. The main principle of working on this method is that it relies on the teachers' and students' native language.

Numerous studies have found that the CLT technique encourages students to communicate in the TL for regular teaching and learning activities (Tadzhudin, 2022; Tran, 2022; Zakharova *et al.*, 2020; Litvinko, 2019; Toro *et al.*, 2019). In fact, the main objective of the CLT approach, which the language coaches effectively applied in their course, is communicative competence, which is simply utilising the language rather than analysing it.

I noted that all the Ingush teachers of English I observed used textbooks as their primary teaching tools, and there was no instruction based on authentic resources. The teachers predominantly used GTM and, as Sanjaya (2014, p.60) commented, "there is no instruction using the authentic material" in this approach. In this situation, learners did not acquire the target language in a social learning environment and were therefore unable to apply or implement their English language skills in the social or everyday setting.

In comparison, language coaches replaced the "boring" (according to the students) study of languages from an outdated textbook by using engaging and authentic material within a CLT approach to make the students familiar with and understand the real context of the subject being taught. As T1 commented, this is "*the most effective means of teaching a foreign culture since it develops a sense of language*" that corresponds to the tasks of teaching foreign languages in modern society, which is to teach language for the purpose of communication. This approach motivates students and has a positive impact on learning, as could be seen from students' comments. For example, F6 commented: *"I've never been as engaged as I was for the last two months",* and B2 said that learning had become fun*.*

Language training using CLT places a strong emphasis on communicative skills (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011, p.14). The language coaches from the UK demonstrated that the purpose of language acquisition is to engage with others by

utilising what has previously been learned, not memorising the rules and methods for reading and writing short phrases. Students' feedback and test results after just seven weeks of study supported the notion that communicating with native-speaking language coaches made learning English substantially easier and faster. This was made considerably simpler by modern communication capabilities, which allow anybody with a smartphone and internet connection to utilise video conferencing (VC) software to find a native speaker anywhere in the world and practise speaking the language.

By contrast, GTM requires the students to analyse the language rather than use it functionally, whereas the CLT method, as Larsen-Freeman (2011, p.115) stated, has the students use the language rather than analyse the language. Therefore, this research shows, based on teachers' and students' perceptions, test results and students' performance, that the combination of CLT with those who speak the TL fluently, and GTM, with teachers who can explain the nuances of the language clearly in L1, enhances students' language performance and motivation. Alternating L1 and L2 can be an effective teaching strategy when used consciously to advance students' TL proficiency using L1 as a reference point, and thereby helps build knowledge in the TL.

At the end of the study, both the GTM and CLT approaches had become familiar to Ingush teachers. They recognised that each method had its own set of advantages and disadvantages. After careful consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches, the Ingush teachers reached the consensus that a fusion of GTM and CLT principles would likely yield the most favourable outcomes. This combination was seen as a strategy to enhance language proficiency levels, especially in an environment like Ingushetia, where opportunities for practising the target language (TL) outside of the classroom are scarce. This conclusion was drawn from the analysis of test results conducted before and after the 7-week course, as well as from the teachers' firsthand observations of how the introduction of lessons with language coaches influenced student performance.

The study's findings suggest that these principles and the utilisation of a balanced approach can offer valuable guidance for language educators seeking to introduce

and sustain TL education while creating a dynamic learning environment that mirrors authentic linguistic communication.

Regarding the role of native or first-language speakers in language education, it is indeed crucial to acknowledge their potential contributions, including authenticity, natural language use, intuitive grammar and cultural insights. Nevertheless, the selection of teaching methods should be contextually driven and consider the specific needs and challenges of learners in diverse settings. Therefore, the choice of methods should align with the context and educational objectives within each unique educational environment as the condition, context and social culture in each of the countries is different.

6.2.2 CLT Factors

The teachers' comments made during the interviews make it clear that they thought their equipment and resources available in their classrooms were insufficient for communicative instruction. The following factors were revealed through interviews and classroom observations as those that teachers associated with the opportunities and limitations associated with implementing the CLT approach.

6.2.2.1 Digital Technology and Internet

The findings of this study underscore the role of technology in enhancing the learning process and fostering collaboration among students, teachers, and language coaches from various geographical locations. This aligns with Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning, which emphasizes the significance of social interactions and the involvement of more knowledgeable individuals in cognitive development. In line with Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the study demonstrates that interactive learning through platforms like Zoom and WhatsApp enabled students to work collaboratively, with teachers and language coaches serving as facilitators within their ZPD. This collaborative environment allowed students to engage in tasks slightly beyond their current capabilities, promoting cognitive growth.

Furthermore, the study aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis on social interaction as a crucial driver of cognitive development. By encouraging students to interact, share

ideas, and exchange work through shared documents, the study facilitates meaningful discussions and feedback, supporting Vygotsky's principles of social learning. Additionally, the utilization of shared resources and technology parallels Vygotsky's view that learning is influenced by cultural tools and resources. This approach expands students' learning environments and provides them with additional resources for cognitive development.

Overall, the study's findings reflect the principles of social constructivism associated with Vygotsky's theory, suggesting that knowledge is actively constructed through social interactions. By leveraging technology to connect students and educators across different locations, the study reinforces Vygotsky's belief that social interactions are integral to cognitive development and learning.

However, the main problem with using technology in the village is the lack of the necessary equipment for the vast majority of students, which includes personal computers or laptops. Consequently, there is little opportunity to communicate with the teacher through various Video conferencing software (VC) such as Skype and Zoom, which makes it quite difficult to study independently and analyse educational material or use Social Networks (SNs) such as WhatsApp, Viber, VK and others.

The rural school where the research took place needs new computers. Today, 350 students study in this school in two shifts. Recently, the school had access to the internet installed, but the bandwidth is only sufficient for five computers to connect to the worldwide web at the same time. There are not enough funds or school premises for more, and children have to stand in a long queue to access the internet. "*There is no Wi-Fi, the internet is very weak. There are few computers here and they are weak*" the students complain. According to the results of the questionnaire, the situation in the city schools in Ingushetia is slightly better (see fig1 and fig.2). Given this disparity in internet access, Ingush students living in rural communities have fewer opportunities to use digital technology than students in urban and suburban counterparts. Unstable and weak internet connection or complete lack of internet in rural areas that cause problems with technology integration into the learning environment have already been discussed in many studies (Powers *et al.*, 2020; Le, 2020; Le, 2018; Li, Perrin and Duggan, 2016; Li, Snow and White, 2015; Gosper *et al.*, 2014; Wang *et al.*, 2014; Sundeen and Sundeen, 2013). It is noticeable that students in this study not only had

issues with the internet but also had very limited access to computers and laptops both at school and at home, while students in the studies cited above had access to the computers, laptops and iPads at school and at home.

I found that the school lacked appropriate facilities to enable the adoption of CLT. From the observations and teacher interviews I found that only board and markers/chalk were provided by the education authority and there were no technological teaching aids in the language learning classrooms. Therefore, it is critical to modify the classroom to better accommodate teachers and students as technology develops and becomes a bigger part of daily lives. Technology can be an extraordinary tool to amplify instruction when it is current and user-friendly. In fact, according to a CompTIA research study (2021), 84% of American schoolteachers said they used the internet on a weekly basis to find interesting material to teach their students. Consequently, any type of learner can be engaged with any subject because of the nearly limitless resources that technology can provide, such as images, videos, and games. This is especially useful because teachers are able to use these resources to lighten their workload, since they are already overworked (Kolesnikova, 2019).

The requirement set forth by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation for comprehensive Wi-Fi access in schools presents an ideal scenario where students can utilize their phones or tablets to access additional knowledge, courses, and study materials. This policy aims to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to learn and expand their knowledge, as highlighted by Kravtsov in 2021. However, the reality in Ingushetia's schools, as observed in this study, starkly contrasts with these expectations. Despite official claims of widespread internet availability in all villages, in practice, internet connectivity is restricted only to specific reference points. The study participants noted that the IT equipment in schools was scarce and the quality of the internet connection varied significantly. In fact, typically only the district infrastructure in the village, along with an accounting department and a few outdated computers in the ICT room, have reliable internet access. As teacher T4 remarked, the quality and speed of the internet connection are also subpar. Consequently, this situation severely hampers students' ability to effectively engage in online studies, thereby undermining the policy's intention of equal learning opportunities for all.

There are both externally imposed factors and internal factors that affect the quality and availability of the technology required to successfully integrate ICT into English language classes. Internal factors, such as lack of IT training, were discussed in 6.2.1.4. Externally imposed factors, such as the problem of access to the internet of educational institutions in rural areas can be divided into several cases:

• Firstly, the internet to the rural school is of poor quality.

• Second, the internet had reached the school, but an extensive network did not go through the school. Perhaps the preference is given to low price, not quality.

• The solution to solving all the above problems of internet access and technological equipment is better funding of rural schools. According to Aksenty (2022), the price difference for internet access at speeds of 8 Mbps and 100 Mbps is quite noticeable, and for the Ingush school investigated there would need to be completely different funding than the amount that rural schools now receive from the budget.

Reliable internet must first be introduced to the village in order to create the conditions for students and teachers to have an adequate learning process that is in step with the times. Only after a dependable internet connection is installed at the school can the following steps, such as a different level of involvement and interest from teachers, students, and the environment, be discussed. Despite these difficulties, a partial solution is to rely on the students' own data using mobile technologies. The school facilitated online study through the adoption of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), with students utilising their mobile phones for learning purposes. The specifics of mobile-assisted language learning and its application in this context are elaborated on in the following section.

6.2.2.2 Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

There is no question about the relevance of using mobile technologies; they are required by life, and a contemporary student cannot imagine their existence without a mobile phone, computer or internet (Shugal, Bondarenko and Varlamova, 2023; Lotova, 2022; Sarka, 2022; Troshina and Verbitskaya, 2015). Therefore, modern teachers must effectively and competently integrate mobile devices into their teaching process.

The unexpected findings that point to the successful integration of mobile phones/smartphones in ELT despite several obstacles help make this research study unique. During interviews, the teachers spoke of wanting to use those devices because they could see the progress students were making through using them and some of them highlighted that they observed activity in participating and improving knowledge of lower attaining or shy students. As the interviewee T3 said: "*I believe some shy or weak students would improve their learning if we had included mobile devices earlier.*"

It is possible that what stopped teachers from attempting to combine technology based CLT teaching and their traditional GTM approach in their lessons to a greater extent was a fear that they would not be able to manage or control how students used their phones in the classroom. T1 shared her concerns: "*I wouldn't be so sure that students are not messaging friends, cheating, or on social media*". T3 suggested class management training as a solution to the problem. The research shows that teachers are generally amenable to the idea of incorporating MALL techniques into the classroom. However, they frequently believe that they lack the skills necessary to implement such practice, so training programmes are required (Lai and Hwang, 2015).

T3 spoke of how she doubted that B2, who had previously not participated in the lessons, would take part in a WhatsApp chat. However, when she asked him to upload a recording about himself in his free time, B2 did so later the same day. Moreover, figs. 11 and 13 show that B3 improved his writing and listening capabilities by participating in mobile learning. At the same time, this result implies enhanced B2's motivation (discussed below in section 6.3.2). This demonstrates that learning a foreign language using a student's mobile phone can help with linguistic abilities like academic writing. Alamera and Khateeb (2021), Ali and Bin-Hady (2019), Kartal (2019) and Karpinski (2018) are a few of the many researchers who have written on how integrating technology in the classroom might help students become more critical thinkers, articulate themselves more clearly, and write more academically.

Many researchers, such as Lotova, 2022; Troshina and Verbitskaya, 2015; Avazova and Ermetova, 2017, have found that mobile devices trigger students' interest in learning, widen students' knowledge and understanding deeply, improve interaction between students and teachers, and provide flexible teaching courses. This was

confirmed by interviewees within this study. For example, B1 said: "*It's easy to send videos and audio files, leave a voice message, and more*". F4 commented: "*I really enjoy participating in our group chat*" [via mobile phones/smartphones]. T4 described how use of mobile devices increased interactions between students: "*…messaging is unstoppable. I can see that students enjoy doing tasks through technology*".

The use of personal devices, as students could not use computers or the school internet, helped make the integration of digital technology with existing CLT teaching strategies. Internet connectivity was also less of a problem because teachers and students were able to access the internet via their smartphones rather than relying on the weak Wi-Fi network at schools. When students can use their cell phones in class, they have access to technology. An advantage of allowing students to use their own mobile phones/smartphones is the opportunity it provides teachers to integrate digital technology and select the most appropriate materials in their teaching process. For example, teachers can use authentic materials, videos, games, information sharing and receiving, tests, and any other tools the internet offers. Online resources include many e-books and essential course materials. If students have access to these resources via their smartphones, schools, notably those schools with minimal funding that are situated in rural areas as the school in this study, may be able to avoid financial expenses by forgoing the need to buy necessary supplies, such as printers, paper or ink. More significantly, by providing less paper materials to their students, teachers will have a more positive impact on the environment.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to using mobile phones in language education. The advantages are:

First, the main goal of education is to prepare the student for real life (MES of Russia, 2017). Mobile phone communication is one of the most important and real aspects of modern life. For this reason, using a mobile phone to work in a classroom meets the needs of a CLT approach to teaching English while also providing students with valuable technological experience and skills, as the use of communication channels online itself creates the illusion of the complete reality of what is happening.

Second, using mobile phones is a great motivating learning tool for students (Dabbagh *et al.*, 2019; Sami, 2018; Karpinski, 2018). Educators can experiment with those tools and monitor how well they aid in students' academic growth.

Thirdly, it works effectively for the practice of speaking. Students in this study practised before sending an audio chat message. They tried to make the speech correct, with the correct intonation and pronunciation. F3 said: "*I can record my answer and listen to others' recordings as many times as I need".* Everyone was able to speak at the same time; this is also a simulation of real life, where there is no artificial silence of the audience. According to B4: "*I feel that we are together with WhatsApp chat".* This aligns with the social constructivist approach, according to which learning is the process of acquiring skills and enhancing knowledge within a community. Mobile learners achieve social learning, influencing each other via social interactions and online communities, and engaging in teacher-student and peer-to-peer collaborative learning, which play a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of human learning describes learning as a social process and the origination of human intelligence in society or culture. He emphasised that "all the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.57). The extension and augmentation of human interaction is empowered by digital technologies and the internet, which are increasingly diffused throughout the entire field of human activity (Nechaev and Durneva, 2016, pp.3-9). Digitally networked spaces create new forms of community in which people can connect anytime, anywhere, to anyone and to almost any information (Rubtsova, 2019). Consequently, our social community and the way we function in it have changed due to the increasingly digitally networked state of the world. Although most of these arguments apply to the society as a whole, they are equally applicable to more specific network formations, such as those formed for this study. The participants' community of learning was greatly expanded by online tools and this allowed students to encounter native English speakers, from whom they were able to learn more and faster. F3's response: "*Often language coaches are online, and we can discuss anything as a group at once"* demonstrated that social learning takes place when students with joint interests form groups, share ideas, and find solutions. Therefore, the mobile phone is an exceptional social tool that can improve collaboration between students, teachers, and the larger learning community because it can synchronise communications and foster social interaction.

Fourthly, in the interviews, students reported that by going online they were able to find a lot of information they need in a lesson on their phone: check spelling, find the

translation or meaning of a word or phrase, and pick up synonyms or antonyms. Such searches are especially effective in improving skills if they are done in the TL (Sami, 2018).

Another advantage is that students are accustomed to using their phones/smartphones, often more than with computers. Figure 1 shows that 84% of the students had access to smartphones; in the focus group, 100% of the students possessed smartphones, which they used every day for various purpose. Students were easily able to connect their devices to cellular networks so that they are always online (Bouchrika, 2023; Gao *et al.*, 2019). Desktop computers/laptops, on the other hand, require a Wi-Fi connection in order to access the internet, which the school does not offer, as discussed in 6.2.2.1. Therefore, personal mobile phone ownership can be especially beneficial in classrooms that do not have enough tablets or computers for each student, as was the case in this study.

One more compelling argument for using mobile phones in the classroom is that they give students control over their learning. For example, students decide what information to share, save, upload or use for recordings (Bouchrika, 2023; Karpinski, 2018; Lopez-Fernandez *et al.*, 2017). Despite the fact that T3 advised B2 to upload a recording within two days of their lesson, the student completed the assignment on the same day. He undoubtedly made his own choices and took charge of his education, and this demonstrated the student's motivation and interest in the subject matter, which is covered in section 6. Other students' comments, such as F6's: "*I like to record myself on WhatsApp when I have free time*" or F8's: "*I listen to recordings before bed and early in the morning*" also demonstrate that students had control over their education.

The use of mobile phones during the English class was very popular with the students. They referred to the language coaches as "cool" and their lessons as "interesting". The use of mobile phones and internet in this study is already connecting students with mother-tongue L2 speakers, improving the quality of education and preparing them for the future. These few examples represent only the very tip of the vast iceberg of new teaching and learning opportunities made possible by mobile devices. The potential of mobile phones becomes clear when they are recognised as powerful computers in students' pockets (Willings, 2023; Lead and Yoon, 2022). Educators can

take advantage of the fact almost all students have mobiles and not every school would be able to afford to provide all of students with that level of technology.

There are also some disadvantages that could appear, such as:

Firstly, students have access to a range of different mobile phones and therefore the question of social inequality may arise.

Secondly, not all students have unlimited data mobile phone plans, which they can freely use. For example, B1 shared her anxiety about breaching her data limit: "*I am afraid, I can exceed my data allowances*". Therefore, in order for students to study and complete projects, it is crucial that they have access to unlimited data at school.

And finally, there are a variety of games and SNs services available on phones. As a result, there is always a strong temptation for students to get involved in unrelated activities. There should not be any issues if the level of discipline is adequate and learning motivation is high. The first step is for the teacher to define the specific purpose of teaching and plan how and at what point in the lesson to allow students to use the phone, and for what skill: speaking, listening, reading, writing, or some combination of the four skills. However, it is essential that the infrastructure is made secure, that e-safety standards are in place, and that the instructors are taught and confident about how the mobile devices may be used to enrich their curriculum before anyone begins to use their own mobile device in school (Bouchrika, 2023; Willings, 2023; Lead and Yoon, 2022).

From the above, it is obvious that there are compelling reasons for English teachers to be adaptable when addressing current challenges by effectively integrating digital technology/mobile devices in their classroom teaching.

6.2.2.3 Examination System

English is included in the list of compulsory subjects in the Russian secondary education system. The main goal of teaching and learning English at schools in Ingushetia is reduced to passing the State Final Certification (known as GIA) or final Unified State Exam (EGE) examinations.

The teachers in this study noted that examination does not involve much listening or speaking. Consequently, teachers focused on reading and writing in accordance with the content of the syllabus. Students also explained that there was only limited focus on practising speaking and listening skills in their lessons, and they were driven to improve their reading and writing skills in order to achieve good grades in exams. Hence, it is not surprising that the examination format is a barrier to CLT adaption. Le (2020), Almohideb (2019), Albadry (2018), and Islam (2016), to list just a few, conducted research that corroborates this conclusion. They discovered that teachers concentrate on reading and writing abilities while focusing on the assessment technique. True communicative competence is not created as a result of exam-oriented study.

This study uncovered a notable imbalance in language instruction in Ingushetia, with teachers primarily emphasising reading and writing skills aligned with the assessment approach. This focus on exam-oriented study fails to foster true communicative competence. Additionally, the study's results highlight a contradiction between the examination methods used for English language proficiency and the fundamental objective of foreign language education, which aims to develop communicative skills. In reality, among the four key communication activities, students' abilities in listening and speaking were found to be the least developed. Listening, along with speaking, provides the opportunity to communicate in a foreign language. Since verbal communication is a two-way process, the underestimation of listening, that is, the perception and understanding of speech by ear, can have an extremely negative impact on the language training of schoolchildren. The statements of students that they sometimes do not understand the questions addressed to them confirms the fact that the understanding of speech in a foreign language must be taught purposefully. Generally, the situation is similar in the whole country, because all state schools must follow the federal state educational standard of basic general education (FGOS, 2021).

It was clear from the interview data that teachers taught only the skills tested and actively prepared students by practising with past papers. The teachers claimed that language testing played a significant role in their language teaching and learning process. Consequently, they taught in an examination-focused way, adapting their teaching preparation to match the exam objectives. Furthermore, under the strong influence of the exam, teachers were unlikely to emphasise knowledge and practices

that could be adopted for real-world language use. T1 highlighted that her goal was for learners to do well in exams: "*I need to cover certain grammar, and specific types of texts, and prepare for exams...*"   Dmitrieva (2017) and Sorokina (2017) also described how teachers were under pressure to help their students pass the exams because of the examination-oriented system in Russia.

 Proper use of standardised tests can provide educators with important information to support and improve the educational process (Murtazin, 2023). The problem arises when these tests turn into something more than just an educational tool and become its main goal. The main problem in the GIA/EGE is that it deprives students of the ability to think independently and freely express their thoughts. Creativity is very much limited by the results of the exam. The exams do not reveal the individual qualities of students, especially in the field of humanities. It follows that students and teachers are encouraged to follow standard algorithms, instead of awakening the power of imagination and curiosity. Educational standards must be revised to meet the demands of the modern world, in which it is much more important to think systemically, to know and understand the relationships between phenomena. Coaching for the exam does not contribute to this. Students should develop an understanding of the subject and the ability to apply knowledge according to the 3C principle: creativity, communication and critical thinking.

The desire to pass exams encourages students to focus on learning specific skills likely to be used in the exams, such as reading and writing, and discourages them from learning English for communication purposes, which are not tested. T2 highlighted that she did not have time for speaking activities, and students generally had little practice speaking English. Consequently, in class, literacy skills were emphasised through exercises that included repetition, memorisation, reading comprehension, and grammar. Results showed that the perceived need for exam-oriented instruction and the focus on teaching and learning specific skills and sub-skills did not improve students' English proficiency as much as the CLT approach (see fig.15). In comparison to the control group, the students in the test group advanced more in their reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities after the seven-week online course, according to the findings. Test results from before and after the online course with language coaches show that all four language skills had improved in the test group. An important condition in development of listening skills is motivation. If the

listener feels the need to listen, this leads to the maximum mobilisation of their mental potential: speech, hearing, and even the sensitivity of the sense organs become stimulated, attention becomes more focused, and the intensity of thought processes increases (Martazanova, 2020, p.113). This, in turn, may confirm that the strategy employed by language coaches in this study increases the likelihood that students will perform well on exams without focusing solely on exam-passing techniques. Additionally, it boosts students' motivation and "*brings purpose to learning English*," as B1 said.

It could be noticed that, in Ingushetia and perhaps, in Russia as a whole because there are unified general education programs in schools, there has been a discrepancy between educational policy, that is, to encourage communication skills, which is discussed in Chapter 2, and the real situation that teachers of foreign language and students face in Ingushetia. Perhaps, the aims of educational policy in foreign languages cannot be reached until the focus of the skills examined is revised.

6.3 Motivational Changes

This research aimed to explore the impact of integrating Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) with the support of native-speaking language coaches using Zoom, within a Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) environment. Findings from the focus group discussions revealed that numerous students had encountered negative experiences in their previous English learning endeavours, leading to a diminished motivation for language acquisition.

In this study, students in the test group exhibited significantly higher levels of motivation to learn the language following the incorporation of CLT principles and their interaction with native speakers. This finding holds substantial importance, as motivation is widely recognised as a crucial factor influencing students' learning and academic performance (Silva, 2022).

To contextualise this motivation, it is pertinent to acknowledge the duality of motivation as identified by psychologists: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation stems from external factors, such as rewards or recognition, and in this study, it may have been influenced by the external stimuli provided through CLT and interaction with

native speakers. For example, students may have been motivated by the prospect of communicating with native speakers or by the recognition they received for their efforts, particularly through their use of WhatsApp as a language learning tool.

Conversely, intrinsic motivation arises from internal factors, driven by personal interest or the inherent satisfaction derived from an activity. It is plausible that the unique teaching techniques employed and the integration of WhatsApp in this study tapped into students' intrinsic motivation to learn English. These methods may have been perceived as engaging and personally fulfilling, thus fuelling their internal drive to excel in language acquisition.

By recognising the coexistence of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation within this study, I underscore the intricate nature of motivation and how it was influenced by a myriad of factors, including innovative teaching methods and the seamless integration of technology. This comprehension deepens my exploration of student motivation and elucidates the profound impact of the study's interventions on their language learning experiences.

6.3.1 Novelty

To clarify, the purpose of this study was not to investigate how novelty impacts student motivation, nor were new teaching methods implemented to enhance or alter student motivation. Instead, novelty was incorporated into the students' language learning process to assist in improving their English skills. To achieve this, native speaking language coaches were invited in to employ a CLT approach, which was novel at the school. Zoom was utilised to enable these language coaches to conduct classes, while WhatsApp was used interactively to further engage students in developing their language skills. Incorporating new technologies and innovative teaching methods in the classroom significantly contributed to student motivation. Moreover, the combination of these three factors created a positive learning environment. Novelty, as a strategy to promote better learning, can be applied to any aspect of education to make a positive impact on both learning and learners (Silva, 2022; Serdyukov, 2017).

Through online learning and meetings with language coaches who were native speakers and representatives of a different culture, Ingush students are exposed to a

new and unique (to them) learning experience. The use of personal mobile phones also added to the novelty of their learning routine. The study's results suggest that incorporating new/unfamiliar situations in the classroom can foster intrinsic motivation among students. The novelty in this study sparked the students' intrinsic motivation, as they were aware that their responses would not be graded in their school records, allowing them to focus on expanding their knowledge.

The course of study was improved by incorporating multimedia and real-life examples to present new material. This led to a moderate increase in student learning productivity (fig. 9 and fig.10). Incorporating CLT into the current teaching method has been found to be a beneficial addition, leading to measurable improvements in the academic achievements of students (fig.15).

In this study, the incorporation of digital technologies for online learning in classrooms and homework has altered certain aspects of education, including teaching formats and methodologies. Technology has consistently acted as a catalyst and a tool for progress in various fields of human activity (Serdyukov, 2017). Therefore, it is reasonable to anticipate that innovative measures such as technology integration can enhance the quality of teaching and learning. According to Accuosti (2014, p.5), technology has inherent value in education. While it can expand what teachers are capable of, it is not a solution to all problems, but rather a tool that innovative teachers and students can use. When incorporating technology in schools, it is important to consider not only the frequency of computer usage but also the purposes for which the computers are used. It is important to understand which technology tools can enhance learning in school subjects and how to use them effectively to improve student outcomes. Based on observation, there are two main challenges when it comes to incorporating technology (such as computers, mobile devices, etc.) in the classroom. Firstly, teachers need to have the necessary skills to effectively introduce these technologies (as previously discussed in section 6.2.1.4). This requires proper training and familiarity with the appropriate technologies. Secondly, the use of technology in the classroom must be based on effective pedagogy. The study suggests that teaching methods in the Ingush school still rely heavily on the GTM approach. Teachers interviewed were open to the adoption of a more CLT-based approach, but their lack of familiarity with the techniques and with spoken English, along with the focus of the examinations on grammar-based skills, militated against

new techniques that could meet the aims of educational policy. However, incorporating new complementary approaches and technologies, like using WhatsApp on mobile phones, could potentially improve student motivation and increase learning outcomes.

Mikhailichenko (2015, pp.160-195) found that actively engaging in problem-solving activities that interest people can promote their intellectual growth. It can be said that new experiences can both impact and be impacted by intrinsic motivation (Ng, 2018). In this study, the participants were initially interested in taking part and were intrinsically motivated. They became more creative and suggested new discussion topics that were not only beneficial to them, but also potentially interesting for coaches. At this stage, some students were intrinsically motivated and engaged in an activity because they enjoyed it and got personal satisfaction from doing it. For example, F6 said: *"I talked about some of our traditions in the last lesson they might find remarkable. They liked it. I hope they continue their lessons with us".* F6 and several other students aimed to make a positive impression on the coaches and be well-liked by them. This fulfilled their desire for novelty and enhanced their motivation to learn more. It stemmed from a desire to captivate the coaches' attention and ensure that future classes would follow the new format. The desire for novelty is the need to experience something that is different from the usual or has not been experienced before, as stated by Gonzalez-Cutre *et al.* (2016, p. 159). In this context, it is the perception of novelty that is examined, rather than the introduction of completely new stimuli. As a result, teaching and learning methods do not necessarily have to be objectively "new" if they are perceived as such by the students. Even minor changes to traditional lessons can increase the perception of novelty. Understanding what and how students have previously learned can assist the teacher in bringing novelty to their lessons. For instance, teachers can use Kahoot (a game-based learning platform) to summarise lessons or assess how well students have grasped a particular topic, instead of administering a regular test.

However, there were certain students who seemed to place more importance on their grades or exams (which are examples of extrinsic interests) rather than their actual learning (which is an intrinsic interest). For example, F7 mentioned: "*I want to pass exams with better grades".* Additionally, the teachers were focusing more on ways to improve the students' performance in exams. T2 expressed that obtaining good grades is crucial since they provide learners with insights into their intellectual capabilities,

inclinations, and aptitude for acquiring novel knowledge. By making small adjustments to classroom methods, such as incorporating quiz games or brief instructional videos, teachers can introduce a sense of novelty that boosts self-efficacy, motivation, and engagement among students. This can ultimately lead to improved academic performance. In the context of this research, it is evident that students made significant progress in their English language proficiency through their engagement with native-speaking language coaches who employed innovative teaching methods. The observed progress is well-supported by the data and outcomes of the study, which demonstrate a positive impact on student learning. However, it is essential to acknowledge that research findings are grounded in the observed results and data collected during the study period. While the evidence strongly supports the conclusion that students made substantial progress, the level of certainty surrounding these findings is contingent on the robustness of the research design, the reliability of the collected data, and the extent to which the results can be generalized to other educational contexts. Therefore, while the research strongly suggests a positive impact on student progress, it does not definitively establish causation and may not be universally applicable to all educational settings.

The CLT method and online learning with native speakers made lessons more realistic and engaging and enhanced the methods for acquiring information and developing skills. With online communication, students can hypothetically learn from any teacher in the world in real-time, visually, and on-the-go. However, while technology is a valuable tool, it is important to consider whether it should be the sole or primary source of student motivation, and whether it is reasonable to rely solely on technology. These points will be discussed in section 7.6.

6.3.2 WhatsApp

In the present study, WhatsApp was implemented to evaluate the extent to which the utilisation of WhatsApp, along with other comparable social networks, could be useful in CLT introduction for students' language learning. To do so, in the study, the WhatsApp group was created for group chats, text messages, voice recordings, assignments and feedback from language coaches. At the beginning of the course, students had not previously actively use WhatsApp, especially not for educational

purposes (see Fig.7). Consequently, as a result of the novelty it offered, there was an increase in student WhatsApp activity after the first few days. As such, it could be said that the use of WhatsApp was responsible for the increase in autonomous motivation of the students. This possibly affected students' improvement in reading, writing, listening and speaking, including pronunciation (Fig.11). Students had to read new articles and assignments that were shared on WhatsApp. They had to leave written or verbal answers and feedback on what they read or listened to. These requirements meant that before uploading their verbal response, students practised their speech until they liked how it sounded. B3 shared how he recorded himself: "*I practised a lot before I upload anything*". Specifically, this direct effect on the improvement of four language skills can be seen in Figures 11-14. Such independent work, when students were able to express their personal opinion and comment only on what they wanted to, gave autonomy to the students. Students could also do this work at a convenient time and in a convenient place for them. This increases student motivation, in particular autonomous motivation (Alamera and Khateeb, 2021). The findings of Ali and Bin-Hady (2019) indicate that students become more convinced of learning the target language (TL) because of their increased autonomous motivation with the use of WhatsApp. As a result, WhatsApp appears to serve as a language learning tool that increases the perception of autonomy, which in turn increases autonomous motivation. Language coaches in this study who used WhatsApp with students appeared to positively help students perceive a sense of enjoyment and see meaningful value behind the learning of the language. This interactive learning experience, facilitated by expert scaffolding, was discovered to be more effective than simply reading from a textbook. As per student feedback, textbooks and texts are "boring" and "outdated" for L2 learners. Comparing the test scores of the experimental and control groups, the experimental group shows better improvement in all language skills (see Fig.15). The significant change between the groups is consistent with the MALL theoretical foundation set by Chinnery (2006), as WhatsApp is an application of MALL, and the results reported by Betretdinova (2019) and Kartal (2019), who found that the use of WhatsApp in language learning settings contributes to the development of learners' autonomy, the reduction of their anxiety, and the enhancement of their reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Section 6.3.1 highlights the use of handheld devices like smartphones to facilitate communication and information exchange through SNs. This study highlights that WhatsApp can serve as an engaging and current source of

knowledge from around the globe. Several studies have found that other platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook are also beneficial for language learning (Bouchrika, 2023; Sergeykin, 2020; Onorin, 2019; Le, 2018; Williams and Whiting, 2016; Bista, 2015). These SNs offer interactive content through photos and videos, making them a valuable tool for educational support.

Language coaches used WhatsApp to provide more choices to explore language-related materials liberating students from a strict reliance on traditional textbooks. Importantly, the tasks assigned on WhatsApp were not subject to formal grading, providing students with a sense of autonomy, increased engagement, and an intrinsic drive to participate actively. Remarkably, even students who had previously been characterized as shy or lacking confidence demonstrated increased participation and reduced anxiety when engaging in WhatsApp tasks, reflecting a boost in their self-assurance. This approach proved to be advantageous for all students, promoting a dynamic and inclusive learning environment.

The students shared that they were interested in working together in the WhatsApp group. They said that it was especially interesting to receive voice or written feedback from language coaches. They worked harder to receive their feedback. This demonstrates that, while delivering tasks on WhatsApp, language coaches reinforced interaction among all group chat participants, which is an essential component to building up meaningful relationships between users. In fact, effective interaction requires social collaboration between teammates and instructors with the application of support for engagement across these parties in order to achieve such a relationship (Zadorozhnaya, 2017, pp.19-21).

According to Sergeykin (2020), Loposhuk (2019), Onorin (2019) and Le (2018) students who are regularly involved in social media tend to have better academic performance compared to those who are not active on social media. The use of WhatsApp for learning purpose was a new feature for students that they did not practise earlier. The students were eager to utilise WhatsApp to communicate with native speakers and chat with their peers in a group setting. They had a positive experience interacting with both language coaches and fellow students through the WhatsApp group chat on their mobile devices. The integration of WhatsApp into the learning process significantly enhanced students' engagement, for example, F3, B4,

and F8, in group activities. This technology provided a dynamic and interactive platform where students could actively participate in discussions and collaborative tasks. The immediacy and accessibility of WhatsApp allowed for more spontaneous and frequent interactions among students, fostering a sense of community and collaboration.

Students found that the app's features, like voice recording and instant messaging, made it easier to contribute to group discussions and activities. They could share their thoughts and responses in real time, offering a more engaging and responsive learning experience. This was particularly beneficial for those who might have hesitated to speak up in a traditional classroom setting, as the digital platform provided a less intimidating environment for participation.

Moreover, the ability to revisit recordings and messages on WhatsApp meant that students could engage with the material at their own pace, enhancing their understanding and retention of the language. This aspect was beneficial for language learning, as students could repeatedly listen to and practice pronunciation, intonation, and language structure, thereby improving their fluency and comprehension. The students exhibited excellent engagement, diligently completed all assigned tasks, and even went above and beyond what was expected of them. They were granted the freedom of choice, which came with the responsibility of ensuring the high quality of their work.

Overall, the use of WhatsApp represented a shift towards a more student-centred approach, where learners could actively shape their educational experiences, resulting in more effective and enjoyable language learning. These results indicate that SNs can be used as a motivator.

In summary, the results indicated that the use of WhatsApp increased students' motivation directly, perhaps because they felt that this implementation provided a new opportunity for enjoyment and interest in the language tasks that traditional teaching did not offer. The study results are currently in need as most institutes, during the COVID-19 pandemic, have shifted to distance language learning using VCs, SNs, learning management systems, and numerous instant messaging tools, for example, WhatsApp. For this reason, these findings offer educational institutions that are currently providing online learning, useful information about enhancing learners'

motivation and engagement. The results also provided a better understanding of the relationship between motivation and meaningful relationships in the MALL context. To increase students' positive feelings as a result of reinforcing the successful completion of challenges (competence) and the development of a sense of belonging and collaborative learning with others (relationship), instructors should diversify learning opportunities using SNs as an educational tool.

6.3.3 Human Relationship in Online Learning

One of the most inspiring, engaging and motivating aspects of the new learning strategies was the chance for students to interact with native speakers in real-time through Zoom. While students were aware that other schools were already utilizing technology devices, social media, and online learning, the idea of interacting with native speakers was completely new to them and made the experience unique. It was also unique that teaching happened at an Ingushetia school as part of compulsory lessons, not as additional learning.

One of the benefits of such learning is the sense of absence of physical boundaries related to geographical distances in the classroom, which allows teachers and students from different continents to engage in active social interactions for the purpose of language learning. B3 described in an interview how this special opportunity, made available by the internet and technology, allowed students to participate in a lesson in a classroom while simultaneously seeing the world of another person and another country: "*I'm here in the small village and, at the same time, I'm a part of the whole world*". In education, digital devices serve as valuable tools that enhance human abilities and expand the possibilities for educators. *"I wish we had similar lessons before. I wouldn't miss a lesson"*- B1 said, emphasising that he was especially interested in live communication with language coaches. Therefore, the individuals operating the devices and fostering personal relationships are indispensable to the learning experience.

No matter how advanced the educational technologies become, the human aspect of learning, specifically the learner and teacher, remains crucial. During the interviews, every student commented on how much they had enjoyed communicating with the language coaches. For example, F5: "*It's like a breath of fresh air. Lessons are fun*

and interesting now". Each student's intrinsic motivation was nurtured and consistently reinforced at a high level through emotional engagement in the learning process. As a result, student achievement and attendance saw a noticeable improvement. Therefore, as instructors incorporate these cutting-edge tools into education, it is important to keep in mind the broader context of human education in order to maintain its humanistic and developmental goals. By doing so, educators can maximise the effectiveness of these technologies. However, new technology can never be a replacement or substitute for the pedagogic relationship between teacher and student, it can only facilitate new ways of enacting this relationship. Community beliefs, identities, and students' lives outside the classroom (see the Introduction chapter) affect students' interest in, attitudes toward, and motivation toward learning; for example, learning English. The students who experienced online language instruction, especially those who had not previously had the same opportunities that many others take for granted, understood that they were not isolated from the rest of the world. They felt that they were part of a larger society and the global world, which gave them a sense of significance, meaning and motivation to learn about another culture, while at the same time engendering hope and perspective.

According to Ermekova *et al.* (2022), cultural beliefs and attitudes affect interactions and how education and learning take place. At the beginning of the online course, the students were less active in participating and communicating during the online lessons (Fig.7). As more interactions occurred, students developed impressions of the individual language coaches they encountered online, and their culture and community. For example, one of the language coaches delivered his online lessons from different places he happened to be going about his day, introducing the students to a real environment. He introduced his dog to the students, shared his hobby of gardening, and walked with them through the streets of his city. Real-life situations were utilised in online learning as the basis of learning activities to facilitate content acquisition and skills development, communication and collaboration, and to ensure that students maintained high levels of cognitive and emotional engagement. This practice aligns with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (SCT), in which he emphasises the influence of cultural and social contexts on learning, claiming that knowledge is constructed through social collaboration. The other language coach talked about the lifestyle and hobbies of young people of the same age as the test group in England

and they discussed the similarities and differences students found. Teacher-guided class discussions can be an effective way for teachers to provide a cultural context or reference for classroom material (Main, 2021). Vygotsky's SCT has far-reaching ramifications for classroom instruction. Teachers teach, support, and encourage students while also assisting them in developing problem-solving methods that may be applied in other contexts. Children learn best when they connect with others, especially more competent adults who can give assistance and encouragement to acquire new skills, for example, communication skills (Vygotsky, 1978, p.90). The application of Vygotsky's theory to online education expands the options for teachers, especially in teaching language.

Within two lessons, the students' online social interactions showed significant improvement. Such opportunities for the variety of lessons, facilitated by platforms like Zoom, created diverse learning opportunities that piqued the students' interest in exploring another culture and served as a powerful motivator for their English language learning journey. The school's teachers recognised that students were fully engaged and interested in learning English through online conversations with language coaches, which *"is much more effective for students",* as T1 commented. Quantitative data shows improvement in all language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking (see figs. 11-14). Additionally, the students conveyed their contentment regarding the progress they had made in language learning. For example, B1 said: "*There is a good improvement. I am glad that they understand what I'm saying, and I understand what they are saying"*.

Students had been learning English as a compulsory subject from the second grade, so for seven years. Prior to the online lessons the main goal of their English learning had been to get good grades and pass their exams. Such an approach, apparently, does not contribute very well to the development of speaking in the TL (see Fig. 9). On the other hand, during the online courses, the students developed an interest in the lives of English students, wanted to comprehend what the coaches were saying, asked questions, tried to contrast the cultures of the two countries, and attempted to discuss their own personal experiences. The quantitative outcomes show that this approach to language acquisition was more effective (see Figs. 9 and 10). The primary source of motivation to the students was the interest engendered in a person, their culture, traditions and attitude to life. By taking a socio-cultural approach, educators

can include a wider range of social issues for educational purposes, which can help students gain self-confidence and improve their interactions with others. When teaching foreign language communication, it is important to consider the sociocultural aspects. This means providing an opportunity for students to enhance their cultural awareness, which can increase their motivation to learn foreign languages. Ultimately, this can benefit them in their future professional activities and other situations where foreign language communication is necessary, rather than simply focusing on a narrow topic. During the focus group discussion, the students expressed their positive feedback regarding the changes they have experienced. One of the students, B3, mentioned feeling shy before, but now they felt able to engage in small talk and had noticed an improvement in their English-speaking skills. This approach promotes global cooperation and a deeper understanding of different cultures. Direct interaction with English-speaking language coaches sparked a desire to study the language. Over time, teaching students the grammatical rules and having them read about English culture had not been as successful as the online teaching proved (see Fig.15). Also, student claimed in interviews that English classes were exciting and that they attended every single class. Additionally, teachers observed an increase in attendance. T4 confirmed: "*The attendance is hugely improved*". A high level of intrinsic motivation was developed and constantly supported by the language coaches through the emotional involvement of each student in the learning process. As a result, student achievement and attendance saw a noticeable improvement.

The students were thrilled to discover a variety of intriguing terms and expressions that they had never come across in textbooks or heard before. For example, B4 said: *I've learned many new words that I've never seen in our books such as 'yep-nope, dude'*. While these examples may not always be appropriate speech for the classroom, it makes perfect sense for a native speaker to use such casual language and improves the students' grasp of colloquial English. This means that a teacher who has not engaged with native speakers or is not fluent in the TL, cannot teach colloquial language at the native level and consequently students never hear such expressions. Both classroom and online learning are subject to this disparity. This teacher may be superior in writing or grammar, but speaking skills are most likely lacking. The primary objective of studying foreign languages in school is to develop students' communicative competence in such languages, and their capacity and desire to

engage in interpersonal and intercultural dialogue in those languages with native speakers (FSES, 2019; MES of Russia, 2017). The sociocultural orientation of teaching foreign languages must be strengthened in order to accomplish this aim. Attention must also be paid to enhancing the cultural component of educational material and including students in intercultural discourse, which helps students become familiar with the culture of the nation where the language they are learning is spoken and fosters mutual understanding and a tolerant attitude toward the expression of a different culture.

The students' and teachers' interviews allow the identification of certain essential aspects of teaching foreign languages that are required for the effective implementation of communication in intercultural communicative settings. These are:

1.	freedom from bias in regard to representatives of a different culture,

2.	tolerance, and

3.	the ability to hear and listen to the interlocutor.

For Ingush students, who live in a mono-ethnic region and practice Islam, it was a bit difficult to see the commonality from the first meeting with the coaches. F6 said: "*At the first lesson I was uncomfortable with Dave because I concentrated on his appearance*". B7 had very similar feelings: "*I was sceptical at the beginning*", he said. Later, students discovered much in common between both cultures. As a result, interaction with coaches affected students' worldviews. Students became particularly curious about the topics and dynamics of their conversations with coaches. B7 shared his attitude: "*The main thing is that the lessons are cool.*"

Along with identifying differences, Ingush students also identified certain cultural parallels. This aroused great interest and became a serious incentive for the practical use of English as a means of communication with native speakers. The students were eager to tell as much as possible about themselves and some interesting facts they heard or read about England. Hence, they developed a motivation to study English on their own outside of school hours for the purpose of communication, which is the leading goal of teaching a foreign language (Eskaraeva *et al.*, 2021). Online communication with coaches, containing socio-cultural elements, helped to increase the motivation for learning, the development of needs and interests, as well as a more

conscious study of English. B1 reflected that: "*These lessons bring purpose to learning English*". As Vygotsky observes, cultural beliefs and attitudes affect interactions and how education and learning take place. The premise that learning is initially mediated through social interaction highlights the importance of creating an interactive learning environment that can generate a common online culture with its own values and ethics for students from different cultural backgrounds. A student needs a teacher who is approachable, receptive, and understanding (Chernigovskaya, 2022). The students developed a sense of trust and affection for their coaches because of discussions about issues that interested them, the meaningful sharing of information, and collaborative interactive activities. They had to communicate and defend their own viewpoints in addition to listening and participating in discussions and debates at the online lessons with the language coaches. Since students in Ingushetia are obliged to maintain silence throughout the class where student social interaction is often discouraged and can only respond to inquiries with permission, they had not had a similar experience before. F5 stated: "*We usually don't discuss anything with teachers...But it was different in these lessons*". The use of this strategy encouraged students to express themselves and share their opinions. F1 said: "*I start enjoying speaking English*". This finding is significant in the study of language since it demonstrates that speech/language is an essential tool for communication, and that culture and behaviour were understood through language (Bgantseva, 2023).

Although the schoolteachers may have been experts in the grammatical aspects of the English language, students were able to access information on grammar websites online, whereas the communication skills they obtained from the native speakers were not available from their teachers and required the contact established through online teaching. The world has become digital and will never be the same again (Chernigovskaya, 2022). Digital technologies and internet connectivity enable access to the global space. Perhaps it is unrealistic to physically invite native teachers to every community, but it is feasible to do so online. Online lessons with native-speaking teachers gave a sense of immersion into a real environment and developed trusting relationships between representatives of different cultures. There is no need to be concerned that the schoolteacher may be replaced, as the teachers themselves emphasised that it is necessary to utilise the native language in order to teach a foreign language. To this end, teachers at school must apply this principle of socially mediated

learning in their classrooms and create an environment that encourages these interactions.

F2's response to Diana's feedback highlights a significant aspect of the study - the creation of a community-like atmosphere through online communication. F2's positive reaction was not only to the content of the feedback but also to how it was delivered, contributing to a warm and inclusive environment. This sense of familial closeness, as articulated by F2, underscores the transformation of traditional teacher-student dynamics into a more interactive and supportive setting. Such an environment cultivates a feeling of belonging and unity among participants, thereby enhancing the collaborative and engaging nature of the learning experience. The communal approach to feedback, characterised by both encouragement and constructive criticism, plays a vital role in augmenting the learning process. It does so by fostering connections and support networks not just between students and instructors but also among peers. The outcomes of this study underscore the efficacy of online and technology-mediated communication in complementing and enriching traditional classroom instruction. These methods have shown a marked improvement in the communicative, cognitive, and social facets of language learning. As highlighted in the literature by Martazanova (2020) and Budnik (2019), the interpersonal relationships formed in the context of language education, whether for native or foreign languages, lay a robust foundation for cognitive and linguistic development.

In this context, the human dimension of teacher-student interaction, influenced by individual, environmental, and social factors, emerges as a crucial element in online English teaching. It bestows a unique character upon online learning environments, distinguishing them from more conventional educational settings. This study's findings emphasize that the effectiveness of online language instruction hinges significantly on these dynamic and personalised human interactions.

During our recent meeting, students candidly conveyed their deep sense of longing for interactions with the language coaches. They expressed a genuine eagerness to sustain these valuable connections by actively engaging the coaches through the sharing of new and intriguing information. The sentiment among students was remarkably consistent—they missed the enriching Zoom meetings and the meaningful dialogues they shared with the language coaches. These sentiments shed light on the

profound impact of online learning on student-teacher relationships and the role of social interaction in fostering the development of communicative competence in English. This motivation demonstrated by students appears to be predominantly intrinsic, as their eagerness is rooted in their sincere interest in the learning process itself rather than being solely driven by external factors such as grades or exams, indicative of extrinsic motivation. Given the significance of this intrinsic motivation, further research may be warranted to delve deeper into the dynamics of online learning, its effects on student-teacher connections, and language acquisition.

6.4 Educational system

The new requirements set out in the Federal State Educational Standards (FSES, 2019) state that the teaching, educating and developing work of the entire teacher team to achieve these results should be interconnected, predictive and necessarily in the zone of the student's proximal development. The teacher needs to find all the necessary and sufficient means to achieve all three directions. This provision enables teachers to integrate cognitive, communicative learning activities (skills), including the use of information and communication technologies.

The teachers suggested that an educational system can play an essential role in providing an appropriate atmosphere for the implementation of CLT. They specified that in their experience, exam-orientated education, a test-based curriculum, lack of supplies, large class sizes, and lack of training appropriate to the stated aims of educational policy (a more CLT based approach to foster the development of communicative language skills) hindered this process. In general, these findings of the study are consistent with those of various past studies (Chang and Suparmi, 2020; Lukyanova, 2019; Rahmawati, 2019; Androtis, 2019; Ogorodny, 2018; Aoumeur, 2017; Bahanshal, 2013; Todd, 2012; Abdulkader, 2012; Qiang and Ning, 2011; Kerr, 2011), which reveal that a large class size or test-based curricula are considered to be detrimental to the implementation of CLT.

However, unlike existing research studies (for example, Wahyuni, 2021; Almuhammadi, 2019; Rahmatillah, 2019) this study shows that the existing obstacles to integrating CLT into teaching in Ingushetia do not exist as stand-alone entities.

Instead, they are a combination of multiple factors such as the learning process, inadequate equipment, the Federal State Education Standard of Russia's (FSES) programmes, and inexperienced teachers who are heavily influenced by the traditional method of teaching. Additionally, this study demonstrates that the educational support given to teachers is essential for overcoming restraints on CLT implementation, because GTM and an exam-based curriculum are contradictory to CLT implementation; therefore, the curriculum, along with teacher training and support, need to be adapted accordingly.

T1 conveyed the situation regarding language instruction in the sentence: "*In our schools, a foreign language is not taught, but a certain subject that talks about it*". In Ingushetia, all schools follow the same teaching method mandated by FSES. In Russian public schools, English is still mainly taught using the GTM method despite policy changes mandating a CLT approach. As a result, English instruction lacks practical application and often involves dry memorisation and uninspiring lessons. Many students struggle to learn the language and view it as a difficult and challenging subject. According to Bikov (2022), this problem has persisted for a long time, and the Russian government has been slow to address it.

In Ingushetia, language learning has become more focused on formal coaching for individual exam tasks and repetitive classroom training, rather than actual communication. Speaking skills are not given priority by Ingush teachers as the examination system does not consider it to be a vital part of language learning. Instead, the evaluation is based purely on performance in written exams. Students are limited to a fixed set of words and are only required to choose the correct answers on grammar tests. The learning process does not consider the real-world scenario. T2 commented*: "In our schools, great attention is paid to strict adherence to the programme developed by FSES. And no one takes into account the fact that the programme has shortcomings and that schoolchildren have individual characteristics".*

It appears that the school may not prioritise developing the English-speaking skills of its students. This could suggest a greater emphasis on theoretical knowledge over practical application, with the curriculum focusing solely on grammar and translations. B2 describes his experience as being "*forced to perform tedious exercises in the*

textbook", and F4 said they often "*called to the board to retell boring texts*". The result of such practice is discouraging for learners and leads to demotivation to learn the TL.

Based on the insights shared by educators who were part of the study, reducing class sizes can greatly enhance the success of CLT. With smaller groups of around 15 students, language instructors would be able to engage with learners more effectively, compared to the usual scenario in schools where there are usually about 31 students in a class, which can be overwhelming. T3 said: "*It would be ideal for delivering a higher quality of teaching to have a small group of students, not the whole class; I could pay attention to every student's needs*". Unfortunately, the educational system does not currently offer sufficient opportunities for teachers to work with smaller groups, which was identified by participants as one of the obstacles to successfully implementing CLT in their classrooms.

Teachers emphasised the importance of having suitable classrooms to facilitate effective physical learning in a CLT environment. In Russia, the local community can evaluate the financial well-being of schools through the website bus.gov.ru, a platform that provides information on municipal and state institutions. Despite its complex interface, the platform offers critical details such as the number of students and teachers, educational policies, school budgets, and average teacher salaries. This data reveals that small schools in suburban areas are struggling due to recent reforms. They lack well-equipped classrooms, essential educational materials, and an internet connection, which is unaffordable for them.

According to a study, teachers in Ingushetia tend to stick to traditional teaching methods that align with their prior experience of teaching and learning English. Consequently, they may show resistance towards any new practices that differ from their previous approaches. This indicates that the challenges faced in implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in their classrooms are caused by various factors, including the context in which they work.

6.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study revealed that there are several challenges in teaching a foreign language in Ingushetia, ranging from technical issues to student stimulation.

The use of technology and internet opportunities in foreign language instruction is crucial because it allows teachers to create a situation close to reality for immersion in the language being studied. This study also showed that motivation is required to overcome the majority of the challenges associated with learning a foreign language. The study has also uncovered issues such as student timidity, a lack of time, and textbooks with inadequate assignments, all of which had a detrimental influence on students' English competence. In tackling these challenges, the study demonstrates that obstacles are erased when effective new technology in language teaching and language learning are implemented.

Additionally, in order to overcome the obstacles that teachers of English face, they must constantly seek ways to attract and maintain students' interest in the TL through innovative and stimulating activities. Furthermore, to overcome the challenges that English instructors confront, they must consistently enhance their professional knowledge and skills.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter summarizes the principal findings of the study in response to its research questions, providing insights for educators, learners, and educational institutions. Additionally, this chapter acknowledges the limitations encountered during the research and suggests directions for future studies in this field.

7.2 Summary of the Key Findings

This study aimed to explore the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) through synchronous online platforms, specifically Zoom and WhatsApp, facilitated by native-speaking language coaches.

A mixed-methods case study design was utilized, incorporating diverse data collection tools including questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The core of the study was a seven-week online course conducted by native English-speaking language coaches, designed to explore the effectiveness of CLT in this context. The key conclusions drawn from the study are outlined in the following sections.

Research question 1

1. How do the use of Video Conferencing Platforms (VCs) and social networks (SNs) affect English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' Language Acquisition (LA)?

a. To what extent do students think VCs and SNs support or limit language learning?

b. How do teachers perceive the value of VCs and SNs to improve English Language Teaching (ELT) compared to traditional methods?

The results of this study demonstrate that the use of VCs (Zoom) is an important tool for English language learning as it motivates English learners to improve their language learning skills. Similarly, the results of the study showed that the interactions facilitated by a VC platform are not only useful for developing English learners' language skills, particularly the skills of speaking and listening, but also opens up the potential for international connections for learners of English.

The results of this study further demonstrate that the use of VCs helps English language teachers to increase students' attention and increase their understanding and fluency in the language. From this it can be concluded that the use of VCs improves the speaking ability of English learners and motivates them to further study and to correct various errors in their pronunciation and fluency.

SNs can also be critical in educational assistance. When using an SN (WhatsApp), L2 learners were able to learn, read, write, record and communicate more effectively. The results showed that the students had a very positive attitude and felt motivated by SNs. Students indicated that they used social media platforms for studying and for educational purposes and for chatting with friends, making friends, playing games and for other different purposes. The type of interaction a user desires from these social networks depends on the type of information the user is interested in. Educational support groups can be created in SNs, from which learners can get information about different skills and knowledge, depending on the purposes of the user. Among the many potential benefits of using social media, L2 learners have recognised that it can be used as a good communication and educational tool. For the participants in the study, aiming at enhancing proficiency in English language, WhatsApp was used for chatting, sending many kinds of text information and for completing assignments. They enjoyed receiving information that was more interactive in nature with the help of embedded voice recordings, photos and videos.

The findings from this study indicate that Video Conferencing (VCs) and Social Networks (SNs) are highly effective tools in enhancing second language (L2) proficiency. Participants particularly noted the beneficial influence of communicating

with native-speaking language coaches through these platforms, and how the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach positively impacted their L2 communication skills. Specifically, the use of SNs, such as WhatsApp in this study, was reported to significantly improve their English language learning, encompassing writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills. Based on these observations, it is evident that SNs and VCs can substantially contribute to the effectiveness of English language education.

A noteworthy aspect highlighted by the students was the considerable increase in their self-confidence in language learning. Initially, many participants experienced feelings of shyness and discomfort, particularly when making mistakes in front of native-speaking teachers. This phase of apprehension, marked by a fear of judgment or error in English communication, was a common challenge among the students. However, as the study progressed, there was a clear shift from this initial reticence to a more confident and assured approach to their language use. This transformation in the students' attitudes and self-perception is a testament to the effectiveness of the employed teaching methods and the learning environment. It underscores how innovative educational tools like VCs and SNs, when integrated effectively with pedagogical strategies, can significantly enhance student confidence and proficiency in language learning.

English language teachers recognise the value of VCs and SNs as significant enhancers of student attention, understanding, and fluency in the language. They appreciate these digital tools for their effectiveness in engaging students, particularly benefiting those who are shy or require more time to respond in a typical classroom environment.

Teachers find the ability to share multimedia resources, links, and materials via SNs highly beneficial. This ease of access to varied learning aids is seen as a notable improvement over the limitations of traditional textbook-based methods. Additionally, the flexibility offered by VCs and SNs in terms of time and location is acknowledged positively. Teachers view this adaptability as an essential support for learners who may struggle in a conventional classroom setting or require a more personalised learning approach.

However, alongside these benefits, some teachers have expressed concerns regarding the integration of technology into their teaching practices. These concerns range from facing technical challenges to a lack of adequate training for the effective utilisation of these digital platforms. Furthermore, teachers also highlight the importance of a stable internet connection and access to sufficient computers. Reliable internet is crucial for the smooth operation of VCs and SNs, and the lack of enough computers can be a significant barrier to implementing these technologies effectively in a learning environment. These infrastructure requirements are essential for the successful integration of digital tools in English language teaching.

Research question 2

What perceptions do teachers have about the opportunities and limitations associated with implementing the CLT approach in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes?

The findings of the study reflect the teachers' perceptions of the opportunities to implement the CLT approach when teaching oral and written skills. It was clear that the teachers believed that CLT approaches could be valuable in an EFL classroom. However, the teachers perceived some challenges of teaching for communicative purposes, which they claimed prevented them from using it, such as unified exams that focused on grammar-based skills rather than the functional skills engendered by CLT, large class sizes and other issues, which were discussed in Chapter 5.

In addition, the findings outlined in Chapters 4 and 5 indicate that the teachers were focusing solely on the specific skill that they were teaching. They stated that they were unable to integrate all the skills into their teaching practice because they did not feel confident about doing so and were concerned that they should only concentrate on the specific skill their class was concerned with, because of the limited time available for exam preparation. However, despite these expressed views, the teachers believed that integrating CLT would help their students to improve skills in the TL and use it meaningfully. They argued that the integrated use of oral and written language for functional and meaningful purposes most effectively promotes the full development of an L2. Teachers used the traditional approach to teaching English as a foreign language, stressing grammar teaching and memorisation; consequently, they paid great attention to reading and writing instruction. Teachers described grammar-

translation method as having been the norm in Ingushetia since they themselves were at school and they were still applying the approach. The unwillingness of the teachers to implement CLT and integrate the four skills together in their teaching practice could be said to be because of their prior experience and lack of adequate resources and training. The teachers in this study felt there was a need to shift the focus to a more integrated and communicative approach. They believe that the CLT approach, as taught by the online language coaches, allowed for a shift to a more integrative teaching style, which is essential to create more opportunities for common speaking and interaction, thereby improving students' language skills.

Research question 3

What impact did the interaction with native-speaking language coaches using CLT, VCs, and SNs have on students' English proficiency?

The impact of interaction with native-speaking language coaches using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Video Conferencing (VCs), and Social Networks (SNs) on students' English proficiency was multifaceted and significant. Regular engagement with native speakers via VCs enriched students' listening and speaking skills by providing authentic language exposure, and improving their comprehension, pronunciation, and fluency. This method also sparked increased motivation and engagement, making the learning process more interactive and relevant, and thereby encouraging active participation.

The continuous interaction and feedback from native-speaking coaches were instrumental in boosting students' confidence in using English. As students became more comfortable and less fearful of making mistakes, their use of English became more spontaneous and natural. Moreover, conversations with language coaches expanded students' vocabulary and understanding of complex language structures, further enhancing their language proficiency.

An important aspect of this interaction was the cultural awareness and understanding it fostered among students. Engaging with native speakers provided valuable insights into different cultural contexts, enriching students' language learning with a broader

perspective. Additionally, the use of SNs for communication and feedback allowed students to refine their writing skills in a more informal and expressive manner.

The personalised and immediate feedback provided by the native-speaking coaches through these platforms played a critical role in the students' language development. This feedback mechanism facilitated immediate corrections, clarifications, and encouragement, which are vital elements in language acquisition. In essence, the integration of native-speaking language coaches using CLT, VCs, and SNs not only enhanced students' linguistic capabilities but also bolstered their confidence, motivation, and cultural comprehension, all of which are essential components of effective language learning.

In conclusion, the approach to learning the target language (TL) explored in this study has demonstrated its effectiveness, enjoyability, innovation, and challenge for students. They showed a clear preference for the dynamic and interactive method of instruction, which not only improved their language skills but also made the learning experience more engaging and stimulating. This innovative teaching style was instrumental in creating a positive language acquisition experience for the students. One key finding of the study was the enhanced student motivation, driven by a greater sense of control and responsibility in their learning journey. The flexibility they had in deciding the pace, place, and time of learning was pivotal in boosting their interest in language learning.

The transition from traditional, teacher-centred classrooms to learner-centred environments, particularly in Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), received positive feedback from students. This shift towards a more autonomous learning approach led to increased creativity, independence, and self-confidence in their language learning pursuits, transforming their attitudes towards language education and significantly raising their motivation levels. The students' responses during the interviews reflected their positive perception of interacting with language coaches and the integration of Video Conferencing (VC) and Social Networks (SN) into their language learning process.

Central to the concept of language learning through modern technology is the role of human interaction. While digital platforms like Zoom and WhatsApp are heavily utilized, the essence of learning is significantly enhanced by personal interactions

between students and language coaches. These interactions, ranging from direct conversations in video calls to collaborative tasks in messaging apps, create a rich communicative environment crucial for language acquisition. They provide not only a platform for practising language skills but also opportunities for cultural exchange and community building among learners, which are essential in any educational context. This human element ensures that the incorporation of technology in language learning is anchored in real-world communication, rendering the learning experience more engaging, effective, and meaningful.

7.2.1 Beyond the Research Questions

Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, the current research findings highlight that the key to successfully teaching foreign languages to today's students is not just the use of digital technologies, but it depends on having live communication with native speakers of the language being studied through these tools. This is because students showed little interest in using digital learning technologies without the guidance and teaching methods of language coaches.

The study indicated that the incorporation of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in the classroom can promote critical thinking among students, foster communication, boost students' creativity, and increase the efficiency of teaching. However, there are several factors that determine the effectiveness of the integration of mobile phones for this purpose. The first factor is the availability of resources such as digital technology, internet, and technical support, which can be a challenge. Secondly, the integration of digital technology is closely related to pedagogical beliefs and sociocultural factors. Instructors who have constructivist pedagogical beliefs are more likely to have positive attitudes towards using MALL, which can lead to the adoption of mobile phones for language learning in classrooms for student-centred purposes. There were divided opinions among the teachers regarding the use of mobile phones during lessons, and not all the teachers had a positive reaction towards it. It was found that some teachers were unsure about being able to manage what students were viewing on their phones. However, the general agreement was that with proper training, integrating mobile phones into the language learning classroom could be a positive addition. The influence of sociocultural factors, such as school

curriculum, education authorities, and colleagues, were also found to impact a teacher's decision to implement digital technologies.

The research suggests that grammar-translation method (GTM) could be used for pedagogical purposes along with other approaches and language activities, for example, socio-cultural communication, CLT, MALL and WhatsApp in this study. During the observation, it was noted that translation as a method used in the practice of language teaching contributes to a deeper insight into the essence of the material being studied. The real benefit of translating in a foreign language classroom lies in the comparison of grammar, vocabulary, word order, and other linguistic aspects in the language being studied and the student's native language. However, the practice of translation should not be overused in the classroom, and it should be intelligently integrated into language teaching along with the learning tools mentioned above.

The research also suggests that the textbooks still play an important role in the educational system. However, there are valid concerns about their current effectiveness because school textbooks include educational materials that can quickly become anachronistic and some of the materials are useful only for preparing students for exams. Content in textbooks needs to be relevant to the target audience and interoperable with electronic devices, the internet and real-time audio-visual artefacts for knowledge production.

7.3 Reflections on the Research Process

Using a communicative language approach within socio-cultural theory and mobile assisted language learning as the theoretical framework resulted in a set of significant results. However, there were a number of limitations that could not be avoided due to various factors related to the nature of the research and the context of the study. While the significance of this research study is such that it can contribute to research and professional communities.

7.3.1 Limitation of the Research

The study only examined a small sample size in a single village in Ingushetia. The data gathered cannot be generalised since it does not represent the whole population of high school students in Ingushetia. Instead, the study might serve as a model for language teachers looking to incorporate technology into their classes.

Furthermore, all the students in this study voluntarily participated in the online course via Zoom and restricted WhatsApp group. This suggests that they were highly motivated to learn English and subsequently did their best to complete all the assigned tasks on the course. However, if this method of teacher were implemented on a larger scale, students may not be as motivated. Notwithstanding issues of motivation, in real classroom practice, lengthy online practice may be beneficial as part of continuous formative evaluations so that students have a range of skills inputs to finish their tasks.

Additionally, the data revealed that students' reading, writing, listening and speaking skills improved significantly. However, while language skills are examined separately in this study, they do not develop independently of one another because students practised language proficiency at the same time during the online course. Moreover, because this study recognised these different elements as a coherent, non-separable programme, the online course contained both asynchronous tasks and synchronous conversations; therefore, it is difficult to determine which had a greater impact on students' English language improvement.

The students involved in this study were eager and had a positive attitude towards experiencing new things, such as using technology and communicating with native speakers. However, new experiences can be daunting and cause stress, and may not always be seen as necessary or beneficial. In some learning environments, new experiences can even be perceived as a hindrance to motivation. Therefore, introducing novelty in the classroom can sometimes limit students' motivation and could potentially be perceived as a limiting factor. Also, in certain traditional schools, the use of phones may not be permitted. Moreover, some students or teachers may have difficulty using mobile devices due to poor eyesight. In addition, it could be challenging to find native speakers to act as language coaches. To do so, a reliable and endorsed educational system of websites or organisations with language coaches

would be needed. It is also important to consider the potential financial costs, as not everyone may be able to volunteer.

7.3.2 Alternative Approaches for EFL

Integrating retired individuals in online foreign language learning programmes within schools could be yet another beneficial approach with intergenerational advantages. Retirees bring a wealth of experience and expertise, including language proficiency, which can significantly enrich students' language education by providing practical insights and real-world context.

Moreover, retirees often have firsthand experience of living in or travelling to countries where the target language is spoken, offering students the opportunity for authentic cultural exchange and a deeper understanding of cultural nuances.

The flexible schedules of retirees make it easier to accommodate various time zones and student needs in online language learning, thereby increasing accessibility for students.

Interacting with retired language mentors could also serve as a motivational factor for students and teachers. Retirees can act as role models, demonstrating the benefits of lifelong learning and language acquisition at any age. Intergenerational interactions promote mutual understanding and respect. Students can benefit from the wisdom and life experiences of retirees, while retirees stay engaged with younger generations, fostering a sense of connection. Additionally, involving retirees in educational activities can be cost-effective for schools compared to hiring full-time language teachers, allowing schools to allocate resources to other educational needs. Retirees can provide more personalised attention to students, tailoring instruction to individual needs and interests, resulting in enhanced language skills. Furthermore, retirees bring diverse perspectives to the learning environment, enriching students' understanding of language and culture.

In summary, integrating retired individuals into online foreign language learning programmes could be a mutually beneficial arrangement that promotes intergenerational connections, enhances language learning, and leverages the expertise and availability of retirees for educational purposes.

Beyond retired people, several other groups and individuals could contribute to language learning in meaningful ways. Here are some suggestions:

University Students: Students majoring in education, linguistics, or language studies often seek practical experience. They can serve as language tutors or conversation partners, gaining valuable teaching experience while contributing to the learning process.

Volunteers from Cultural Associations: Members of cultural or linguistic associations often have a strong interest in promoting their language and culture. They might volunteer for language teaching or cultural exchange programs.

Peace Corps Volunteers or Similar Organizations: Volunteers from organisations like the Peace Corps often participate in educational and cultural exchange programs and could be valuable resources for language teaching.

Local Language Enthusiasts or Clubs: People in the community who have a passion for languages might be interested in sharing their knowledge or learning a new language themselves through exchange programs.

Professional Language Educators Seeking Part-time Opportunities: There may be language educators interested in part-time or volunteer opportunities, especially those who are semi-retired or have flexible schedules.

Language Learners Themselves: Implementing a peer-teaching model where more advanced students help beginners can be an effective method. This not only helps beginners but also allows advanced learners to reinforce their knowledge.

Libraries or Community Centres: Staff or volunteers at these centres might be interested in participating in language programmes, especially if they have a background or interest in languages and education.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) Focused on Education and Cultural Exchange: These organisations often have individuals who are skilled in languages and interested in educational projects.

Incorporating a diverse range of individuals as language coaches can enrich the learning experience by providing varied perspectives, teaching styles, and cultural insights. However, it is important to ensure that these individuals are properly trained

or briefed about the educational goals and teaching methodologies to maintain a consistent and effective learning environment.

The evolving landscape of language learning, particularly within the digital and interconnected context of today's world, is gradually moving away from the sole reliance on traditional classroom teaching. This shift reflects a growing recognition of the benefits of incorporating more dynamic, interactive, and authentic methods of language acquisition, especially those facilitated by modern technology.

This research has shown that interaction with native speakers through online platforms provides various opportunities for a more genuine, engaging, and pragmatic method of learning languages. For example, engaging with native speakers online opens up a multitude of opportunities for a more authentic, interactive, and practical approach to language learning. This shift can be developed and applied in various ways.

Engaging with native speakers allows learners to experience the language as it is used in everyday situations, offering exposure to colloquialisms, slang, idiomatic expressions, and the natural pace of conversation. This is invaluable for developing practical communication skills. Moreover, this interaction provides insight into the cultural nuances of the language, enhancing the learning experience and fostering a deeper connection with the language through an understanding of cultural references, humour, and social norms.

The flexibility of online interactions with native speakers offers a less formal and more adaptable learning environment than traditional classroom settings. This informality can reduce anxiety, make learning more enjoyable, and encourage students to engage more fully with the language. Conversations can be tailored to the interests and needs of the learner, discussing topics like current events, hobbies, or day-to-day life, thereby increasing engagement and motivation.

Native speakers can introduce learners to authentic materials such as songs, movies, articles, and social media content in the target language. This exposure not only improves language skills but also keeps the learning process interesting and fun. Furthermore, online platforms can facilitate the creation of a community of learners and native speakers, providing a supportive and motivating environment that makes the language learning journey less isolating.

Regular interaction with native speakers enhances listening and speaking skills as learners are exposed to various accents, speeds of speech, and dialects. Native speakers can provide immediate, natural corrections and feedback, essential for language acquisition, helping learners understand and rectify their mistakes more effectively. Additionally, regular conversation with native speakers can significantly boost a learner's confidence in using the language, which is crucial for language retention and fluency.

By shifting the focus from a purely academic to one that incorporates engaging, real-world interactions with native speakers, language learning can transform into a more dynamic, practical, and enjoyable experience. However, it is important to strike a balance between structured learning and these more informal methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the language. Given the potential of these approaches, further research into the suitability and effectiveness of various identified groups for language learning programs would be highly beneficial to optimise and tailor these methods to different learning contexts.

7.4 Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study open avenues for further exploration in the field of online socio-cultural learning, particularly in understanding the impact of technology on human interaction and its implications for language learning. Future research should aim to investigate various facets of this interaction, striving for a deeper comprehension of its integral role in the process of language acquisition. This exploration is crucial in delineating the nuanced ways in which technological platforms facilitate or hinder the learning experience.

In addition, considering the complexity and diverse interpretations of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), it is recommended that subsequent studies explore the efficacy of CLT in online contexts as compared to traditional classroom settings. Such research would provide valuable insights into the adaptability and effectiveness of CLT methodologies within digital learning environments, potentially leading to the development of more refined and effective teaching strategies for language educators.

Furthermore, this study primarily focused on the students' perspectives, which highlighted significant findings regarding their experiences and learning outcomes. However, it is acknowledged that incorporating the views of the language coaches could yield additional, valuable insights. Future research should consider examining the experiences and perspectives of language coaches, as their views could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the online language learning process. This inclusion could help to identify the challenges and opportunities presented by online language coaching, enriching our understanding of the educational dynamics at play. Addressing the limitations of the current study, such as constraints in time and resources, future investigations should aim to balance the perspectives of both learners and educators. This would contribute to a more rounded and holistic understanding of language learning in online settings, thereby enhancing the theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of online language education.

7.5 Final Remark

The CLT curriculum is currently one of the most widely used language teaching methods globally. Nevertheless, effectively integrating this approach into the curriculum requires careful planning, especially in Ingushetia where traditional language teaching methods are still prevalent. It is crucial for policymakers to reconsider the importance of the CLT approach in the context of Ingushetia. Furthermore, classroom resources and textbooks should align with the objectives of the CLT curriculum.

To improve teacher training in Ingushetia, there is a need to shift towards online support from professional language coaches instead of relying solely on GTM-based teacher development programs. Additionally, there should be proper monitoring and guidance for potential training programmes to address the lack of effectiveness in current teacher education programmes. Online training capacity building is a sustainable approach that can offer flexible training to teachers through global training centres. Further research in language education in Ingushetia is crucial, as there is a lack of empirical studies that can provide generalisable solutions to the problems faced. A deeper understanding of these issues can contribute to better policy adaptation and implementation for ELT in Ingushetia.

7.6 Post-Script: Impact of Russia's Geopolitical Shifts on English

7.6.1 Language Teaching and Learning

On 24 February 2022, Russia launched military action in Ukraine (Walker, 2023). The EU has imposed massive and unprecedented sanctions against Russia in response to the war of aggression against Ukraine (European Council, 2022). Sanctions have significantly affected all spheres of the life of Russian citizens, and education has been no exception. Dozens of student exchange programmes and the recognition of diplomas have been cancelled, and online services have been disabled. The most noticeable changes for the students themselves were digital restrictions:

- **Grammarly**, an online artificial intelligence-based platform to help students communicate in English, has ceased operations in Russia.

- **Storytel**, a Swedish company and audiobook streaming service with over 20,000 books in Russian, is unavailable.

- **Tableau** and **SPSS**, programs for processing, analysing, and visualising big data, are no longer available to Russian students.

- **Canva**, a service for creating presentations and visual editing, does not open from Russian IP addresses.

- **Zoom**, the program for online conferences, turned off the possibility of buying a paid subscription for Russian educational institutions, and access to remote learning depended heavily on this.

- Many student subscriptions (which are usually 20–30% cheaper than standard ones) for various kinds of services have also been disabled.

In addition, the political position of the Russian government suggests a voluntary-compulsory parting with Western educational programmes. On May 24, 2022, the head of the Ministry of Education and Science, Valery Falkov, announced the intention of the Russian Federation to withdraw from the Bologna system of education (Starodubtsev, 2022).

7.6.2 Impact on the Culture of English Teaching and Learning

The geopolitical shift has had significant repercussions on the culture of English teaching and learning in Russia:

1. **Decreased Exposure to Western Influences:**

With the severing of ties between Russia and Western countries, there has been a marked reduction in cultural and academic exchanges. This includes fewer opportunities for Russian students and educators to participate in international programmes, conferences, and collaborations with Western institutions. Consequently, access to contemporary pedagogical methodologies and resources from the West has diminished (Crowley-Vigneau *et al*, 2022).

2. **Shift in Language Priorities:**

The geopolitical shift has prompted a revaluation of language priorities within the Russian education system. There is a growing emphasis on strengthening ties with non-Western countries, leading to increased interest in learning languages such as Chinese, Arabic, and other regional languages. This shift may result in a reduced emphasis on English, traditionally seen as a global lingua franca.

3. **Adaptation of Teaching Materials:**

The reliance on Western-produced teaching materials is being reconsidered. Russian educators are increasingly looking to develop and adopt locally produced materials that reflect the current socio-political context and align with national educational goals. This move aims to reduce dependence on Western educational resources and promote a more localized approach to language teaching (Bukharina, 2023).

4. **Impact on Teacher Training and Development:**

The professional development of EFL teachers in Russia has been affected by the geopolitical rift. Access to training programmes, workshops, and certification courses provided by Western organizations has become limited. As a result, there is a need to enhance domestic teacher training programmes to ensure that educators continue to develop their skills and stay abreast of global teaching trends.

7.6.3 Future Role of English in Russia

Despite these challenges, the English language is likely to retain a significant role in Russia for several reasons:

1. **Global Communication:**

English remains the dominant language of international business, science, and technology. Proficiency in English is essential for Russian professionals and researchers who wish to engage with the global community, access scientific literature, and participate in international projects.

2. **Educational and Career Opportunities:**

Knowledge of English continues to be a valuable asset for students seeking educational and career opportunities abroad. English proficiency can open doors to higher education institutions, multinational companies, and international organizations.

3. **Technological Advancements:**

The increasing integration of digital tools in education provides new avenues for learning English. Online platforms, language learning apps, and virtual exchange programs can mitigate some of the barriers caused by the geopolitical situation, enabling learners to practice and improve their English skills independently.

7.6.4 Forecast and Potential Avenues for Future Research

1. **Resilience and Adaptation in EFL Teaching:**

Future research could explore how Russian educators and institutions adapt to the new geopolitical realities. Investigating the development of localised teaching materials, the effectiveness of domestic teacher training programmes, and the integration of digital tools in EFL teaching could provide valuable insights.

2. **Impact on Student Motivation and Attitudes:**

Understanding how the geopolitical shift affects students' motivation and attitudes towards learning English is crucial. Research could examine changes in students' perceptions of the importance of English, their engagement with the language, and their future aspirations.

3. **Comparative Studies:**

Comparative studies between regions within Russia and between Russia and other non-Western countries could highlight differences and similarities in responses to the

geopolitical changes. Such studies could identify best practices and successful strategies in EFL education for countries under similar circumstances.

4. **Longitudinal Studies on Language Proficiency:**

Longitudinal studies tracking changes in English language proficiency over time could provide a comprehensive picture of the impact of the geopolitical shift. These studies could assess the long-term effects on language skills, academic performance, and career outcomes for Russian students.

5. **Promoting International Understanding and Peace:**

According to Alexander Lebed, the Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, all conflicts on Earth culminate in peaceful negotiations (Marchenko, 2022). Negotiation is a process that speakers go through to reach a clear understanding of each other (Pizer, 2021). For these reasons, the ability to communicate is considered a critical skill in a negotiator. One idea worth considering is connecting students from diverse regions across the globe through online platforms. This could foster cultural and social unity, as well as facilitate the exchange of unique perspectives. Ultimately, such initiatives could promote a more peaceful and prosperous future for our planet.

In conclusion, while the geopolitical shift resulting from the war in Ukraine poses challenges to English language teaching and learning in Russia, it also presents opportunities for adaptation and innovation. By exploring these avenues, future research can contribute to a more resilient and effective EFL education system in Russia.

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APPENDICES:

Appendix A

FSES (2022) specifies the content of education.

1) Mastering the main types of speech activity within the following thematic content of speech: My family. My friends. Free time of a modern teenager. Healthy lifestyle. School. The world of modern professions. The world. Mass media and the Internet.

Fundamentals of Business English. Translation Techniques. Travel to the Countries of the Language Being Studied. Foreign Language in the Modern World. Technology of Grammatical Text Analysis/. Technology of Working with Text. Cultural Studies of English Speakers' Countries. English in the Dialogue of Cultures. In the World of British Literature:

a) speaking: be able to conduct different types of dialogue about eight phrases; monologue statements of 10-12 phrases

b) listening: listening and understanding simple authentic texts that run for two minutes

c) semantic reading: read to yourself and understand simple authentic texts of various types, genres and styles of 450-500 words

e) written speech: fill out questionnaires and forms, reporting basic information about yourself, in accordance with the norms adopted in the country/countries of the language being studied; write a personal email of 100-120 words.

Also included in the programme:

1) mastering phonetic skills (distinguish by ear and adequately, without errors leading to communication failure), pronounce words with the correct stress and phrases in compliance with their rhythmic and intonation features, including applying the rules for the absence of phrasal stress on service words

2) knowledge and understanding of the basic meanings of the studied lexical units (words, phrases, speech cliches)

3) mastering the skills of using at least 1350 studied lexical units in oral and written speech

4) mastering sociocultural knowledge and skills

5) mastering compensatory skills: use a repeat question when speaking

6) development of the ability to classify according to various criteria

7) development of the ability to compare

8) the formation of the ability to consider several options for solving a communicative task in productive types of speech activity

9) the formation of the ability to predict the difficulties that may arise in solving a communicative task in all types of speech activity

10) gaining practical experience in everyday life.

Appendix B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

1: Demographic information

Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Age:

2: Use of technologies (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Smartphone
- ☐ laptop
- ☐ Tablet (e.g. iPad)
- ☐ Computer
- ☐ Another device with internet access (e.g. games)

	Computer/Laptop (notebook)	**Tablet**	**Smartphone**	**Other**
What computing equipment do you have **access** to (select all that apply)?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Which computing equipment has access to the internet (select all that apply)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Which equipment do you **often use for your study** (select all that apply)?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Outside of school, how often do you currently use the following technologies in your everyday life for social and work purposes (i.e. for purposes NOT associated with learning)?

	Never	**A few times a**	**A few times a**	**One or more**

	MONTH	WEEK	times a DAY
Messaging (e.g. ICQ, Viber, Email)	○	○	○	○
Collaborative/conferencing technologies (Skype, Facetime, Viber, Facetime, Zoom, other)	○	○	○	○
Social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Blogs, WhatsApp)	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○
Internet search (e.g. Google, Yahoo)	○	○	○	○
Online multi-user computer games	○	○	○	○
Presentation software (e.g. PowerPoint, Keynote)	○	○	○	○
Cloud storage	○	○	○	○
Photo or video sharing on the web (e.g. YouTube, Instagram)	○	○	○	○

Are there any other technologies you use for social purposes?   ○ **Yes**   ○ **No**

(If yes, what technology do you use and why?)

How often do you use technology as part of your study?

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	Never	A few times a MONTH	A few times a WEEK	One or more times a DAY
Join an online course	○	○	○	○
Use Social Networks to discuss with friends and share information	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○
Use CD to practice your listening skills	○	○	○	○
Use freely available educational resources related to your field of study (e.g. YouTube)	○	○	○	○
Use video conferencing platforms (e.g. Skype, Zoom) to join in remotely to live lectures and tutorials.	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○
Use technology (e.g. Skype, Google Hangouts, Viber, Facetime) to work collaboratively on activities and assignments	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○
Use web services to share resources and ideas related to your course and learning	○	○	○	○
Watch or listen to vodcasts or podcasts	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○
Use internet search engines to find online resources (eg Google, Google Scholar, Yahoo)	○	○	○	○

2) Are there any other technologies you use for your study?   ○ **Yes**   ○ **No**

(If yes, what technology do you use and why?)

3: Students' perceptions of technology

1) Do you like technology as a teaching-learning tool?   ○ **Yes**   ○ **No**   ○ **I do not know**

2) Does technology-mediated teaching-learning motivate you toward a new learning situation?

○ **Yes**   ○ **No**   ○ **I do not know**

3) What's your perception of technology-mediated language learning in the English Language classroom?

- **a)** Technology-enhanced EFL classes ensure a higher degree of interaction
- **b)** Technology-enhanced language teaching/learning strategies develop a student-centered approach
- **c)** Technology in teaching/learning is troublesome and time-consuming
- **d)** Technology use in the classroom promotes students learning autonomy and self-directed learning.
- **e)** I'm not sure how to use technology to learn the language
- **f)** Web-based materials expand my knowledge while they are confined to the shell of textbooks

Overall, how would you describe your experience with technology?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am satisfied with my technology skills	○	○	○	○	○
Technology has helped me study better	○	○	○	○	○
Technology has enhanced my motivation	○	○	○	○	○
Technology has helped me learn foreign languages/other subjects/skills	○	○	○	○	○
I have found it easy to use technologies	○	○	○	○	○
Technology distracts me from my study	○	○	○	○	○
I hate technology	○	○	○	○	○
Technology is time-consuming	○	○	○	○	○

Any additional information:

Appendix C

Please provide information about yourself:

Gender: M/F

Code number:

1. How often do you use OVPs (Zoom, Skype, other (please, specify)?

- o Every day
- o 2 or more
- o 2 or less
- o Never

2. Do you learn English online? If "Yes", how much time do you spend on learning?

- o Up to 15 minutes
- o Up to 30 minutes
- o More than 30 minutes

Comments:

3. What network resources do you use for learning English?

- o YouTube
- o Instagram
- o Other (Specify)

4. What resources do you use to communicate with your friends?

- o Phone calls/messaging (Specify)
- o Social networks (Specify)
- o Other (Specify)

5. How would you assess the degree of your interest to improve your English comprehension using Zoom?

1. Interested in a sufficient degree

2. Rather interested than not

3. Rather not interested than yes

4. Not interested

5. Difficult to answer

6. How would you assess the degree of your interest to improve your English comprehension using WhatsApp group chat?

1. Interested in a sufficient degree

2. Rather interested than not

3. Rather not interested than yes

4. Not interested

5. Difficult to answer

Appendix D

Final Questionnaire

Please provide information about yourself:

Gender: M/F

Code number:

1. How often did you use OVPs (Zoom, Skype, other (please, specify) for learning English?

- o Every day
- o 2 or more
- o 2 or less
- o Never

2. Did you learn English online? If "Yes", how much time do you spend on learning?

- o Up to 15 minutes
- o Up to 30 minutes
- o More than 30 minutes

Comments:

3. What network resources do you use for learning English?

- o YouTube
- o Instagram
- o Other (Specify)

4. What network resources do you use to communicate with your friends?

- o Phone calls/messaging (Specify)
- o Social networks (Specify)
- o Other (Specify)

5. How would you assess the degree of your interest to improve your English comprehension using Zoom?

1. Interested in a sufficient degree

2. Rather interested than not

3. Rather not interested than yes

4. Not interested

5. Difficult to answer

6. How would you assess the degree of your interest to improve your English comprehension using WhatsApp group chat?

1. Interested in a sufficient degree

2. Rather interested than not

3. Rather not interested than yes

4. Not interested

5. Difficult to answer

6. **Do you notice that technology-enhanced teaching/learning changes the teachers' mode of pedagogy?**
   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. I do not know

7. **Does technology-mediated teaching-learning (Zoom and WhatsApp) motivate you toward a new learning situation?**
   1. Yes
   2. I do not know
   3. No

Appendix E

Teachers' and Students' Interview Questions

Student Interview Questions:

1. Do your current teachers use any digital tools to teach you? If yes, what tools do they use?
2. What is your opinion about using Zoom and WhatsApp as learning tools?
3. Did you like interacting with your classmates and other users via WhatsApp for learning English?
4. How do you believe your learning changed when you used Zoom/WhatsApp?
5. What is/are the advantage(s) of using Zoom/WhatsApp for learning English?
6. What is/are the disadvantage(s) of using Zoom/WhatsApp to learn English?
7. What challenges did you experience, if any, in using Zoom/WhatsApp for the duration of the study?
8. Do you feel more confident in speaking after the course?

Teachers' Interview Questions:

1. Which methods do you use for teaching the English language?

2. What is your opinion about using Zoom/WhatsApp for Learning English with native speakers at the lessons to improve students' communication skills?

3. Tell me about your experience using Zoom/WhatsApp to engage students in the process of learning?

4. What is your opinion about using Zoom/WhatsApp to improve students' communication skills?

5. Do you notice that technology-enhanced teaching/learning changes the teachers' mode of pedagogy?

6. What benefits do you believe students receive when they use Zoom/WhatsApp to improve their English?

7. What challenges do you believe students face in using Zoom/WhatsApp to engage to learn English?

8. What value, if any, from your point of view, Zoom/WhatsApp can provide to the course?

Appendix F

Common European Framework of Reference for English (CEFR)
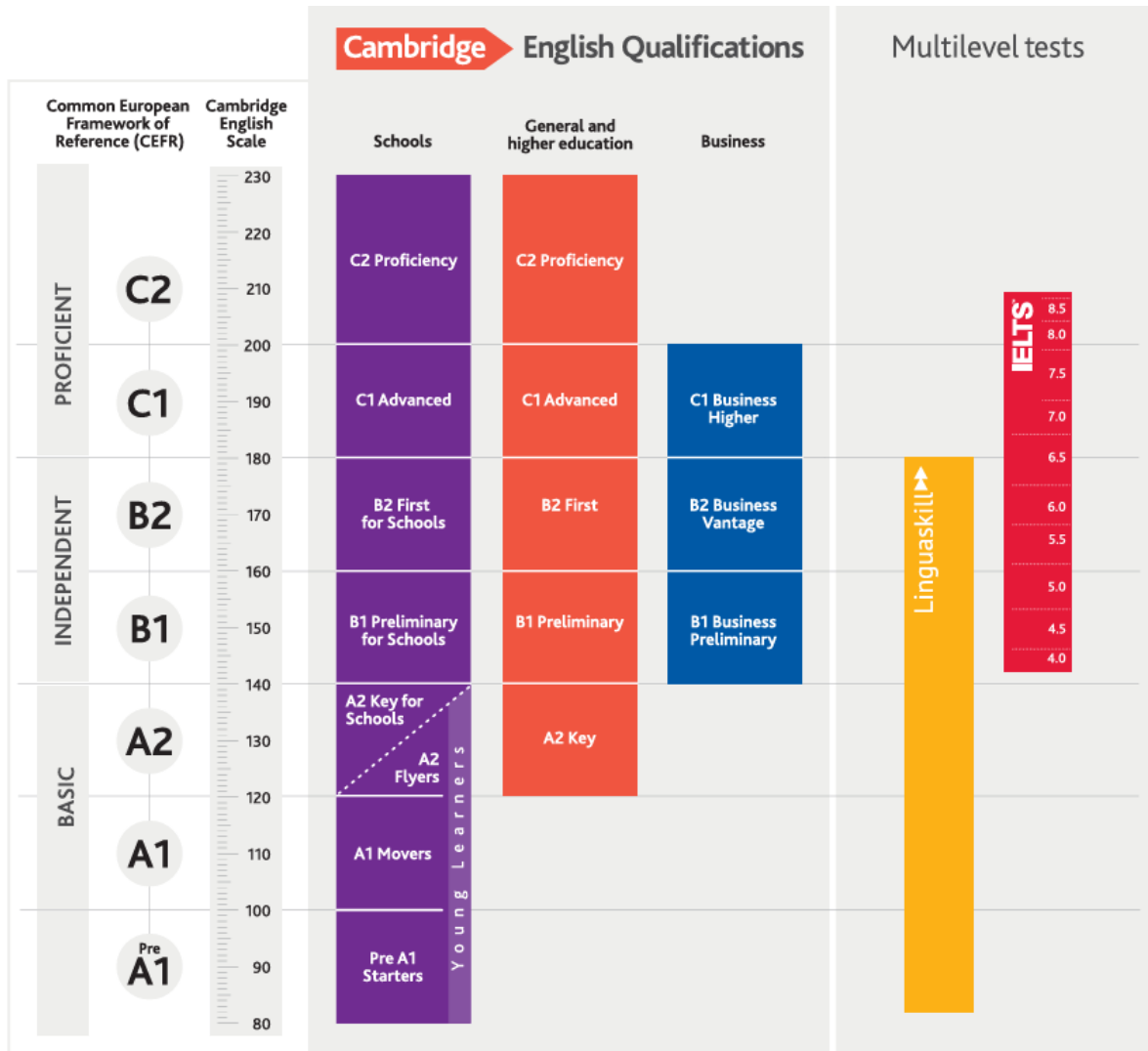
Appendix G

Criteria for Assessing Writing

https://eclexam.eu/criteria-for-assessing-writing/

Points	FORMAL ACCURACY (Morphology and Syntax)	WRITTEN ACCURACY (Paragraphing, Punctuation and Spelling)	VOCABULARY (Range and Activation)	STYLE (Pragmatic / Sociolinguistic Aspects)	COMMUNICATIVE EFFECTIVENESS (Appropriate Task Completion)
5	Correct use of simple grammatical structures required at this level.* Despite typical minor morphological and syntactic errors, the message is clear.	Adequate paragraphing. The minimal number of mistakes in spelling and punctuation rarely hinders comprehension.	Appropriate use of the vocabulary relevant to the topic. Only occasional lexical deficiencies.	Mostly logical organisation of content. Correct use of the most common conjunctives to connect the simplest forms and sentences. Knowledge and correct use of the relevant style.	Adequate elaboration and coverage of all the bullet points.
4	If the quality of written communication exceeds the performance described under point 3 but worse than what is described under point 5, a score of 4 should be given.				
3	Mostly adequate use of the simple grammatical structures required at this level. Basic grammatical errors may occur occasionally, but they rarely impair comprehension.	Paragraphing generally follows the content. Spelling and punctuation is not perfect but acceptable. The errors rarely impair comprehension. ·	Adequate vocabulary to satisfy simple and basic communication needs. The repetition of words and mistakes may slightly impair comprehension.	Adequate organisation of content. Appropriate use of conjunctives. The style mostly satisfies the relevant genre.	Adequate elaboration and coverage of two bullet points, and partial elaboration of the other two. Irrelevant parts may appear, but the overall text is mostly satisfactory.
2	If the quality of written communication does not match the performance described by point 3, but exceeds what is described by point 1, a score of 2 should be given.				
1	Makes several mistakes when using the simple grammatical structures required at this level. Their message is difficult to follow and may frequently be misinterpreted.	As a result of incorrect paragraphing the content can hardly be followed. Punctuation is inconsistent; many spelling mistakes, most of which hinder comprehension.	Narrow range of vocabulary used in a highly restricted way. The high number of lexical mistakes makes comprehension impossible.	Inappropriate organisation of text, the sequence of sentences is accidental. Rare use of conjunctives, inappropriate style.	Incomplete task. Partial misinterpretation of task. Many irrelevant parts. Elaboration of at least one bullet point.
0	If the quality of written communication does not match the performance described by point 1 and the writing cannot be assessed (no elaboration of any of the bullet points, inappropriate content), or it is impossible to follow or irrelevant, a score of 0 should be given. If a score of 0 is given for communicative effectiveness, the entire grade for the task should be 0.				

Appendix H

STRAIGHTFORWARD QUICK PLACEMENT & DIAGNOSTIC TEST

https://www.englishtestsonline.com/straightforward-quick-placement-and-diagnostic-test/

The Straightforward Test has 50 questions, each worth one point. The first 40 are grammar questions and the final 10 are vocabulary questions. To decide your level, use the conversion chart below. Please note that these bandings are a guide.

Total score	Level
0 - 15	Beginner
16 - 24	Elementary
25 – 32	Pre-intermediate
33 – 39	Intermediate
40 - 45	Upper Intermediate
46-50	Please use Straightforward Advanced in January 2008!

This test can also be used to diagnose grammar that you need clarification on. Please consult the relevant level and unit of the course for more information.

Straightforward Quick Placement and Diagnostic Test

1. I _____ from France.

   A) is
   B) are
   C) am
   D) be

2. This is my friend. _____ name is Peter.

   A) Her
   B) Our
   C) Yours
   D) His

3. Mike is _____.

   A) my sister's friend
   B) friend my sister
   C) friend from my sister
   D) my sister friend's

4. My brother is _____ artist.

   A) the
   B) an
   C) a
   D) __

5. _____ 20 desks in the classroom.

   A) This is
   B) There is
   C) They are
   D) There are

6. Paul _____ romantic films.

   A) likes not
   B) don't like
   C) doesn't like
   D) isn't likes

7. Sorry, I can't talk. I _____ right now.

   A) driving
   B) 'm driving
   C) drives
   D) drive

8. She _____ at school last week.

   A) didn't be
   B) weren't
   C) wasn't
   D) isn't

9. I _____ the film last night.

   A) like
   B) likes
   C) liking
   D) liked

10. _____ a piece of cake? No, thank you.

    A) Do you like
    B) Would you like
    C) Want you
    D) Are you like

11. The living room is _____ than the bedroom

    A) more big
    B) more bigger
    C) biggest
    D) bigger

12. The car is very old. We're going _____ a new car soon.

    A) to buy
    B) buying
    C) to will buy
    D) buy

13. Jane is a vegetarian. She _____ meat.

    A) sometimes eats
    B) never eats
    C) often eats
    D) usually eats

14. There aren't _____ buses late in the evening.

    A) some
    B) any
    C) no
    D) a

15. The car park is _____ to the restaurant.

    A) next
    B) opposite
    C) behind
    D) in front

16. Sue _____ shopping every day.

    A) is going
    B) go
    C) going
    D) goes

www.englishtestsonline.com

17. They _____ in the park when it started to rain heavily.

A) walked
B) were walking
C) were walk
D) are walking

18. _____ seen fireworks before?

A) Did you ever
B) Are you ever
C) Have you ever
D) Do you ever

19. We've been friends _____ many years.

A) since
B) from
C) during
D) for

20. You _____ pay for the tickets. They're free.

A) have to
B) don't have
C) don't need to
D) doesn't have to

21. Jeff was ill last week and he _____ go out.

A) needn't
B) can't
C) mustn't
D) couldn't

22. These are the photos _____ I took on holiday.

A) which
B) who
C) what
D) where

23. We'll stay at home if it _____ this afternoon.

A) raining
B) rains
C) will rain
D) rain

24. He doesn't smoke now, but he _____ a lot when he was young.

A) has smoked
B) smokes
C) used to smoke
D) was smoked

25. Mark plays football _____ anyone else I know.

A) more good than
B) as better as
C) best than
D) better than

26. I promise I _____ you as soon as I've finished this cleaning.

A) will help
B) am helping
C) going to help
D) have helped

27. This town _____ by lots of tourists during the summer.

A) visits
B) visited
C) is visiting
D) is visited

28. He said that his friends _____ to speak to him after they lost the football match.

A) not want
B) weren't
C) didn't want
D) aren't wanting

29. How about _____ to the cinema tonight?

A) going
B) go
C) to go
D) for going

30. Excuse me, can you _____ me the way to the station, please?

A) give
B) take
C) tell
D) say

31. I wasn't interested in the performance very much. _____.

A) I didn't, too.
B) Neither was I.
C) Nor I did.
D) So I wasn't.

32. Take a warm coat, _____ you might get very cold outside.

A) otherwise
B) in case
C) so that
D) in order to

33. _____ this great book and I can't wait to see how it ends.

A) I don't read
B) I've read
C) I've been reading
D) I read

34. What I like more than anything else _____ at weekends.

A) playing golf
B) to play golf
C) is playing golf
D) is play golf

35. She _____ for her cat for two days when she finally found it in the garage.

A) looked
B) had been looked
C) had been looking
D) were looking

36. We won't catch the plane _____ we leave home now! Please hurry up!

A) if
B) providing that
C) except
D) unless

37. If I hadn't replied to your email, I _____ here with you now.

A) can't be
B) wouldn't be
C) won't be
D) haven't been

38. Do you think you _____ with my mobile phone soon? I need to make a call.

A) finish
B) are finishing
C) will have finished
D) are finished

39. I don't remember mentioning _____ dinner together tonight.

A) go for
B) you going to
C) to go for
D) going for

40. Was it Captain Cook _____ New Zealand?

A) who discovered
B) discovered
C) that discover
D) who was discovering

41. You may not like the cold weather here, but you'll have to _____, I'm afraid.

A) tell it off
B) sort itself out
C) put up with it
D) put it off

42. It's cold so you should _____ on a warm jacket.

A) put
B) wear
C) dress
D) take

43. Paul will look _____ our dogs while we're on holiday.

A) at
B) for
C) into
D) after

44. She _____ a lot of her free time reading.

A) does
B) spends
C) has
D) makes

45. Hello, this is Simon. Could I _____ to Jane, please?

A) say
B) tell
C) call
D) speak

46. They're coming to our house _____ Saturday.

A) in
B) at
C) on
D) with

47. I think it's very easy to _____ debt these days.

A) go into
B) become
C) go down to
D) get into

48. Come on! Quick! Let's get _____!

A) highlight
B) cracking
C) massive
D) with immediate effect

49. I phoned her _____ I heard the news.

A) minute
B) during
C) by the time
D) the moment

50. I feel very _____. I'm going to go to bed!

A) nap
B) asleep
C) sleepy
D) sleeper

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Appendix I

Answer Key

**STRAIGHTFORWARD QUICK PLACEMENT &
DIAGNOSTIC TEST – Answer Key**

1 c
2 d
3 a
4 b
5 d
6 c
7 b
8 c
9 d
10 b
11 d
12 a
13 b
14 b
15 a
16 d
17 b
18 c
19 d
20 c
21 d
22 a
23 b
24 c
25 d
26 a
27 d
28 c
29 a
30 c
31 b
32 a
33 c
34 c
35 c
36 d
37 b
38 c
39 d
40 a
41 c
42 a
43 d
44 b
45 d
46 c
47 d
48 b
49 d
50 c

Appendix J

Worksheets for speaking tests:

Do:

- Think about the types of topics and questions you may be asked before the exam. School, family, free time, daily routines and future plans are common topics.
- Practise answering simple questions about yourself. Work with a friend to practise or record yourself and listen to the recording.
- Listen carefully to the questions. If you don't understand the question, ask your teacher to repeat it.
- Give complete answers in full sentences.
- Look at the examiner. His/her face may tell you when you've said enough and he/she is ready for the next question.

Don't:

- Memorise your answers. It's good to have ideas ready, but it's better not to memorise long replies to typical questions.
- Just reply with 'yes' or 'no'.
- Panic if you are asked an unexpected question. Take a few seconds to think before you answer it.

Here are some examples of things you can say about yourself:

My name's ...
I'm from ... / I live in ...
I was born in ...
I'm ... years old.
I go to ... school.
I like ... because ...
I don't like ... because ...
In my free time / After school, I ...
My best friends are ... because ...
My favourite (school subject, actor, pop group, sport) is ... because ...
I have ... brothers and sisters.
In the future, I'd like to ... because ...

www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglishteens

2. Check your language: ordering – questions

1. What's your name?
2. How do you spell your surname?
3. Where do you come from?
4. Where do you live?
5. Which school do you go to?
6. What do you like doing in your free time?
7. What's your favourite subject at school?
8. How many brothers and sisters have you got?
9. What are your plans for the future?
10. Tell me about your best friend.

Appendix K

Cross-referencing data

Aspect	Observation/Interview	Student's Statement (B2)	Test Results/Outcome
Shyness and Participation	Identified as shy in classroom observations and personal interviews. School teacher identified B2 as being shy.	Admitted to being reticent in class; felt anxious speaking in front of others.	Improved confidence, especially in presentations. '…*a small presentation about my dog. I was really pleased with how it went and my performance; I didn't expect to feel that confident'*.
Technology in Learning	Preference for digital communication noted. '*WhatsApp is better for me because I can listen to recordings whenever I want, unlike being limited to just the class time*'	Found online tools and WhatsApp helpful for quick information and less stressful communication.	Voice-recordings-active. Feedback voice-recording-passive. *T3: I doubted that B2 would take part in WhatsApp chat.*
Interaction with Native Speakers	Observation (November): the students avoided camera in first two online lessons. Wednesday: Progressing; participate in conversation.	Interaction via Zoom and WhatsApp was novel and interesting. '*It is convenient*' '*It's interesting*' '*This is fantastic!*' '*…had not been experienced before and so was interesting*'.	Improvement in language skills, especially speaking.
Motivation and Engagement	Consistent attendance in language coach sessions; improved online engagement.	Reported increased intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for learning English after new teaching format.	Consistent attendance and active participation online.
Academic Performance	Gradual improvement in classroom engagement.	Figure: 11, 12, 13, 14	Improvement in all language skills, notable in speaking.

Attendance Patterns	Missed some school lessons but never missed language coach sessions.	Preferred WhatsApp for its flexibility.	Journal: missed 2/12 and 9/12
Self-esteem and Confidence	Improved willingness to participate in class activities.	Communication with language coaches helped improve self-esteem; felt less timid and anxious.	Growing confidence evident in class participation and presentations.

Student Name = B2.

Teachers 1,2,3,4 = identified as a shy student.

Observations:
 lessons with T₁ & T₂:
no hand-up.
sitting at the last desk.
Приятный парень, но не отвечает на вопрос.
Я думаю, что он может учиться, не глупый. Красенеет.

Lang. Coach:
На уроках убегает попадания в камер
Monday: Wednesday: — avoiding camera
Friday: absent. ⇒ Teachers

November, 28.
 Presentation about his dog. Progress!
Check with Diana. Feedback.
Tests: writing — +1
 Reading — +1
 Listening — +1
 Speaking. — +2? (Check again)
WhatsApp = Active (from week 3).

Appendix L

Approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Gloucestershire

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Via email

Milana Albakova
milanaalbakova@connect.glos.ac.uk

4 November 2020

Dr Emily Ryall
Research Ethics Committee Chair
Reader in Applied Philosophy

Oxstalls Campus,
Longlevens, Gloucester, GL2 9HW

Tel: +44 (0)1242 715237
Email: eryall@glos.ac.uk

Dear Milana

Thank you for your application for ethical approval.

I am pleased to confirm ethical clearance for your research following ethical review by the University of Gloucestershire – Research Ethics Committee (REC).

Please keep a record of this letter as a confirmation of your ethical approval.

|	
Project Title:	'The Impact of Using Social Networks (SNs) and Online Video Platforms (OVPs) to Support Communicative English Language Teaching in Ingushetia, Russia'
Start Date:	29 October 2020
Projected Completion Date:	30 September 2023
REC Approval Code:	REC.20.98.2

If you have any questions about ethical clearance please feel free to contact me. Please use your REC Approval Code in any future correspondence regarding this study.

Good luck with your research project.

Regards,
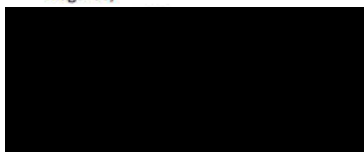
Dr Emily Ryall
Chair of Research Ethics Committee

Appendix M

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Request for Research Participation and Consent from Headmaster

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you as a PhD candidate at the University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom, where I am engaged in scholarly research for my dissertation. My study is titled "Investigating the Impact of Using Social Networks and Video Conferencing Services to Support Communicative English Language Teaching in Ingushetia, Russia." The primary objective of this research is to explore innovative methods for enhancing the quality of English language education in Ingushetia, with the potential for broader application across Russia.

The core aspect of my research involves interaction with English teachers and Year-10 students within your esteemed institution. My study methodology includes conducting 16 online lessons facilitated by native-speaking language coaches and observing 8 English classes in your school. Additionally, I intend to carry out semi-structured, individual interviews with selected students. These interviews, lasting approximately 20 minutes each, aim to gather insights into students' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of Social Networks and Online Video Platforms in their English language learning process.

I assure you that all data gathered will be transcribed and analysed with the utmost respect for privacy and confidentiality. To uphold these standards, all information will be anonymised, using pseudonyms for the school, its staff, and students. This measure ensures that the identity of all participants and the institution remains confidential. The data will be securely stored and will be disposed of responsibly upon the conclusion of the project.

It is important to note that participation in this project is entirely voluntary. All participants reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any

adverse consequences. My research will adhere strictly to the University of Gloucestershire's Code of Ethical Conduct, which guarantees the anonymity and confidentiality of all settings and participants involved throughout the research process.

The findings of this research will contribute significantly to my doctoral dissertation and are expected to offer valuable insights into improving English language teaching methodologies. I respectfully request your permission to proceed with this study within your school.

Thank you for considering my request. I am available to discuss any aspect of the research project and address any concerns you may have. Your cooperation in this academic endeavour would be greatly appreciated.

If you would like any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school, by email ██████████████ or phone ██ █████████ ██████████

Yours sincerely,

Milana Albakova

PhD Student, University of Gloucestershire

Supervisor Contact details:

Dr Paul Vare Research Convenor & EdD Course Leader School of Education

University of Gloucestershire

Francis Close Hall

Swindon Road

Cheltenham

GL50 4AZ

Tel: 01242 714752; Email: pvare@glos.ac.uk

Ethical approval from the University of Gloucestershire's Research Ethics Committee. For any queries around the ethics of the project, please contact the REC Chair Dr Emily Ryall at: eryall@glos.ac.uk

Appendix N

A Letter of Information to the Parent/Guardian

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Educational Research Study

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am writing to you in my capacity as a doctoral researcher at the University of Gloucestershire, specifically within the School of Education and Humanities. My current research endeavour, which forms a significant component of my professional development and academic pursuit, focuses on exploring innovative methodologies to enhance English language acquisition among learners. A key aspect of this investigation is examining the impact of integrating Social Networks and Online Video Platforms in language learning.

I am collaborating with four teachers from your child's [Name] for this project. The study involves a series of 16 online instructional sessions conducted by native English-speaking language coaches, complemented by observations of 8 English classes at the school. Furthermore, to gain a deeper understanding of the students' perspectives and experiences, I will conduct semi-structured interviews with selected participants. These interviews, each approximately 20 minutes in duration, are designed to elicit students' viewpoints on the utilisation of Social Networks and Online Video Platforms in their English language studies.

The confidentiality and anonymity of all participants are paramount in this research. To ensure this, pseudonyms will be used for the school, its faculty, and students involved in the study. All data collected will be securely stored and subsequently destroyed upon the completion of the project, adhering to ethical research standards.

Your child's participation in this study is entirely voluntary. They may withdraw at any point without any repercussions. Should you consent to your child's involvement in this research, kindly complete and return the enclosed consent form.

This project is conducted under the supervision of Dr. Paul Vare and Dr. Eve Tandoy at the University of Gloucestershire. Your support in this academic endeavour would significantly contribute to the field of educational research and potentially enhance English language teaching methodologies.

Thank you for considering this request. Please feel free to contact me for any further information or clarification.

If you would like any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school, by email ███████████████ or phone ███ ████████████ ████████████

Yours sincerely,

Milana Albakova

Supervisor Contact details:

Dr Paul Vare Research Convenor & EdD Course Leader School of Education

University of Gloucestershire

Francis Close Hall

Swindon Road

Cheltenham

GL50 4AZ

Tel: 01242 714752; Email: pvare@glos.ac.uk

Ethical approval from the University of Gloucestershire's Research Ethics Committee. For any queries around the ethics of the project, please contact the REC Chair Dr Emily Ryall at: eryall@glos.ac.uk

Appendix O

CONSENT FORM

TO BE COMPLETED BY YOUNG PERSON AND PARENT/GUARDIAN

PART A TO BE COMPLETED BY THE YOUNG PERSON

I agree to take part in the study on 'The Impact of Using Social Networks and Online Video Platforms to Support Communicative English Language Teaching in Ingushetia, Russia' and would like to take part in (please tick one or more of the following)

- ☐ a group discussion
- ☐ an individual interview

- ☐ I agree to the research interview being audio-recoded
- ☐ I agree to my research data including anonymised quotations will apply to qualitative/quantitative data only being used in publications or reports
- ☐ I agree to take part in the study
- ☐ I have been made aware of support services that are available if I need them
- ☐ I know who to contact if I have any concerns about this research

I have read and understood the accompanying letter. I know what the study is about and the part I will be involved in. I know that I do not have to answer all of the questions and that I can decide not to continue at any time.

Name _____

Signature _____ Age_____

PART B TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN

I have read and understood the accompanying letter and give permission for the child (named above) to be included.

Name _____

Relationship to child _____

Signature _____

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED TO THE RESEARCH

TEAM FOR THE NAMED YOUNG PERSON TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS STUDY. A

STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE HAS BEEN PROVIDED.

Appendix P

Information to the students

Dear Student,

I am Milana Albakova and I am currently pursuing a full time PhD at the University of Gloucestershire, School of Education and Humanities.

This study aims to explore an alternative method to enhance learners' English language learning and to investigate the effects of using Social Networks and Online Video Platforms on their performance.

Your English teachers are participating in the project.

The study involves a series of 16 online instructional sessions conducted by native English-speaking language coaches, complemented by observations of 8 English classes at the school. Before all these classes start, you will take a test to see what you already know in English. After the online classes are over, you will take another test to find out how much you have learned and if the online lessons helped you get better at English.

Furthermore, I will conduct semi-structured interviews. These interviews, each approximately 20 minutes in duration, are designed to elicit students' viewpoints on the utilisation of Social Networks and Online Video Platforms in their English language studies. I will transcribe the lessons and interviews and these transcripts will form the basis for my analysis. All transcripts will be anonymised and confidentiality is guaranteed.

Here are a couple of key points to consider before agreeing to participate:

• You will be provided with interview questions before the interview so that you are able to prepare.

• I would like to have a preliminary discussion with you so that I can respond to any of your questions.

• The interview will be audio-taped so that I can listen several times to prepare a written copy of the interviews.

• Your name will not be used in the interview rather you will be given a different name.

• Information from the interview will be stored in a secure place and destroyed once the project is complete.

• Participation in the project is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time within three months with no questions asked.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school, by email ███████████████████ or phone ███████████████████████ .

If you agree to participate in this study, please complete the included consent form and return it to me in the envelop provided.

I am looking forward to working with you and thank you in advance for your contribution

Milana Albakova

Supervisor Contact details:

Dr Paul Vare Research Convenor & EdD Course Leader School of Education

University of Gloucestershire

Francis Close Hall

Swindon Road

Cheltenham

GL50 4AZ

Tel: 01242 714752; Email: pvare@glos.ac.uk

Ethical approval from the University of Gloucestershire's Research Ethics Committee. For any queries around the ethics of the project, please contact the REC Chair Dr Emily Ryall at: eryall@glos.ac.uk

Translation:

Информация для студентов

Дорогой студент,

Меня зовут Милана Альбакова, и в настоящее время я работаю над докторской диссертацией в Школе педагогики и гуманитарных наук Университета Глостершира.

Целью данного исследования является изучение альтернативного метода улучшения изучения английского языка учащимися и изучение влияния использования социальных сетей и онлайн-видеоплатформ на их успеваемость.

В проекте участвуют ваши преподаватели английского языка.

Исследование включает в себя серию из 16 онлайн-занятий, проводимых преподавателями-носителями английского языка, а также наблюдения за 8 уроками английского языка в школе. Прежде чем начать все эти занятия, вы пройдете тест, чтобы узнать, что вы уже знаете по английскому языку. После окончания онлайн-занятий вы пройдете еще один тест, чтобы узнать, много ли вы выучили и помогли ли онлайн-уроки вам улучшить свои знания английского языка.

Кроме того, я буду проводить полуструктурированные интервью. Эти интервью, каждое продолжительностью около 20 минут, призваны выяснить точку зрения студентов на использование социальных сетей и онлайн-видеоплатформ при изучении английского языка. Я буду расшифровывать уроки и интервью, и эти

стенограммы лягут в основу моего анализа. Все стенограммы будут анонимизированы, конфиденциальность гарантирована.

Вот несколько ключевых моментов, которые следует учитывать, прежде чем согласиться на участие:

• Перед собеседованием вам будут предоставлены вопросы, чтобы вы могли подготовиться.

• Я хотела бы провести с вами предварительное обсуждение, чтобы я могла ответить на любые ваши вопросы.

• Интервью будет записано на аудиокассету, чтобы я могла прослушать его несколько раз и подготовить письменную копию интервью.

• Ваше имя не будет использоваться на собеседовании, вам дадут букву и цифру.

• Информация, полученная в ходе интервью, будет храниться в надежном месте и уничтожится после завершения проекта.

• Участие в проекте является добровольным и вы можете выйти в любой момент в течение трёх месяцев без каких-либо вопросов.

Если у вас есть какие-либо вопросы, пожалуйста, свяжитесь со мной в школе или по электронной почте ███████████ или по телефонам ███ ███████████

Если вы согласны участвовать в этом исследовании, пожалуйста, заполните прилагаемую форму согласия и верните ее мне в предоставленном конверте.

Я с нетерпением жду возможности поработать с вами и заранее благодарю вас за ваш вклад.

Милана Албакова

Контактные данные супервайзера:

Д-р Пол Вэр Руководитель исследований и руководитель курса.

Университет Глостершира

Фрэнсис Клоуз Холл

Суиндон-роуд

Челтнем

 GL50 4AZ

Тел: 01242 714752; Электронная почта: pvare@glos.ac.uk

Этическое одобрение Комитета по этике исследований Университета Глостершира. По любым вопросам, касающимся этики проекта, обращайтесь к председателю РЭЦ д-ру Эмили Райалл по адресу: eryall@glos.ac.uk.