

Adapting English Language Teaching: Moving Online During the COVID-19 Crisis



Inmaculada Fortanet-Gómez and Noelia Ruiz-Madrid

Abstract Online and blended teaching has been implemented in many higher education institutions for several decades now. However, the COVID-19 pandemic forced many institutions to change their face-to-face and blended teaching into exclusively online teaching. This resulted in a more frequent and different use of tools and teaching genres (i.e., digital genres) that could eventually lead teachers to the exploration of different teaching approaches. Some research has already focused on digital genres and their characteristics. However, the pandemic has disclosed new practices and applications, which have received limited attention up to now. The aim of the present research is to find out the effect of the COVID-19 crisis on English language teaching concerning the use of multimodal digital genres and tools. English language lecturers in 18 countries were surveyed in April 2020, in the early stages of the pandemic, and then 1 year later, in April 2021. Their answers show that, although most institutions moved to online teaching, it was in the frame of ‘emergency remote teaching’, as there was no real change in methodology. Indeed, teachers reported having learnt and used new tools for their online teaching. Some of them also mentioned the pedagogical advantages and specificities of digital genres for online teaching. Yet, results from the present study show that such expansion of emergent technologies has not led teachers to a further reflection on their teaching practices and ultimately to the adoption of a different pedagogy.

Keywords English language teaching · Online university teaching · Online genres · Multimodal genres · COVID-19

Supplementary Information The online version contains supplementary material available at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-27825-9_2.

I. Fortanet-Gómez (✉) · N. Ruiz-Madrid
English Studies Department, Universitat Jaume I, Castellón de la Plana, Spain
e-mail: fortanet@uji.es; madrid@uji.es

© The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature
Switzerland AG 2023

M.-M. Suárez, W. M. El-Henawy (eds.), *Optimizing Online English Language Learning and Teaching*, English Language Education 31,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-27825-9_2

1 Introduction

The disruption caused by COVID-19, which first appeared at the end of December 2019 in Wuhan, China (Ducharme, 2021), and its quick spreading to the rest of the world, forced all universities to rapidly move from face-to-face to online teaching (Gewin, 2020; Lau et al., 2020). This dramatic change has raised some critical questions regarding the capability of the universities and their faculty to cope with online teaching in an effective way, not only from the technical facilities perspective but also from the pedagogical one (Sabarini, 2020). Implementing online teaching requires an appropriate pedagogical approach to the teaching and learning process (Castañeda & Selwyn, 2019; Orsini-Jones, 2014), highly trained instructors able to adopt multiple roles (e.g., facilitators, lecturers, guides and supporters) (Luzón et al., 2010) as well as expert users of the new digital genres (Luzón & Pérez-Llantada, 2019). In the case of online language learning and teaching, teachers need to reflect on how to promote the free choice of the materials and the way, time and pace to use them. Interaction and collaborative learning have to be at the core of teachers' pedagogical practices as online learning students especially value the facilities given to engage in discussion with their peers and instructor (Palloff & Pratt, 2013), which becomes particularly relevant in language teaching where oral skills must be practised.

Indeed, the effective combination of all these aspects makes online teaching a challenge for universities, which, still prefer to offer face-to-face or blended-learning courses to full online teaching. However, the COVID-19 crisis compelled universities and faculty to assume this challenge overnight. This sudden need to move online was termed by some researchers as 'emergency remote teaching' (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020, i) or "emergency eLearning" (Murphy, 2020, p. 492). One of the main differences between online distance education and emergency remote teaching is that the former has always been an alternative for learners, whereas the latter is an obligation. Bozkurt and Sharma (2020, ii) use "emergency remote teaching" to differentiate the present situation due to COVID-19 from online distance education, which "involves more than simply uploading educational content, rather, it is a learning process that provides learners agency, responsibility, flexibility and choice". On the other hand, Murphy (2020) discusses "emergency eLearning" as the most appropriate response to the population, especially university students, against COVID-19, and visualises this situation as a threat if it became permanent, but also as an opportunity to take advantage of the benefits it may disclose for the future education panorama.

Teachers have been forced to adapt their teaching practices to the online context by using "emergent technologies" (Godwin-Jones, 2016). These technologies can be new developments of already known ones (e.g., the development of Google Meet) or pedagogical applications of technologies well established in other fields of human activity (e.g., the use of WhatsApp for the language classroom) (Adell & Castañeda, 2012; Veletsianos, 2010), which may lead to the use of new digital genres and new literacy practices (Luzón et al., 2010). That is the case of the study

by Milojkovic (2019), who explores what Skype –a popular tool for personal and business video calls– can afford in the English language teaching field; or the study by Andujar (2020), who investigates the effectiveness of WhatsApp and Instagram as blended learning tools in the English language learning context. In fact, in the last 10 years the Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 technologies have already afforded a new era of teaching activity characterised, on the one hand, by new teaching environments such as virtual classrooms, social media, videoconferencing, and learning management systems (Horban et al., 2021) and, on the other hand, by the emergence of new digital genres, such as OpenCourseWare lectures (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2020), discussion forums, wikis (Kelly & Miller, 2016), or webinars (Ruiz-Madrid & Fortanet-Gómez, 2017).

Adell and Castañeda (2012) propose a parallel concept to “emerging technologies”: “emerging pedagogies”. The educational use of “emerging technologies” generates the publication of experiences and the discussion on their possibilities. As a result, there should be a co-evolution of technologies and their pedagogical use. However, there are factors such as the attitude, the lack of time or the lack of specific training that may hinder the use of technologies within a robust pedagogical framework. Consequently, there may be a disruption between “emerging technologies” and “emerging pedagogies”, in which “emerging technologies” are only adapted by teachers to continue with their traditional teaching methodologies disregarding the numerous possibilities digital tools and genres can offer to make their teaching practices evolve into ‘emerging pedagogies’. An example can be the use of Course Management Systems (CMS) (e.g., Moodle) as repositories for documents which were traditionally provided in the form of printed dossiers or books.

In this paper, we analyse how ELT teachers in 18 countries in Europe, America, Asia and Oceania have made use of “emerging technologies” during the COVID-19 crisis and try to disclose whether their moving to online teaching involved a transformation of their teaching practice by adopting/developing “emerging pedagogies” (Adell & Castañeda, 2012). We presuppose a main difficulty for the co-evolution of technologies and their pedagogical¹ use, as in this situation online teaching was compulsory for everyone, there was no time for training, especially in its very beginning, and the urgent objective was the continuation of the classes rather than reflecting on the use of certain technology to improve or to change previous teaching processes.

¹Please note that “didactic” and “pedagogical” are used as synonyms in this chapter.

1.1 Personal Teaching Environments in English Language Teaching: Digital Tools and Applications for Language Teaching

The concept of “Personal Teaching Environment” (PTE) is understood as “the set of tools, information sources and activities that a teacher uses in order to teach”, parallel to the concept of “Personal Learning Environment” (PLE), “a set of tools, information sources, connections and activities that a person uses regularly in order to learn²” (Adell & Castañeda, 2012, p. 23). As already mentioned, in this paper we aim at exploring to what extent teachers incorporated emergent digital tools and applications in their Personal Teaching Environment during the COVID-19 online teaching period and to what extent their use resulted in ‘emergent pedagogies’ and transformed teachers’ teaching methodologies in the field of English language teaching.

The use of emergent technologies to improve the effectiveness of learning in general, and language learning in particular, has continued to grow during the last two decades. At the time of writing the current chapter (October 2021), teachers can take advantage of virtual classrooms provided by Learning Management Systems (LMS) or Content Management Systems (CMS), such as Moodle or Blackboard (Cabero-Almenara et al., 2019), which afford different functionalities like content management (e.g., to place materials in an ordered way, so that students can have access to them chronologically or thematically), the curation of web-resources, or asynchronous and synchronous communication tools (e.g., a forum or a chat); video-conferencing tools such as Google Meet, Zoom, Skype, or social media applications such as Instagram or WhatsApp. These tools allow teachers to communicate with students both synchronously and asynchronously by means of videoconferencing or the recording of lectures or explanations to be shared online later. For instance, Cuaca Dharma et al. (2017) explore Zoom and Skype and conclude that these tools are effective for grammar and conversation learning in an online learning medium by making the participants interact both in writing and orally and share a presentation screen. Andujar (2020), in turn, explores the potential of Instagram and WhatsApp for the development of communication skills (oral and written skills) and for the design of online tasks in blended language learning environments.

Software packages also provide fundamental tools for enriching language teaching. In this category, Google Workspace and Microsoft Office are worth mentioning. Some studies have proved the effectiveness of Google Workspace for language teaching (Kakoulli Constantinou, 2018). This software package (Google, 2020) has 13 applications that can be used on a PC/Laptop in a computer or with a mobile phone. Some of the most widely utilised applications in higher education seem to be Google Meet for video conferencing, Google Drive to store and share files, Google Forms in order to make simple surveys, and Google Docs, Sheets and Slides in order to create online documents in collaboration (Kakoulli Constantinou, 2018). Regarding Microsoft Office, PowerPoint (PPT) is one of the most popular tools to

²Translation by the authors.

assist teachers when delivering their lectures. Literature on the benefits of PPT for lecturing is extensive. PPT can provide teachers with a roadmap, reinforcing what they say and affording multimodal input that can support different learning styles (Ögeyik, 2016). In the case of language teaching, the visual support of PPT can help the learner to remember vocabulary and to better understand grammar points. Finally, there are numerous banks of curated web resources that allow teachers to reinforce or complement their teaching such as the one created by the BBC.³

All these digital tools and resources share one common trait: multimodality. They include different semiotic modes such as images, sounds, videos, hyperlinks, and some even require multimodal oral and written skills. In fact, some of them such as weblogs or forums can be considered as a multimodal digital genre in themselves. Online teaching, thus, goes hand in hand with the development of the digital competence (Redecker & Punie, 2017) and the multimodal competence (Kress, 2003; Ruiz-Madrid & Valeiras-Jurado, 2020). Therefore, teachers need to understand the role of the digital and multimodal affordances in order to develop and design effective “emerging pedagogies” in an online teaching context. To reach this objective, it will be important to provide an evidence-based perspective on what works and does not work but, most importantly, “to understand the characteristics, the processes, the outcomes and the implications of online practices” to prepare and fulfil adequate teacher training, as advocated by Carrillo and Flores (2020, p. 467).

The aim of the study reported in this chapter was to find out the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on English language teaching with a special focus on how the forced migration to online teaching affected the teaching approaches and the methodology used, always from the point of view of the teacher. The research questions we intend to answer are:

RQ1. How did the COVID-19 crisis affect English language teaching?

RQ2. How did it affect the language teaching methodology used?

RQ3. Which were the most frequent emergent digital tools in emergency remote English language teaching?

RQ4. What do teachers think will be their use of online practices in future English language teaching after their recent experience?

By providing insights into English language teachers’ reported practices on their online teaching experiences during the COVID-19 crisis, this paper intends to contribute to the analysis of how this crisis has affected the teaching practices of language teachers in Higher Education, to what extent the online teaching context has made them transform their Personal Teaching Environments and to what extent the presence of digital genres has increased. The results may help institutions take advantage of the experience acquired during this “emergency remote teaching period” and contribute to the elaboration of teacher training programmes that lead to effective “emergent pedagogy” in online distance or blended English language teaching.

³<https://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/forwork/index.shtml>.

2 Method

2.1 Participants

A total of 43 lecturers from 18 countries participated in our study (see Table 1). They were randomly approached according to two main criteria: (i) they had to be teaching English language in a university and (ii) they should have experienced being in lock down due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis for at least 2 weeks when answering the first questionnaire. Some of them were authors' contacts and others were approached by some colleagues. They were informed about the aim of the research and voluntarily accepted to participate and to share their personal data, which have been kept undisclosed. The 43 participants answered the first questionnaire (Appendix 1 at <https://sites.google.com/uji.es/movingonlinecovid/home/appendix-1>).

As for their experience at the university, most of the participants (81%, $n = 35$) had been teaching for more than 10 years and were teaching a wide range of subjects at different educational levels related to ESP and General English as shown in Table 2 below.

Regarding the second questionnaire (see questions in Appendix 2 at <https://sites.google.com/uji.es/movingonlinecovid/home/appendix-2>), all the respondents to the first questionnaire were contacted again, but only 35 of the 43 participants responded. This second questionnaire was distributed in April 2021, that is, 1 year later than the first questionnaire. Our aim was to find out about the participants' teaching situation and their opinions and reflections on their teaching experience during COVID-19 time. With reference to their situation, results show similar figures to those obtained in the first questionnaire during the first period of the pandemic crisis as shown in Table 3 below. Among the 43 participants in the survey, only 7 (16%) were not teaching online at the time of their response, either because they did not have teaching tasks in the current semester or because their university had decided to stop teaching and not provide online teaching either. That was the case of Kuwait, where online teaching was provided in the first weeks of lockout but was later suspended. One year later, 22.8% (8 participants) were teaching exclusively online, 17.1% ($n = 65$) were already teaching face-to-face and 5.7% ($n = 2$) combined online and

Table 1 Distribution of participants' responses and code for the countries

Country	N° of responses
China (Ch), Japan (J), USA(US), Brasil (B), Australia (A), Italy (I), Lithuania (L), Austria (au), Poland (P), Turkey (T) and Kuwait (K)	2 x country
Belgium (Be)	7
Spain (Sp), Sweden (S)	4 x country
Portugal (Po)	3
Canada (C), New Zealand (NZ) and UK (U)	1 x country
Total number of countries: 18	Total responses:43

Table 2 Characteristics of the teachers responding to the first and second questionnaire

Questions	Responses (Total n = 43)
Years teaching English in a HEI	More than 20 years: 44% (n = 19) Between 20–10 years: 37% (n = 16) Less than 10 years: 19% (n = 8)
Subjects and Degrees	Bachelor level: Corpus Linguistics, Introduction to English, English for Academic Purposes, Second Language Acquisition, English Language teaching, Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, English for Business, Scientific English, Introduction to ESP, English and the virtual world, Pronunciation and Comprehension, English for Science and Technology, Maritime English. Master Level: Discourse analysis, MA thesis course, Applied linguistics, Pragmatics of Spoken interaction, Research methods, Introduction to Corpus Linguistics, World Englishes, Language and Society, Language and Diversity. PHD level: Academic Writing and speaking in English, Professional writing.
Previous experience in online teaching	Yes: 55.8% (n = 24) No: 44.2% (n = 19)

Table 3 Participants' situation when answering the first and second questionnaire

Questions	Responses Q2 (Total n = 35)	Responses Q1 (Total n = 43)
Teaching online at that moment	Yes, exclusively online: 77.% (n = 27) Blended teaching (online/face-to-face) 5.7% (n = 2) No, exclusively face-to-face 17.1% (n = 6)	Yes: 84% (n = 36) No: 16% (n = 7)
Experience in online teaching during Coronavirus crisis	For 6 months: 17% (n = 6) From 6 to 12 months 26% (n = 9) For 1 year: 48,5% (n = 17) For more than 1 year: 8.5% (n = 3)	From 2 weeks to 8 weeks: 88% (n = 38) More than 8 weeks: 7% (n = 3) No teaching: 6% (n = 2)

face-to-face teaching. On the other hand, at the time of answering the first survey, those who were teaching online had been doing so for between 2 months (participants from China) to and 2 weeks which was the minimum required. After 1 year, the time they had been teaching online varied from between 6 months to over 1 year. Nearly half of the participants, 48.5% (n = 17), had been teaching online for 1 year, 17% (n = 6) for 6 months, 26% (n = 9) from 6 to 12 months and 8.5% (n = 3) for more than 1 year. However, these differences respond to personal and academic circumstances and are not related to a university or a country policy according to the participants' answers. What is most relevant for the research is that the situation at the time of responding to the first and the second questionnaire was rather similar, with 84% and 77.3% of the respondents teaching online respectively, a situation which had continued for over 1 year for almost 60% of the participants in the second survey.

2.2 *Instruments and Procedure*

As mentioned in the previous section, two different questionnaires were elaborated using Google Forms and participants were sent a link to respond. An exception was made with the Chinese respondents, who were sent a Word document, since Google is not officially accessible from China. The aim of distributing two different questionnaires in two different periods was to observe how the teaching situation reported by teachers in the first questionnaire had evolved in time.

Questionnaire 1 (Q1) included 13 questions (see Appendix 1 at <https://sites.google.com/uji.es/movingonlinecovid/home/appendix-1>). The first four questions were used to find out the profile of the respondents (as presented in 2.1.). Then, they were asked about their teaching experience, as well as the impact of online teaching on their methodology. The next questions dealt with the platforms and applications they had used and the tasks and digital genres they had worked with. Respondents were also required to define the digital approaches they used the most, and finally they were asked about their intentions to use the online genres in their future teaching. Questionnaire 2 (Q2) included 17 questions (see Appendix 2 at <https://sites.google.com/uji.es/movingonlinecovid/home/appendix-2>). The first four questions focused on collecting new information that could have changed as compared to Questionnaire 1 regarding the participants' profile. Then teachers were asked about their teaching experience at that moment and the possible methodological changes, new genres and management platforms participants might have adopted during their teaching in the COVID crisis. Finally, teachers were asked about their views on the changes their teaching had gone through during COVID-19 crisis and whether they saw these changes as permanent in their future post-COVID-19 teaching.

In order to analyse the results, the open answers to the questionnaires have been provided with a code that consists of the number of the questionnaire (1 or 2), the initial of the country the respondent comes from (see codes in Table 1) followed by P (Participant) and a number that represents the order in which the filled in questionnaires were received (ex. 1BeP2 indicates first questionnaire, Belgium and filled-in questionnaire received in second place). The results were compared on quantitative and qualitative bases depending on the questions. Both researchers analysed the answers separately and then compared and discussed them and decided on the best option when they disagreed.

3 Results

In order to present the results, they will be related to the four research questions about the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on language subjects and on their methodology,

3.1 *Effects of the COVID-19 Crisis on English Language Teaching*

First, it should be highlighted that almost 44.2% (n = 19) of the participants had already taught online before, although there are differences when comparing several countries. Online teaching seems to be less usual in Belgium (only 1 out of 7 participants) than in Spain (all participants had taught online). This means that for almost half of the participants teaching online was not something new. So, while some had already experienced it and felt comfortable with it, others found it very challenging, especially due to the pressure and the lack of time to prepare for it. The main problems teachers had, were related to technicalities, especially when preparing online exams, and the fear of not having enough control of the new channels and tools as reported by 1BeP2, who felt “[s]tressed about potential technical problems (on both the teacher’s and the students’ side) and worried at the prospect of doing official exams online”. As one of the respondents said, most were “[b]oth excited and nervous” (1TP23) (8 similar responses) or just felt excited about it (13 replies in this sense). Their doubts about the results of using the new delivery mode and the digital genres needed for this delivery mode made teachers nervous. In contrast, the opportunities to learn new ways of teaching as reported by 1CP11, who describes the situation as a “a new learning experience”, also made them excited, as explained by one participant from Lithuania:

I think it is a very interesting experience and it did develop my skills as a teacher in various respects. For one thing, I have had to get a firmer grasp on the software and apps that could be used for online communication. It opened an entirely new world of possibilities that could be effectively used in the future. Second, I had to rethink some of the tasks that could only be performed in class and change them to more creative tasks⁴. (1LP7)

Other respondents also referred to problems such as inequity issues regarding an overload of work as compared to the previous situation before COVID (1AuP12), limitations in the access to technologies as computers often had to be shared by several members of a family (1NZP28), invasion of privacy when teachers or students had to show their private house or even their bedroom on the screen (1BP34), or how disorienting it may be to speak mostly to a computer screen (1IP9).

These are problems that do not appear in the second questionnaire. After 1 year of COVID-19 teaching, the respondents were asked about what the pandemic had represented for them. In general, they mentioned a great development in the introduction of new technologies, as a positive point, though still missing face-to-face learning especially important in language teaching, as seen in 2BP33’s words:

Although I feel like I’ve gained some experience in teaching online, I do think that ‘on campus’ teaching works better for language classes/workshops because of the face-to-face interaction and informality. (2BP33)

⁴Please notice that the participants’ quotations have been reproduced verbatim, and there may be some mistakes.

3.2 *Perceived Effect of the Changes Due to COVID-19 Crisis on the Methodology*

The first question lecturers were asked in April 2020 was about the way they carried out their teaching, whether it was synchronous, that is students need to attend the online lecture live, or asynchronous, that is materials including pre-recorded lectures are made available to students, who can have access to them whenever they wish. Many teachers (60.5%, $n = 26$) opted for a combination of synchronous and asynchronous teaching, though over 18% ($n = 8$) still preferred only synchronous and 9% ($n = 4$) asynchronous contact with their students. The comparison of the two pie charts in Fig. 1 also shows that in 2021 asynchronous teaching had disappeared, 8.6% was already face-to-face and there was also hybrid teaching (half of the classes were synchronous online and half of them were face-to-face).

When asked if they changed their methodology of teaching, 24 in Q1 and 23 teachers in Q2 (55.8% and 65.7%, respectively) acknowledged the main changes they made consisted in providing specific guidelines on each task and organising their online materials, 13 in Q1 and 19 in Q2 (32% and 54%, respectively). For instance, one Italian lecturer (1IP13) referred to the pandemic teaching as “the chance to rethink my way of teaching” and added “now I organise better the materials, I provide an introduction to each unit or class to explain how to use the materials and I provide specific guidelines on each task.” This is in line with what 16 participants (37%) answered in 2020. They provided an introduction to each unit and 14 (32.6%) also supplied a key for all the activities. However, only 11 (31%) and 8 (23%) did so in 2021. Some respondents added other answers: they were using more creative tools for their activities (16.46% in Q2) or had added new activities such as asking questions and providing feedback via chat (1BeP2) or encouraging students to take a more active role by completing quizzes and submitting tasks and assignments within a specific period of time (1SP5). This is clearly reflected in 1Pop27’s answer to Q1:

Firstly I provided an introductory video where I explained how classes were going to work during this period. Then, in the first ppt made available to the students, I presented and explained the icons used in the lessons (lead-in/ content/ Practice/ assignment to hand in, etc). In terms of structure, I made sure that each lesson had - an explanation for each slide (as if I was speaking to the students); - materials/exercises for independent practice (with solutions provided); - both video and listening study and practice materials; - supplementary materials for those who wanted to progress in their learning and develop their language competence; - a "tip of the day" where a suggestion is made, eg., to a link to an online visual dictionary; to english online video lessons; karaoke, etc.

Q2 was more specific about methodology changes and the responses indicated that teachers adapted (77%, $n = 27$) and created (60%, $n = 21$) materials for the digital contexts, and introduced new digital tools and resources (71%, $n = 25$) in their teaching as shown in 2BeP12’s answer:

I use videoconferencing to teach bigger groups of students, and interactive tools (e.g., Menti) to prompt answers from students in a non-threatening way. I use collaborative writ-

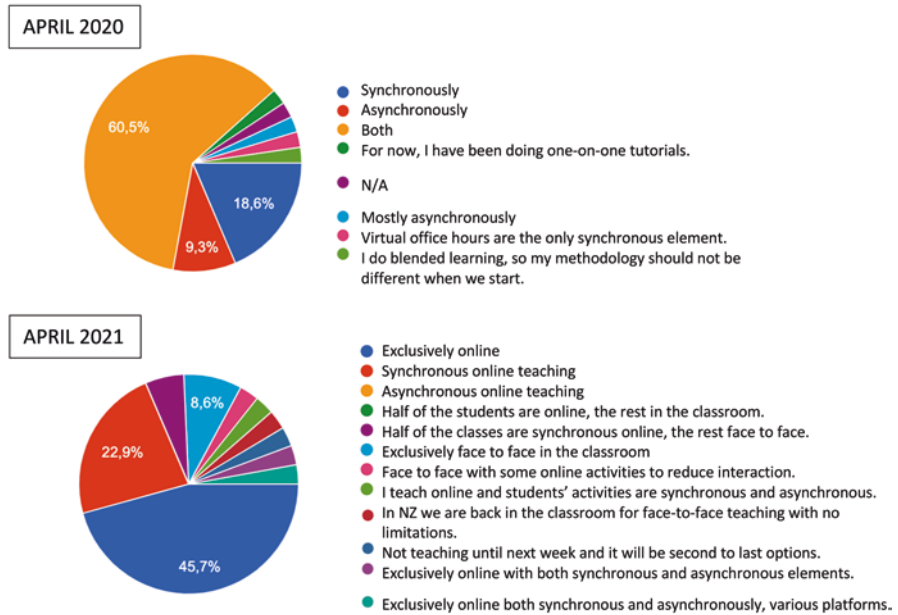


Fig. 1 Teaching in April 2020 and in April 2021

ing tools for pair and teamwork (also on campus, because students cannot come close to each other). Finally, I use video recordings and multimedia presentations as online material that students prepare before they come on campus.

Some other teachers 22.8% (n = 8) said they did not consider they had changed their methodology either because they were already doing blended teaching or because they just adapted the materials or the channel of lectures trying not to alter the methodology as seen below:

I do set similar tasks in a similar order for every class session to avoid confusion. I may be able to become more flexible as both the students and myself become more accustomed to our new reality. (1JP17)

In general, the participants involved in this project did not seem to plan for long-term online teaching, so their online practices seemed to imitate face-to-face classes when teaching online.

[I use digital tools] very differently depending on the task and the intended learning outcome. But in general, I use them to mimic something I might want to achieve in a f2f session. So, I haven't re-designed all my activities sufficiently yet. On the up - I'm more careful with collecting feedback with all of these new session designs. (1SP28)

As for the consequences of the changes due to COVID-19 on language teaching, Q2 respondents highlighted some negative aspects such as lack of socialisation and group cohesion among students (48.6%, n = 17), difficulties when teaching online

as teachers cannot see their audiences (45.7%, n = 16) and impossibility to check students' real attendance online (43%, n = 15).

3.3 *Most Frequent Platforms, Online Tools and Digital Genres in Emergency Remote English Language Teaching*

Teachers were asked in both questionnaires about the digital resources they were using in their emergency remote English language teaching. Concerning platforms, Moodle was clearly predominant in the first period (35%, n = 15, in Q1), though it became second after 1 year, when Google Classroom had taken the lead (69%, n = 24). Blackboard Collaborate, however, was only selected by a few institutions during the whole period, and even fewer teachers selected other systems like Bongo, Canvas, Big Blue Button, the Chinese Tencent tools and special institutionally designed CMS, all of them included in Other in Table 4.

As for online tools, we make a distinction between those video conferencing tools that were used for lecturing such as Zoom or Google Meet, among others, and those used to support teaching, for the creation of materials or complementary resources, such as Kahoot, Mentimeter, or Google docs.

Regarding the online lecturing tools (see Table 5), Zoom was predominant in the whole period with a clear growing tendency (30.2%, n = 13 in Q1, and 91.4%, n = 32 in Q2); Teams also consolidated its position (7%, n = 3 in Q1 and 69%, n = 24 in Q2); and Google Meet grew more moderately (11.6%, n = 5 in Q1 and 26%, n = 9 in Q2). Other lecturing tools less frequently used included Webex, Skype, Bluejeans and the Chinese Tencent tools.

This question had free choice answers and many of the respondents reported to have used more than one platform and online lecturing tool. Moreover, the answers to this question showed some differences related to countries or institutions. For example, institutions such as Ghent University in Belgium decided all teachers should use Bongo and Ufora, though they were not very popular CMS in other places. Moreover, in China where Google cannot be accessed, English language teachers used Tencent Classroom, Tencent Meet and Rain Classroom, which can

Table 4 Use of CMS

Cms	Moodle	Blackboard collaborate	Google classroom	Other
<i>Questionnaire 1</i>	35% (n = 15)	11.6% (n = 5)	4.7% (n = 2)	32.5% (n = 14)
<i>Questionnaire 2</i>	46% (n = 16)	22.8% (n = 8)	69% (n = 24)	22.8% (n = 8)

Table 5 Use of online lecturing tools

Lecturing tools	Zoom	Google meet	Teams	Other
<i>Questionnaire 1</i>	30.2% (n = 13)	11.6% (n = 5)	7% (n = 3)	20.9% (n = 9)
<i>Questionnaire 2</i>	91.4% (n = 32)	26% (n = 9)	69% (n = 24)	37.1% (n = 13)

only be used within this country, and which replicate the Google tools. On the other hand, a few institutions, for example, in Kuwait, asked teachers to use the platforms created by their universities.

Regarding the teachers' experiences in the use of CMS and online lecturing tools, one of the lecturers surveyed explained how they used the Moodle platform.

We work with Moodle, so all my info & activities are there. I have a 'topic' for each lesson and there I include the slides, activities (e.g., forums, wikis, quizzes), video chat, normal chat; so far, I've also added asynchronous videos, in which I explain what the lesson is about and/or how to do some activities. If the videochat function works well in the future, I will stick to that and give my instructions synchronously. (1AtP12)

Concerning the online tools used to support language teaching, in April 2020 teachers did not mention any specific online tool except for those afforded by the CMS or platform they were using at that moment. However, in April 2021, teachers did mention specific tools such as Menti, Kahoot or Google docs:

I use videoconferencing to teach bigger groups of students, and interactive tools (e.g., Menti) to prompt answers from students in a non-threatening way. I use collaborative writing tools for pair and teamwork (also on campus, because students cannot come close to each other). (2BeP12)

As shown in Table 6, when asked in Q1 about the digital genres lecturers had used for the first time in their online classes, and were still being used after 1 year (Q2), videoconferencing was the most often employed (51.2%, n = 22 (Q1) and 77%, n = 27 (Q2)), followed by chats (41.9%, n = 18 and 74.3%, n = 26), recorded videos (25.6%, n = 11 and 62.9%, n = 22), voice over slide presentations (25.6%, n = 11 and 45.7%, n = 16), and forums (20.9%, n = 9 and 60%, n = 21).

We also asked our informants about the most relevant genre for their online teaching and a description of it. They pointed out videoconferences (42.8%, n = 18), followed at a distance by dubbed or voice over Prezi and PowerPoint presentations (19%, n = 8), in which the students can see the slides and listen to the voice of their teacher explaining them. One of the lecturers made a detailed description of how she used videoconference.

I scheduled each class in Colibri/Zoom and got an ID number which I sent to all students inviting them to attend the videoconference/videoclass. At the scheduled time I "entered" the meeting room and was able to talk to students. In the first class it was mainly clearing doubts, but in the following classes I have been addressing some parts of the content (made available beforehand to all students in ppt classes) and going through specific items that may present some problems for the students. It was very useful that this platform allows the

Table 6 Use of digital genres

Digital Genres	<i>Questionnaire 1</i>	<i>Questionnaire 2</i>
Videoconference	51.2% (n = 22)	77.1% (n = 27)
Recorded videos	25.6% (n = 11)	62.9% (n = 22)
Voice over presentations	25.6% (n = 11)	45.7% (n = 16)
Chats	41.9% (n = 18)	74.3% (n = 26)
Forums	20.9% (n = 9)	60% (n = 21)

teacher to share documents on the screen and use a white board to write and share that information with the students. (1TP27)

Most teachers both in Q1 and Q2 (see Table 6) reported having recorded synchronous video conferences and made them available to students for asynchronous use. Other teachers opted for pre-recorded videos to be used asynchronously. We also noticed different interpretations for this digital genre. For example, while most teachers understood video conferences as online lecturing, one respondent said that video calls (mentioned as “video conferences”) were “a good replacement for [face-to-face] office hours” (1USP29). Along this line, teachers also consider the use of chats and forums as an effective tool to foster student-student or teacher-student interaction in English in online sessions:

Chat and videolecture are mostly used in my online teaching. The chat allows real-time interactions with students. (1AP11)

I find “forum” is a flexible tool that prompts participation among students and serves a variety of purposes like asking for explanation, peer reviewing, challenging students by posing quick questions ... It also provides a chance for informal communication in the foreign language. (2SpP6)

3.4 Possible Effect of Online Practices in Future Language Teaching in Higher Education

The final question posed to teachers was about their plans for the future. When answering Q1, some of them (9.5%, n = 4) seemed to be so overwhelmed with their present obligations that they said they had not yet thought about this. The rest (92.8%, n = 39) responded in three different ways: they had not yet made a decision on that (19%, n = 8), they either believed they would carry on using some applications or materials (66.6%, n = 28), or they responded they would not (7.1%, n = 3), as it may affect class attendance (1BeP2) or because they did not think it is appropriate for their language teaching (1SP26). Indeed, some of them had doubts about the usefulness of the materials for their future teaching:

The current method and approach are rather a working alternative, which had to be developed in haste. If one day the Faculty decides to redesign this course into a 100% online, live lectures and voice over ppt using Panopto might be used. Tutorial activities might also be offered via Bb Collaborate or MS Teams. However, given that it is a language-rich course with a particular emphasis on academic written communication, I am not yet sure if online interaction can replace face-to-face instruction and the value the latter brings. There's certainly a different feel and experience. (1NZP28)

In general, lecturers seemed to be more positive about the online experience in Q2 and made more general comments. Almost all respondents said they see blended learning, partly face-to-face and partly online, as the most common in the future. They will also organise better their materials, as they have been forced to do when teaching online and will foster online uploading of writing tasks and videos for

speaking skills assessment, as a specific use of technologies in the English language classroom. One of the respondents even saw an opportunity to change to a flipped classroom, after their online experience: “flipping classroom and switching to a coaching style deepens learning and allows for more catering to individual needs” (1BeP31).

4 Discussion

The objective of this study was to find out how the COVID-19 crisis affected English language teaching in terms of the methodology employed and the digital tools and genres adopted.

First of all, it must be pointed out that the participants in the present study were English language teachers from universities all over the world who were contacted in two different periods for two reasons. First, it was expected the answers to the first questionnaire would show a worldwide view of the effect of the COVID-19 crisis on English language teaching concerning the use of tools and digital genres. Secondly, teachers’ answers to the second questionnaire would unveil whether the changes reported in the first questionnaire had survived time and to what extent had been incorporated in the teaching of English language, paving the way for ‘emerging pedagogies’ (see Sect. 1.1).

In April 2020, due to the pandemic, almost all the participants had moved in a very short period of time from face-to-face to online teaching, and, after one complete year, in April 2021, 80% of the respondents remained teaching online or hybrid. The main difference is that in the first period it was usual to find synchronous and asynchronous teaching, while the latter disappeared 1 year later in April 2021. Instead, other hybrid and blended modalities were implemented to comply with the limitations of the number of students on campus. The reason may be the unsuccessful results of asynchronous teaching in which it is very difficult to control the learning pace of the students, as they are free to read or study the materials whenever they wish, and the lack of lecturers’ training to design pedagogical proposals that offer such a flexible learning approach. However, the freedom to choose the materials and the time to learn with them is one of the bases of online teaching, as reported by Palloff and Pratt (2013), and should be promoted in the case of moving from face-to-face to online teaching.

The results revealed a twofold perspective on the experience teachers lived through, which is clearly reflected in their responses shown in Sect. 3.2. On the one hand, and in the first period of the study (RQ1), participants mainly expressed negative aspects such as the difficulties to foster collaborative work or to create group cohesion, to teach without a visible audience or to check students’ real presence in online lecturing, which do not seem to be specific of the discipline but general. Results also indicate lecturers’ anxiety, nervousness, and insecurity due to their lack of knowledge and unawareness about digital and multimodal genres. It seems that many teachers felt they were not ready to assume the multiple challenges the online

learning context brings about, such as curation of resources or effective use of digital genres for pedagogical purposes, as reported by Luzón et al. (2010). These results are in line with the research findings by Redecker and Punie (2017), Ruiz-Madrid and Valeiras-Jurado (2020) and Carrillo and Flores (2020). On the other hand, teachers also viewed this emergency remote learning as an opportunity to move forward in their teaching practices, but mainly referred to the elaboration of materials adapted to online teaching using the available technologies, rather than a reflection leading to online teaching.

Regarding RQ2, results show that, although teachers considered the ‘emergency remote online teaching’ as an opportunity to reflect on their teaching and acquire new skills (see quotations in Sect. 3), they do not seem to have consciously adopted emergent pedagogies. Indeed, most lecturers in April 2021 just highlighted they had adapted their teaching to the circumstances with no time to go beyond. However, when asked what the main changes had been, they acknowledged a better and more conscious organization of their teaching and classroom interaction. In this line, teachers were more aware of the nature of the materials needed for teaching languages in a digital context as well as the need for more instructions, and exercises and activities (RQ1 and RQ2) with keys for self-assessment. They also showed specific concern on the promotion of vertical (teacher-students) and horizontal (students-students) classroom interaction, understood as offering the students the possibility of using tools and digital genres that afforded a more effective practice (i.e., Menti, Kahoot, forums, chats, among others) or in other cases, participating in chats and forums. At this point, it seems that teachers perceive that oral interaction, which is fundamental in English language teaching and regularly promoted in face-to-face teaching, is a difficult skill to be included in the online context, being replaced by student-reaction devices (i.e., Kahoot) or written interaction (i.e., chats or forums).

COVID-19 does not seem to have brought a change in methodology in the English language subjects. The main reasons appear to be the temporality of the situation, accompanied by the lack of time to prepare the materials, in some cases the lack of training received, and more importantly, the need to continue teaching English-language related subjects that had not been designed for being taught online. However, most teachers acknowledged a much more frequent use of technological applications, as evidenced in the responses to RQ1 and RQ2, which resulted in an enrichment of their Personal Teaching Environment, that is, of the set of tools, information sources and activities that they can use to teach.

Regarding RQ3, lecturers were asked about the most frequent emergent digital genres they used. Firstly, there seemed to be uncertainty about what was considered a Course Management System or Virtual Classroom, a task within a platform, an application, or a genre, and responses refer to any of them. Moreover, this is the only question in which some differences were found related to countries, as in the

case of China (Tencent Classroom and Tencent Meet⁵), where there was no access to Google, and instead they had their own platforms imitating those of Google, or to institutional policies, as some universities created their own Course Management Systems (e.g., Kuwait), or lecturing tools (e.g., Ghent University in Belgium). Moreover, the answers to RQ3 showed a better knowledge and an evolution in the use of some tools such as Zoom, Meet and Teams for online interaction, and Moodle and Google Classroom as CMS.

Regarding digital genres, many lecturers remarked they had already experienced the use of most of them. Among the most often used, the online synchronous or, alternatively, recorded lecture deserves special attention, in addition to the voice over slides presentation, the latter especially at the beginning of the pandemic. Both are adaptations of other genres commonly used in the classroom, the teaching lecture, and the accompanying slide presentation. In their online formats, special attention was paid to multimodality and interaction. Online lecturers often shared their screen with the audience to show support documents, and written interaction with the students was encouraged by means of the chat as an alternative for live dialogue. In the case of voice over slides presentations, multimodality was incremented by the incorporation of voice explanations by the teacher and the use of the screen pointer as a mediator between the slides and the oral explanation.

Concerning RQ4, results indicate that teachers made an effort to accommodate their classroom methodology to the digital context by means of specific ‘emerging technologies’ mainly due to the immediate reaction to the situation required in April 2020 as discussed by Bozkurt and Sharma (2020) and Murphy (2020). Yet, 1 year later, teachers’ answers showed that their teaching practices had not moved forward to the complex and comprehensive online teaching paradigm as described by Luzón et al. (2010), Adell and Castañeda (2012), and Palloff and Pratt (2013). Indeed, when asked about their future post-COVID-19 teaching, participants referred to specific and isolated ICT-based proposals to be integrated in the face-to-face class or in a blended context at the most as seen in Sect. 3.4.

5 Conclusion

The main objective of this paper was to determine the effect of COVID-19 on English language teaching. Our findings show that both the compulsory lockdown suffered during several months and the special measures taken by many countries in the world for a long period of time had a great impact on higher education. Most universities decided to go online, and teachers had to become familiar with digital tools and genres they had not yet used. Some of these technologies were

⁵Tencent Classroom and Tencent Meeting have been developed by Tencent Education, a Chinese company founded in 1998, which already developed the most important Social Medium in China, WeChat. Tencent Meeting was released at the end of December 2019 and in February 2020 it was already offered to the international market.

conditioned by governmental or institutional decisions, such as which CMS or synchronous communication tools each university should use.

Most respondents acknowledged to have learned a great deal with this situation and their obligation to teach online. Indeed, teachers reflected on their teaching methods and expanded and enriched their Personal Teaching Environments with more tools and digital genres. With this experience, English language teachers learned and are now more confident to use digital resources, and many will do so in the future, but only to complement face-to-face teaching.

Nevertheless, the emergency remote learning situation did not evolve to specific emergent pedagogies for online teaching, in which the freedom to learn autonomously and collaboratively are central. Indeed, most teachers acknowledged they tried to follow the same methodology as in face-to-face classes. However, results show an increasing multimodality in the materials, activities and eventually the methodology employed by English language teachers, which would lead to a further reconceptualization of the communicative competence that should be involved in ELT online teaching.

This unexpected and disruptive situation has left universities in a better position to develop blended and online learning in the future, as Adell and Castañeda (2012) predicted, and Carrillo and Flores (2020) advocated, though a complete movement towards these modalities did not seem to be a choice for most lecturers, at least in the language learning field. In the near future, there should be more sharing of experiences, more discussion on the effectiveness of emerging technologies in higher education teaching, and also on the emerging pedagogies that should be associated with them. Results also show that language teachers are in need of training in the digital and multimodal competences for language learning purposes, as is also evident from other studies (Deacon et al., 2017; Grazia-Sindoni, 2017; Kakoulli Constantinou and Papadima-Sphocleous, 2020). They need more than occasional training for developing emergent technology-informed pedagogies, which effectively integrate emergent technologies and digital genres. In order to be ready for this ‘journey’ to a digital context, universities should further reflect and work on a design of what Castañeda, Esteve and Adell (2018, p. 13) call “Integral Teaching Competence for the digital world”, which affords a comprehensive model that merges technology and pedagogy.

Before concluding, we must acknowledge the limitations of this study. The number of participants was reduced as compared to the total number of ELT teachers all over the world, and only related to language teaching departments. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised and may not clearly show the differences between the participants and the teachers in other departments. Moreover, their reactions could be conditioned by the stress caused by an unwanted and unpredicted situation, since the study was carried out during the months of compulsory online or blended teaching in many institutions. Further research would be needed in order to confirm and complement the results of this study.

Acknowledgements We want to thank the collaboration of the lecturers who answered our questionnaire; without them this research would not have been possible.

This study has been developed as part of the research project funded by the Research Promotion Plan at Universitat Jaume I (Spain), grant ID: UJI-B2020-09.

References

- Adell, J., & Castañeda, L. (2012). Tecnologías emergentes, ¿pedagogías emergentes? In J. Hernández, M. Pennesi, D. Sobrino, & A. Vázquez (coord.), *Tendencias emergentes en educación con TIC* (pp. 13–32). Asociación Espiral, Educación y Tecnología. Retrieved from https://digitum.um.es/digitum/bitstream/10201/29916/1/Adell_Castaneda_emergentes2012.pdf
- Andujar, A. (2020). Analysing WhatsApp and Instagram as blended learning tools. In A. Andujar (Ed.), *Recent tools for computer-and mobile-assisted foreign language learning* (pp. 307–321). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-1097-1.ch015>
- Bozkurt, A., & Sharma, R. C. (2020). Emergency remote teaching in a time of global crisis due to Coronavirus pandemic. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 15(1), i–vi. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3778083>
- Cabero-Almenara, J., Arancibia, M. L., & Del Prete, A. (2019). Technical and didactic knowledge of the Moodle LMS in higher education. Beyond functional use. *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research*, 8(1), 25–33. <https://doi.org/10.7821/naer.2019.1.327>
- Carrillo, C., & Flores, M. A. (2020). COVID-19 and teacher education: A literature review of online teaching and learning practices. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(4), 466–487. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1821184>
- Castañeda, L., Esteve, F., & Adell, J. (2018). ¿Por qué es necesario repensar la competencia docente para el mundo digital? RED. *Revista de Educación a Distancia*, 56, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.6018/red/56/6>
- Castañeda, L., & Selwyn, N. (Eds.). (2019). *Reiniciando la universidad. buscando un modelo de universidad en tiempo digital* (1.ª ed.). Oberta UOC.
- Crawford Camiciottoli, B. (2020). The OpenCourseWare lecture: A new twist on an old genre. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 46(2), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2020.100870>
- Cuaca Dharma, H. R., Asmaranib, D., & Puspa, D. U. (2017). Basic Japanese grammar and conversation e-learning through Skype and Zoom online application. *Procedia Computer Science*, 116, 267–273. Retrieved from <https://isiarticles.com/bundles/Article/pre/pdf/103148.pdf>
- Deacon, A., Parkin, L., & Schneider, C. (2017). Looking beyond language skills – Integrating digital skills into language teaching. In C. Álvarez-Mayo, A. Gallagher-Brett, & F. Michel (Eds.), *Innovative language teaching and learning at university: Enhancing employability* (pp. 137–144). Research-publishing.net. <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2017.innoconf2016.663>
- Gewin, V. (2020). Five tips for moving teaching online as COVID-19 taxkes hold. *Nature*, 580(7802), 295–296. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-020-00896-7>
- Godwin-Jones, R. (2016). Looking back and ahead: 20 years of technologies for language learning. *Language Learning & Technology*, 20(2), 5–12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1025/44457>
- Grazia-Sindoni, M. (2017). Multimodality and digital literacy in the English language syllabi across Europe. In F. Cavalliere (Ed.), *Euromosaic: A still open challenge* (pp. 188–211). Edicampus.
- Horban, Y., Humenchuk, A., Karakoz, O., Koshelieva, O., & Shtefan, I. (2021). Application of web 3.0 technologies in distance education (by levels of higher education). *Laplage em Revista*. (International), 7(B), 575–586. <https://doi.org/10.24115/S2446-622020217Extra-B974p.575-586>

- Kakoulli Constantinou, E. (2018). Teaching in clouds: Using the G suite for education for the delivery of two EAP courses. *Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, 6(2), 305–317. <https://doi.org/10.22190/JTESAP1802305C>
- Kakoulli Constantinou, E., & Papadima-Sophocleous, S. (2020). The use of digital technology in ESP: Current practices and suggestions for ESP teacher education. *The Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, 8(1), 17–29. <https://doi.org/10.22190/JTESAP2001017K>
- Kelly, A. R., & Miller, C. R. (2016). Intersections: Scientific and parascientific communication on the Internet. In A. Gross & J. Buehl (Eds.), *Science and the Internet: Communicating knowledge in a digital age* (pp. 221–245). Baywood. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315231099>
- Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the new media age*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203299234>
- Lau J., Yang, B., & Dasgupta, R. (2020). Will the coronavirus make online education go viral? *Times Higher Education*, 12 March. Retrieved from <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/will-coronavirus-make-online-education-go-viral>
- Luzón, M. J., & Pérez-Llantada, C. (Eds.). (2019). *Science communication on the internet*. John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns>
- Luzón, M. J., Ruiz-Madrid, M. N., & Villanueva-Alfonso, M. L. (Eds.). (2010). *Digital genres, new literacies, and autonomy in language learning*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Milojkovic, M. (2019). Teaching English by Skype: Theoretical and practical considerations from the perspective of Serbian English teachers. In M. Carrió (Ed.), *Teaching language and teaching literature in virtual environments* (pp. 95–120). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-1358-5_6
- Murphy, M. P. (2020). COVID-19 and emergency eLearning: Consequences of the securitization of higher education for post-pandemic pedagogy. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 41(3), 492–505. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2020.1761749>
- Ögeyik, M. (2016). The effectiveness of PowerPoint presentation and conventional lecture on pedagogical content knowledge attainment. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 54(5), 503–510. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2016.1250663>
- Orsini-Jones, M. (2014). Towards a role-reversal model of threshold concept pedagogy. In I. C. O'Mahony, A. Buchanan, M. O'Rourke, & B. Higgs (Eds.), *Threshold concepts: From personal practice to communities* (pp. 78–82). NAIRTL. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED558533.pdf>
- Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (2013). *Lessons from the virtual classroom*. Jossey-Bass. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2016.1250663>
- Redecker, C., & Punie, Y. (2017). *European framework for the digital competence of educators: DigCompEdu*. Publications Office of the European Union. <https://doi.org/10.2760/159770>
- Ruiz-Madrid, N., & Fortanet-Gómez, I. (2017). An analysis of multimodal interaction in a webinar: Defining the genre. *EPIC Series in Language and Linguistics*, 2, 274–282. <https://doi.org/10.29007/p8mm>
- Ruiz-Madrid, N., & Valeiras-Jurado, J. (2020). Developing multimodal communicative competence in emerging academic and professional genres. *International Journal of English Studies*, 20(1), 27–50. <https://doi.org/10.6018/ijes.401481>
- Sabarini P. (2020). Coronavirus: Universities are shifting classes online – but it's not as easy as it sounds. *The Conversation* June 2020. Retrieved from <http://theconversation.com/coronavirus-universities-are-shifting-classes-online-but-its-not-as-easy-as-it-sounds-133030>
- Ducharme, J. (2021). It may be too late to find the origin of COVID-19. The WHO is trying anyway *Time Health*, October, 21, 2021. Retrieved from <https://time.com/6107134/who-sago-covid-19-origins/>
- Veletsianos, G. (2010). A definition of emerging technologies for education. In G. Veletsianos (Ed.), *Emerging technologies in distance education* (pp. 3–22). Athabasca University Press. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235939794_A_Definition_of_Emerging_Technologies_for_Education