

Chapter 7

Emergency Remote Teaching Experiences of Language Teachers during the Pandemic in Mexico: Challenges and Recommendations for the New Normal

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted traditional education, emergency remote teaching (ERT) was the answer to try to solve the situation. This transition to ERT posed significant challenges, such as the limited technological resources, and unpreparedness among educators. Many teachers lacked the necessary knowledge and skills for effective online instruction, and although some courses were offered to help them improve their professional development, there was the perception of a need for other courses related to keeping students motivated and providing emotional support. This mixed-method explanatory sequential research includes a quantitative followed by a qualitative phase with the aim to show the perspectives of language teachers in Mexico about their ERT experience during the pandemic and their recommendations after it. 257 teachers answer the survey and 26 agreed to answer a follow up semi-structured interview to provide further insights into their practices. The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework was used to interpret results pertaining the teaching practices of language instructors during emergency remote online learning and highlight challenges and recommendations.

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Resumen

La pandemia de Covid-19 alteró la educación tradicional, la enseñanza remota de emergencia (ERT por sus siglas en inglés) fue la respuesta para intentar solucionar la situación. Esta transición a ERT planteó desafíos importantes, como los recursos tecnológicos limitados y la falta de preparación de los educadores. Muchos docentes carecían de los conocimientos y habilidades necesarios para una instrucción en línea efectiva y, aunque se ofrecieron algunos cursos para ayudarlos a mejorar su desarrollo profesional, se percibía la necesidad de otros cursos relacionados con mantener motivados a los estudiantes y brindarles apoyo emocional. Esta investigación secuencial explicativa de método mixto incluye una fase cuantitativa seguida de una cualitativa con el objetivo de mostrar las perspectivas de profesores de idiomas en México sobre su experiencia de ERT durante la pandemia y sus recomendaciones después de la misma. 257 profesores respondieron la encuesta y 26 aceptaron responder una entrevista semiestructurada de seguimiento para entrevista para proporcionar más información sobre sus prácticas. El modelo de la Comunidad de Indagación (CoI) fue utilizado para interpretar los resultados relacionados con las prácticas de enseñanza de los profesores de idiomas durante el aprendizaje remoto en línea de emergencia resaltar desafíos y recomendaciones.

Keywords: Community of Inquiry (CoI), Covid-19 pandemic, emergency remote online teaching, instructor practices, instructor satisfaction.

Introduction

The involuntary confinement caused by the Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) Pandemic forced teachers and students to rely heavily on technology to continue planned educational programs. This alteration was driven by emergency and involved minimal adjustments to existing course materials, focusing on instructional continuity rather than a fully developed digital learning experience. Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) was the term coined by Hodges *et al.*, (2020) to refer to a situation such as the one previ-

ously described. Hodges *et al.*, emphasize that ERT has three defining characteristics: it is temporary, driven by emergency, and it is conducted remotely. ERT is different from online education mainly because online education is intentionally structured for a digital environment, incorporating specific design elements to optimize online interaction and engagement. Also, online education includes more comprehensive interactivity between participants than distance learning, which may not include regular interactive sessions. This distinction between ERT, online education, and distance learning is important since it highlights that in ERT there is the need for adaptable educational frameworks in unplanned shifts to remote learning.

According to a study by the World Economic Forum in 2022, due to the flexible access to online education, online learning courses have been growing steadily in popularity. Before the Covid-19 Pandemic, online learning courses were still lacking of a good reputation. However, the need to resort to online teaching due to the lockdown helped to prove that online learning was not only possible but that it could have positive results. (Wood, 2022).

ERT, introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, led to a quick shift to online platforms without the more careful planning typical of the regular online course design. This change impacted the field of language teaching as well, since language learning requires continuous communication practice and this is usually provided by having students participate in situations that foster foreign language use. This type of activities was thought to be easier to conduct in face-to-face settings and more challenging in an online format especially when most teachers lacked of knowledge about the resources that could be used for the practice of productive and receptive language skills.

Considering the latter, the teachers could have felt overwhelmed by having to design online activities that mirrored the ones normally carried out in the face-to-face setting. A model that emphasizes the creation of meaningful online instruction and that could be found helpful as a guide to the planning and design of online educational experiences is the Community of Inquiry. This model was proposed by Arbaugh *et al.*, (2008) and considers three types of presence: cognitive, social, and teaching presence

so that the elements necessary for a successful online learning experience are provided since they help foster the establishment of a learning community. Starting from the exploration of the perceptions of those involved in the online teaching-learning process affords information that will serve as the basis for the improvement of courses in this modality.

The purpose of this study in a first phase was to document and analyze the perceptions about emergency remote teaching by language teachers in Mexico; that is, to know about the perceived challenges of teaching and learning online found during this time. In a second phase, in order to propose recommendations for an effective online language teaching experience, it was intended to know more about the type of professional development necessary for the foreign language teachers and their opinion on the effective pedagogical practices for a hybrid or fully online language learning practice while still working in the Pandemic and after this emergency.

Based on the purpose of the study, two main research questions were used as a guide:

1. What was the language teachers' experience of in the ERT during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Mexico?
2. After having this experience, what are some recommendations to have a more effective online language teaching experience in online or hybrid courses in the near future?

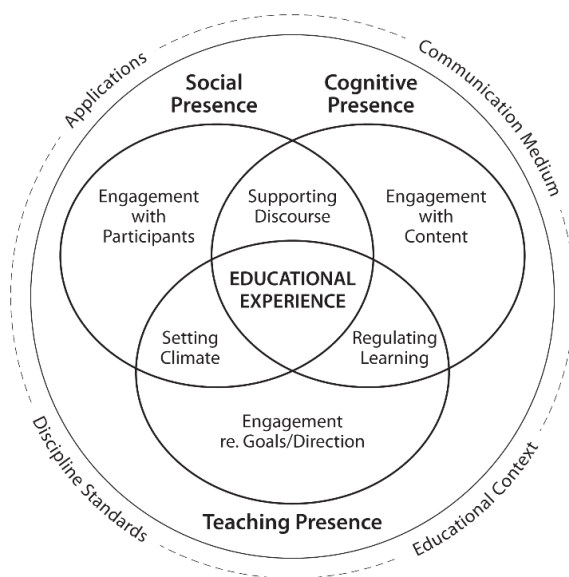
The option of offering online or hybrid language courses is an aspect to consider in institutions that aim to bring educational training to a larger student population. It is therefore important to explore this possibility considering the main providers of this instruction, that is, the language educators. Thus, this work will share language teachers' perspectives and recommendations about online language teaching education after having experienced the need to teach online, overcome it, and learned some lessons.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) Framework

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework proposed by (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2000) is a collaborative-constructivist model that considers Dewey's educational philosophy and social constructivism. In this community instructors and students are the main participants in the educational process. The core elements that foster the interaction between the participants are three, namely, cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence (see figure 1). Cognitive presence refers to the extent to which the learning objectives are achieved. Social presence is about encouraging collaboration among the ones involved in the online course;

Figure 1. *The Community of Inquiry (CoI) theoretical framework*



Note. The Community of Inquiry (CoI) theoretical framework (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2001) is perhaps the best-known and most researched approach to designing learning experiences for the online environment. The Community of Inquiry framework. Image used with permission from the Community of Inquiry website and licensed under the CC-BY-SA International 4.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>). The original image is located at <https://www.thecommunityofinquiry.org/coi>.

technological tools are used to provide an environment of open, affective and effective communication. The presence of the teacher or teaching presence is related to the designing and organizing the course, facilitating discourse, and providing direct teaching, so that the elements necessary for a successful learning experience are provided. Although this framework has had some critiques from other researchers saying that other presences should be included, it has been widely used in online teaching and learning in general (Castellanos-Reyes, 2020). Arbaugh *et al.*, (2008) developed a 34-item CoI instrument, which was found to be reliable after conducting qualitative research. This instrument, the CoI survey, has been used as a reliable resource to evaluate and develop online courses as a tool to designing community in virtual environments.

a) Cognitive Presence

Garrison *et al.*, (2001) defined cognitive presence as “the extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse in a critical community of inquiry” (p. 11). The Cognitive Presence focuses on the learning process; it helps maintain rigorous cognitive engagement. According to the same authors the cognitive presence includes four phases: triggering, exploration, integration, and resolution. Triggering means the inclusion of a situation or problem that will initiate the inquiry process; exploration is conducted when searching for relevant information, engaging in reflection, and sharing explanations; integration is when the information from different resources is compared and contrasted to construct the meaning; finally, in the resolution, possible solutions are presented with their respective support in which learning and comprehension is visible.

b) Social Presence

According to Rourke *et al.*, (1999) open and affective communication, and cohesiveness are the three necessary elements to have as part of social

presence. Open communication refers to being able to have the ones involved in the online interaction(s) feel that they can express themselves freely and respectfully responding to others inquiries and feedback. Affective communication is related to the ability to express emotions and feelings since this facilitates interaction, inclusion, reduces isolation and values personal experiences. This can be done perhaps by using humor, sharing personal experiences, and using words or phrases to how support. Cohesiveness refers to the ability of work as a team to achieve a common goal, in this case a learning goal. This can be achieved by making everyone feel part off the community, for example, using “we”, calling each other using the names. In the light of this, it can be said that social presence might have an influence in students’ performance due to the link it has to interaction, motivation to participate and to commit to the course that can foster better learning (Anggraini & Zuraida (2023).

c) Teaching Presence

Anderson *et al.*, (2001) define teaching presence as the design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes to be able to reach to meaningful educational learning outcomes. They also state that the three characteristics of the online instructor can be contained in the following categories: design and organization, facilitating discourse, and direct instruction. In an online course the process of designing and organizing might be more time consuming than a face-to-face classroom based one. There must be a clear structure for the learners since they will have access to it at different times. In this sense, instructors have to set curriculum goals clearly, design methods, establish time parameters, use the medium effectively, and establish netiquette. In regards to the instructor being a facilitator of discourse, the authors mention the importance of moving the conversation forward by identifying areas of agreement and disagreement, encouraging students’ contributions, setting climate for learning, prompting discussion, and assessing the process. The instructors also have to show that they have an in-depth knowledge of the topics and students also expect them to explain and solve doubts; indicators of this are the presentation of content,

summarization of discussion, diagnose and clarification of misconceptions, and answer to technical concerns.

Intersection of the CoI Elements

As it can be observed in figure 1, the convergence of the CoI elements at its core provides the educational experience. The goal is to that through this experience the participants in the community collaborate and engage in significant discourse and reflection to co-construct meaning and reach to an understanding.

The intersection of the social presence with the cognitive presence shows as a result “supporting discourse”. Cognitive engagement is desired to encourage students’ analysis and co-construction of knowledge and with the help of the creation of a space where students can socialize with others and have access to instructor support and motivation, discourse can be more open and interactive.

Social presence and teaching presence intersection “sets the climate” for the exploration of ideas and new content. Social presence helps to establish a respectful environment where students can feel included and can engage in meaningful interactions.

Teaching presence and cognitive presence help in the “regulation of the learning” by designing appealing authentic tasks that maintain the learning community active. Instructors have to provide direct instruction and assess their own teaching approaches to obtain feedback to guide in their teaching practice.

Principles of Good Practice for the Online Environment

Also used as a guide to develop online courses we can find “the seven principles of good practice for the online environment” adapted by Sorensen and Baylen (2009) from Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) widely used “Seven Principles of Good Practice for Undergraduate Education”. The

principles for the online learning space are the following: student-teacher contact, cooperation among students, active learning, prompt feedback, time on task, communicate high expectations, and respect diverse ways of learning.

Fiock (2020) used CoI and the good practice principles by Sorensen and Baylen (2009) results from research studies to combine the framework and the principles and provide a summary of instructional activities to be used in the online setting and produce a better online experience. For example, the instructional activities “Incorporate audio and video within the course content” and “Share personal stories, professional experiences, and use of emoticons” would be part of establishing social presence from the CoI and the principle of student-teacher contact from the good practice principles.

Col in ERT and Language Teaching

In the context of ERT for language teaching, the CoI framework provides a valuable lens through which to examine the challenges and opportunities presented by the sudden shift to online instruction. It emphasizes the need for language teachers to not only deliver content but also to foster a sense of community and facilitate meaningful interaction in the virtual environment. Establishing social presence in the online setting helps to reduce anxiety and the feeling of isolation and supports language practice by having students work in groups using breakout rooms and thus creating community. Promoting cognitive presence helps in the encouragement of developing critical thinking and meaningful activities for the stimulation of interaction and reflection about language use. The teaching presence is exercised by establishing clear and organized language learning goals and by providing feedback on spoken and written language. This application of CoI highlighted the importance of designing online language learning tasks with intentional strategies for building community, fostering engagement, and ensuring clarity and support, which are beneficial aspects for all online language instruction, not just in emergency settings.

Technology Use in ERT Contexts

According to Maggio (2021) the experience in emergency remote teaching presented two phases in regards to teaching practices. The author mentions that in the first phase, instructors tried to provide online spaces full of content or information and in the second phase, the main goal was to develop process of interaction by trying to have the face-to-face communication forms in synchronic videoconferences; a technological resource that existed but was not as popular. ERT was different from the regular online teaching experiences since the intensive use of technological resources had to be improvised and many of the materials used was not carefully selected.

Challenges in ERT for Language Teaching

Studies related to the challenges faced by instructors mention issues in relation to teacher preparation, students' engagement, assessment, and feedback. In Akram *et al.*, (2021) mixed methods research with surveys and interviews about the challenges faced by university professors in Pakistan during the Pandemic the themes that emerged were class management, lack of guidance, limited resources, low attendance, lack of technical skills, communication barriers, and difficulty in assessment. 82 faculty members from different disciplines answered the survey and 15 of them were interviewed. Difficulty in monitoring students, lack of student engagement, poor time management, difficulty delivering content, difficulty in practical work were the aspects related to class management. Lack of training, lack of guidance and lack of workshops were mentioned and classified under lack of guidance. Among the limited resources the professor mentioned electricity failure and lack of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) infrastructure, poor internet connectivity and lack of time. Students' low-interest, less participation, and limited work-space were the aspects included under low attendance. Limited technology competence, technical use in pedagogy and technological experience showed faculty's lack of technical skills. The communication barriers found were insuffi-

cient feedback, improper online discussion and less student-instructor interaction. As for the difficulty in assessment, professors perceived students' resistance, teachers' incompetence, and also found the online experience less useful for practical evaluation.

According to Shieh & Hsieh (2021) the use of interactive content also plays an important role in online learning. It is recommended to use multimedia: videos, audio clips, and interactive exercises to keep learners engaged and enhance comprehension. Game-based elements such as quizzes, badges, and leaderboards also help to motivate and engage students. Their study involved 275 product design students who engaged in e-learning for 15 weeks. The instrument used was a questionnaire which was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), factor analysis, reliability analysis, regression analysis, and analysis of variance to test the various hypotheses.

A quantitative study by Rakhmanina *et al.*, (2021) about students' participation in online courses during the Pandemic also showed that students perceived that they found the listening skill as the most difficult to develop online. The study had 66 participants and the questionnaire metrics had four main indicators: 1) student's participation, 2) language difficulties levels, 3) internet issues, and 4) online learning platform suited with their needs and conditions. Most of these students answered that they found listening (40%) as the most difficult skill to practice online followed by speaking (20%). Some of the reasons were that it was difficult to find a quiet place to practice listening or had trouble accessing the exercises. About speaking, they mentioned that they felt shy and it seemed odd to practice role plays and other speaking exercises in front of the screen. 42% mentioned that the internet connection was not adequate for online learning.

In a mixed methods study that included answers from 725 teachers from the European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education (CercleS), Schaffner & Stefanutti (2021) found that teachers need constant training and that teachers perceived that most students were able to learn; however, they felt that the students lacked of speaking skill practice.

In a qualitative study in Philippines by Gipal, Carrillo and Mallonga (2022) that involved three English as a Second Language (ESL) university teachers, about teacher challenges and experiences during the pandemic

findings addressed students' lack of participation and motivation, internet connection problems, and a need for professional development.

Advantages of ERT in Language Learning

According to a study by Hickenlooper & Bell (2022), Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) in language teaching presented disadvantages; however, some advantages could also be perceived. Increased accessibility is a major benefit, as ERT allowed students to participate in language learning from diverse locations, overcoming geographical barriers and making education more inclusive. Additionally, ERT fostered the development of digital literacy, equipping both students and teachers with essential digital skills, from navigating virtual platforms to utilizing online resources effectively—skills that are increasingly valuable in the modern, technology-driven world (Nayman & Bavli, 2022). Furthermore, ERT encouraged innovative teaching methods by prompting educators to experiment with multimedia tools, gamified learning, and interactive applications. These methods engage students in ways that may not have been explored in traditional classrooms, ultimately enhancing language acquisition and student motivation.

Recommendations from Previous Studies

Professional Development

Isaee & Barjesteh (2022) conducted phenomenological research and interviewed 18 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers who had practiced online and face-to-face (F2F) teaching. Results from the semi-structured interviews showed that online teaching was perceived as more demanding than F2F instruction and that EFL teachers' Professional Development needs for online teaching could be classified into five main categories including pedagogical, content, designing and technological, communication and social skills, and classroom management.

According to Compton (2009) online language teaching requires dif-

ferent skills than face-to-face language teaching and teaching content subjects online. This is because the objective of language teaching is for students to develop their communicative competence which involves team interactions, for example. Compton proposes a framework of important skills, roles, and responsibilities in the online language teaching environment according to novice, proficient and expert teachers. The features in that framework are related to technological and pedagogical aspects and the evaluation of online language teaching. Technological aspects refer to knowledge and ability to handle software and hardware related issues; the pedagogical aspects refer to the facilitation of learning activities; and teaching and learning and assessment skills refer to the analytical skills to assess tasks and the course in general to do the modifications necessary to achieve the objectives.

Language teachers had to adapt their face-to-face (F2F) methodologies to the online environment. One of the main objectives was to foster or facilitate interaction. A mixed method study by Lee (2021) that involved the use of a survey, interviews, students' reflection papers, and the instructor's field notes, aimed to identify factors that enhanced the quality of online education and learner satisfaction of the 20 college students who participated in the study and who were enrolled in an online Multimedia-assisted Language Learning (MALL) course. It is important to mention that the instructor developed the course based on the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation & Evaluation) (Hess & Greer, 2016). This is an instructional design model that has proven to be effective (Tamilarasan, Vijayakumar & Anupama, 2021). The results indicated that the students preferred face-to-face classes mainly, however, they perceived online learning effective because the instructor's provided prompt feedback, promoted interaction among students, and designed tasks carefully. In the same study, Lee (2021) used a survey to ask students about their perception of previous online courses and they answered that their teachers lacked training to teach online. Additionally, students stated that teachers were promoting teacher-student interaction and student-content interaction but not student-student interaction. We have to remember that in the beginning of the Pandemic some of the features such as breakout rooms, now commonly found in Zoom, Meets or TEAMS, the main plat-

forms used to teach online, were not yet available and that could have been one of the reasons why teachers were not promoting student-student interaction.

Liang *et al* (2021) wanted to know how Chinese students had perceived their meaningful online English learning (MOEL) during the Pandemic; thus, they applied a survey to 529 Chinese university students on their perceptions of authentic language learning (AULL), self-directed learning (SDL), collaborative learning (CL), and their English self-efficacy (ESE) during this period. The survey was validated through factor analysis, and structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to identify the role of authentic language learning in predicting students' English self-efficacy. Their results showed that AULL through CL and the use of technology led to language improvement and more confidence in the foreign language use. That is, the use of authentic tasks and collaboration among students fostered language learning.

In summary, Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) unlike planned online education, lacks the deliberate course design. Online learning environments benefit from a more structured, interactive framework that supports student engagement, since it is paramount for communication and interaction. During the ERT period, many language courses were adapted quickly to online formats, creating challenges in engagement, motivation, and communication. The Community of Inquiry (CoI) model provides a framework to guide effective online teaching. CoI emphasizes three interconnected elements crucial for online learning: social, cognitive, and teaching presence. Applying CoI principles in online language teaching, especially during ERT, helps create a more supportive and engaging learning environment despite the sudden transition.

Research Methodology

The present study adopted a mixed-method explanatory sequential research design in which there was a quantitative followed by a qualitative phase; a survey was applied and some interviews were conducted after it in order to elaborate on the quantitative results found in the first phase (Cre-

swell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) this combination of quantitative with qualitative research can provide a general understanding of the problem-atic studied. Thus, this investigation was conducted in two phases. In the first phase the language teachers' perceptions were documented and analyzed through the use of an online survey. In the second phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a selected group of participants to explore the language teachers online teaching experience views in more depth.

Participants

An online survey was distributed in mail lists and shared in different social media and 257 language teachers in different states of Mexico answered it. Their participation was voluntary and no compensation was provided. These professors work in education institutions in different levels from elementary to college and university, and teach different languages not only English. The majority of the participants were women ($n = 177$, 68.9%), while men represented 31.1% ($n = 80$). Also, the majority were more than 40 years old ($n = 143$, 55.6%), and had more than 15 years of teaching experience ($n = 120$, 46.7%). Additionally, most of them worked in higher education institutions ($n = 213$, 82.8%) in Sonora ($n = 68$, 26.4%) and taught English ($n = 239$, 93%). Table 1 below presents the participants demographic details:

Instruments

The research instruments included a survey and a semi-structured interview. The survey was administered online using Google Forms. It consisted of a total of 28 items, 6 were used to gather demographic information (age, gender, experience, state and level of the institution where they worked). The following items included Likert scale items, multiple choice and open questions and asked about the resources used for online teach-

Table 1. *Participants demographic information*

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Details</i>
Gender	Male: 80 Female: 177
Age	25 years old or less: 5 26-30 years old: 35 31-40 years old: 74 More than 40 years old: 143
Teaching Experience	1-2 years: 6 2-5 years: 21 5-10 years: 47 10-15 years: 63 More than 15 years: 120
Type of Institution where they teach	Elementary School: 25 High School: 9 Higher Education: 213 ; Normal Superior (Teaching Training College) (11), and University (202) Others: 10; Freelance (5), and Language Institutes (5)
States	Aguascalientes (1), Baja California Norte (5), Baja California Sur (1), Campeche (2), CDMX (22), Chiapas (8), Chihuahua (4), Coahuila (1), Durango (4), Estado de México (21), Guanajuato (2), Guerrero (1), Hidalgo (3), Jalisco (6), Michoacán (1), Morelos (1), Nayarit (1), Nuevo León (5), Oaxaca (7), Puebla (5), Querétaro (16), Quintana Roo (2), Sinaloa (1), SLP (7), Sonora (68) , Tabasco (2), Tamaulipas (18), Tlaxcala (4), Veracruz (13), Yucatán (23), Zacatecas (2)
Language taught	English (239) , French (7), German (4), Italian (2), Japanese (2), Spanish (3)

Note. Information in bold represents the majority of answers in each aspect.

ing, challenges and advantages of online teaching, student participation, teachers perceived needs, and their recommendations. Finally, the last item asked participants to provide their email in case they were interested in being contacted to answer the interview questions (see Appendix A). The survey included detailed consent information, and participants were asked to proceed only if they agreed to participate. No compensation was offered. Participants were invited to provide their email address if they were willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview to share additional insights into their experiences.

A total of 257 teachers answered the survey and 86 of them provided their emails and were subsequently contacted by email to schedule their interview. They were informed that the interviews were going to be in groups of 10 participants as maximum and were asked to select a preferred date from nine options and to register via a Google Form created for this purpose. In the registration form, participants received further informa-

tion on the confidentiality measures and were informed that each interview session would be limited to a maximum duration of 40 minutes. Of those invited, 26 teachers were able to attend and participated in the focus group interviews, which were conducted via Zoom. These sessions followed a semi-structured interview format, covering the same core topics from the survey. However, participants were encouraged to freely discuss their approaches to online language teaching, their struggles given the emergency and the characteristics of the experience, as well as their efforts to set a positive example for their students during those challenging times. Interviews were transcribed using the ms Word Dictate tool and revised by the researchers. Data from the interviews was categorized and codified considering the main themes of interest in this research. Information about the instructors was recorded by following the characteristics given in their general description; i.e. I1-M4-M15-HE (I1 = Instructor 1, M4= More than 40 years old, M15=More than 15 years of experience, HE=Higher Education Institution).

Discussion of Results

In this section, results from the survey and semi-structured interview will be shared. A total of 257 teachers answered the survey, and 26 participated in the interviews. Data from the survey pertinent to answering the research questions will be presented along with the data obtained from the interviews to support the quantitative results. The research questions that guided this study were the following:

1. What was the language teachers' experience of in the ERT during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Mexico?
2. After having this experience, what are some recommendations to have a more effective online language teaching experience in online or hybrid courses in the near future?

Language Teachers' Experience of Online Teaching during the Pandemic in Mexico

In order to answer the first research question, we will present the data gathered from the items that helped us respond it. It is important to point out that many of the questions had the option of selecting more than one answer and had the option for teachers to include their own opinions.

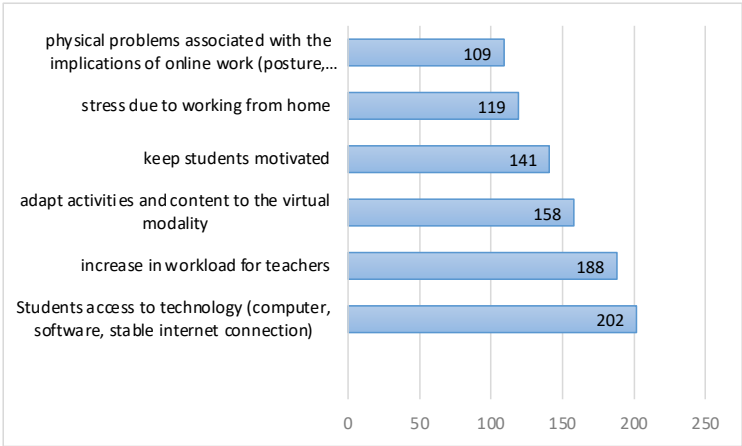
The majority of the teachers mentioned that they used a combination of laptop (n = 232, 90%) and smartphone (n=154, 60%) to teach their on-line classes, and only some answered they used a tablet (n = 40, 15%) and or desktop computer (n = 47, 18%). 53% (n = 135) mentioned that they were already familiar with LSM platforms such as moodle, Schoology, and/or EdModo as an additional resource to their face-to-face courses, 92 teachers (36%) were already using resources such as Kahoot, Socrative, and Quizziz, and only 41(16%) mentioned that their previous experience was almost null. An interesting data was that only 53 teachers (21%) mentioned that they had already used Zoom or Skype for online interaction before the pandemic. This indicated that the majority of the teachers were not familiar with these resources and had to learn how to use them.

Students access to technology was the main challenge perceived by teachers during this period; 79%, that is, 202 teachers selected this option. In the interviews, teachers mentioned that students struggled to be in class on time and in many cases it was due to unstable or slow internet connection. A teacher said that in some households, students were sharing the computer with their siblings and it was not always possible for them to use their cellphone to attend class either. All 26 teachers interviewed mentioned how their workload had been increased and 73% (n = 188) selected this option in the survey. According to 55% (n = 141) of the teachers, it was also frustrating to keep students motivated. One of the interviewed teachers stated “knowing that my students are not doing the work that I spent hours preparing (which, in fact, they also do in face-to-face classes!)” has been the most difficult part of teaching online. We could notice here that unmotivated students were not helping the teachers to be motivated and it was discouraging for some. The adaptation of activities and content to the virtual environment was a challenge for some teachers

(n = 158, 61%) since as it was explained in the interviews sessions, it represented learning to use a new tool or resource in many cases and that also was time-consuming. All interviewed teachers mentioned they were stressed; they stated different reasons: “having to work while taking care of my own children”, “handling my own space and time”, “the extra time I’m spending in evaluation and learning about new resources”; in the survey 46% (n = 119) chose that working from home generated them stress. Physical problems associated with the implications of working online such as posture and eyestrain was another challenge faced by the teachers: all the teachers interviewed agreed, and 42%(n = 109) selected this option from the list in the survey. These results are similar to the ones found by Akram *et al.*, (2021) and Isaee and Barjesteh (2022): lack of student engagement, poor time management, difficulty delivering content, and lack of training. The following chart (see figure 2) shows the challenges discussed by the teachers when they had to opt for online language teaching.

Beside challenges, teachers also found that that teaching online had pleasantly surprised them. In this item, the teachers were asked to select from a list, they also had the option to include their own reason and could select more than one reason. Their answers to this question can be observed in the following chart (see figure 3). The possibility of experiment-

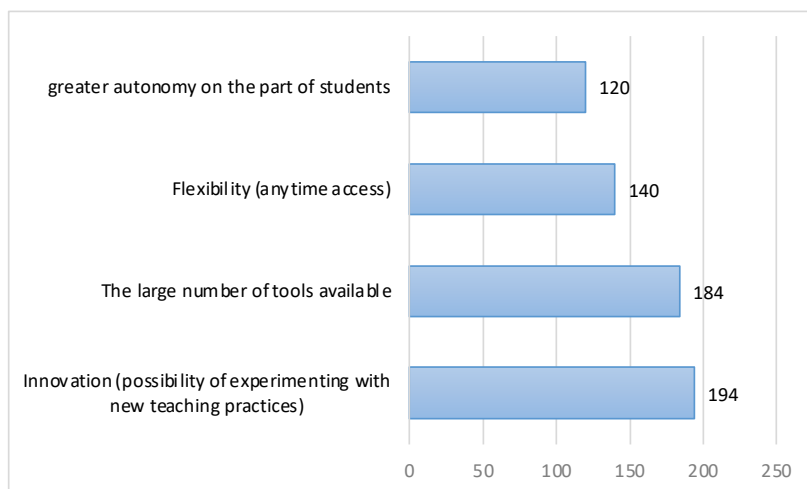
Figure 2. Challenges faced when moving to Emergency Remote Teaching during the Pandemic



Note. These answers represent frequencies. The teachers could select more than one option. This graph represents the answers that had 40% or more selections. N=257.

ing with new practices was something that the majority of teachers liked ($n = 194$, 75%). They also mentioned that there were many tools they were not aware of before going online and that they had found that refreshing ($n = 184$, 72%). 54% ($n = 140$) of the teachers were pleased about the flexibility that the modality allowed and also, 47% ($n = 120$) mentioned that students had to learn to be more independent and that was an advantage.

Figure 3. *Advantages perceived in online language teaching during the Pandemic*

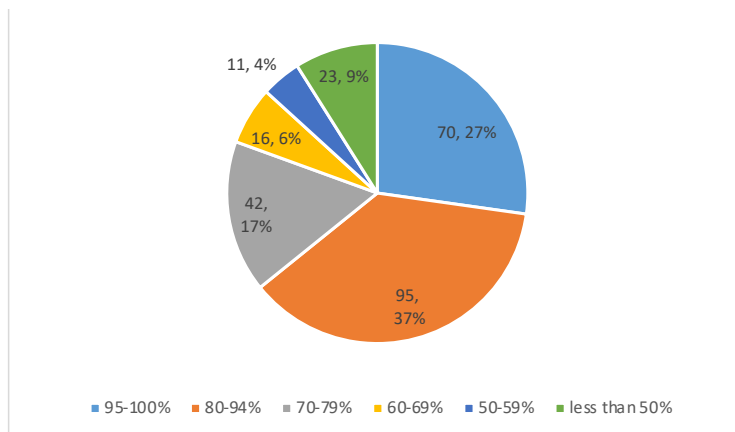


Note. The reasons presented here are the ones that were chosen 40% of the time or more. $N=275$.

One of the disadvantages perceived in online learning is that students seem to be less attentive since it is difficult to know if they are paying attention. Interviewed teachers shared that their students' cameras could be off during the class and it was not possible in many cases for the teachers to "make" them turn it on since they had to respect their students' reasons for not doing it. Despite the fact that the working conditions were inadequate, 165 teachers (64%) reported that they had more than 80% of the students participating in and attending their classes (see figure 4).

Among the reasons why there was lack of participation from the students were the unstable internet connection ($n = 195$, 76%) or lack of computer equipment to work with (i.e. laptop, tablet, smartphone) ($n = 159$, 62%). These results were similar to the ones found by Gipal, Carrillo

Figure 4 . Students' participation in online classes



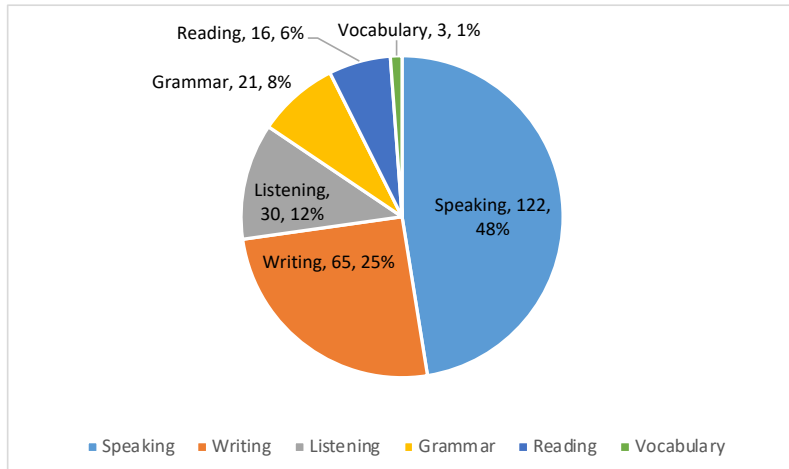
Note. N=275.

& Mallonga (2022) who also mentioned internet connection difficulties and lack of participation from students. Some other reasons related to this issue mentioned by the interviewed teachers in our research were that students had to work to help their parents, had health issues in the family, or presented anxiety and depression.

Teachers were also asked about the most difficult and the easiest skill to practice online and the majority responded that the most difficult skill was speaking (see figure 5) and the easiest was listening (see figure 6). In the results for the easiest skill we can observe that that even though listening was selected as the easiest (23%), the speaking skill was very close to it (21%), and when they were asked about the most difficult skill, speaking is the skill that got selected the most. It is also interesting to notice that these results like the ones found by Schaffner & Stefanutti (2021) and Rakhmanina *et al.*, (2021)(n = 224, 87%), got as a result the skills of listening and speaking. It is important to point out that the results obtained in this research are teachers' perspectives and Rakhmanina *et al.*, (2021) study considered students' perspectives.

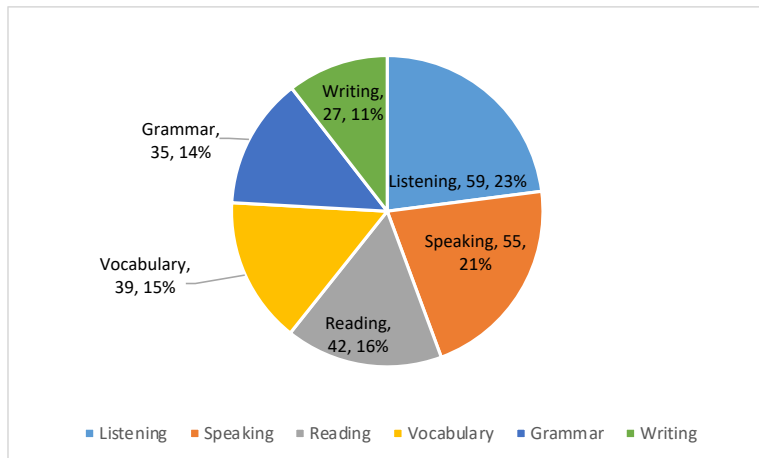
In regards to the relationship of the cognitive, social and teaching presence in the CoI framework and the ERT experienced, we can observe that instructors often had to hurry to adapt face-to-face curricula to on-

Figure 5. *Most difficult language skill to practice/develop online*



Note. N=275.

Figure 6. *Easiest language skill to practice/develop online*



Note. N=275.

line platforms, affecting their ability to structure activities and manage the class effectively. They had to find new ways to guide students' learning while balancing technological constraints, which made the instructional design more challenging resulting in lack of student engagement, poor

time management, difficulty delivering content, and lack of training conflicting with their teaching presence. Social presence was difficult to establish in some cases due to limited interaction and sometimes poor internet connection or video/audio quality. Teachers had to find different ways (i.e. synchronous activities, games), to promote a sense of connection; this was more difficult for some who were also struggling with their own emergencies at home. Additionally, related to cognitive presence, many students struggled to engage with content, as the sense of focus and continuity was often compromised, and instructors had to rethink assignments and activities to facilitate deeper engagement within these constraints.

Recommendations to have a more Effective Online Language Teaching Experience in Virtual or Hybrid Courses

Table 2 presents the activities that the teachers considered were the most important to include in an online language course. All the activities were mostly rated in the “very important” and “important” options. We can also note that the ones that got higher rates (85% or more), in ascendant order, were the following: *audios with communicative situations and exercise, videos with communicative situations and exercises, real time interaction with teacher, Interactive reading with comprehension questions, Individual projects (i.e. presentations, writings, etc.), live sessions, and writing practice*. As we can see, those activities cover the practice of receptive and productive skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All these activities are implied in the pedagogical abilities that online language teachers should have as recommended by Compton’s (2009) framework.

About the recommended resources to include in online language courses, for all of the resources the selected rates were “very important” or “important”. Table 3 shows the resources that had rates of 90% or more by adding up the “very important” and the “important” selections. Thus, considering that, the resources that were selected as “most important” or “important” are the following in ascendant order: *audios with communicative situations, videos with communicative situations, forums to ask questions to*

Table 2. *Perception about the level of importance of different activities for an online course*

<i>According to your professional experience, rate the level of importance of the following activities from the perspective of an online course.</i>					
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Of some importance</i>	<i>Less important</i>	<i>Not important</i>
Live sessions	147	72	30	7	1
Recorded sessions to review later	77	129	37	10	4
Videos with communicative situations and exercises	113	115	19	8	2
Audios with communicative situations and exercises	114	117	22	3	1
Option to print grammar explanations	64	88	62	34	9
Interactive reading with comprehension questions	113	113	20	11	0
Writing practice	106	113	34	4	0
Navigation manual course (i.e. upload assignments, calendar, etc.)	108	104	33	9	3
Real time interaction with classmates	109	96	46	4	2
Real time interaction with teacher	130	97	25	4	1
Teamwork	97	96	50	12	2
Role play	63	107	65	17	5
Individual projects (i.e. presentations, writings, etc.)	112	108	34	3	0
Team projects (i.e. presentations, videos, etc)	87	104	48	13	5

Note. N = 257. The highest numbers in each row are the ones marked in bold. Also, the activities marked in bold are the ones which selection adds up to 85% or more, considering the "very important" and "important" columns.

the teachers, and presentations about grammatical aspects. Here it is important to notice the importance of establishing resources to foster social presence (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2001) such as the forums to ask questions to the teachers.

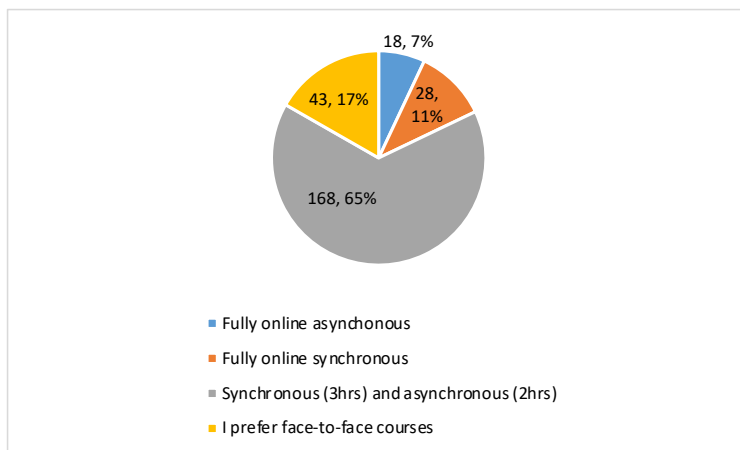
When asked about the ideal balance in an online language course, the great majority of the teachers chose a combination of synchronous and asynchronous interaction. The question asked participants to consider a 5-hour a week class and the majority agreed on a combination of 3 hours synchronous and 2 hours asynchronous (see figure 7). The teachers interviewed mentioned that they perceived that it was necessary to provide space for students to use the resources and do the activities, thus, asyn-

Table 3. *Perception about the level of importance of different resources for an online course*

<i>According to your professional experience, rate the level of importance of the following from resources you can include in an online course.</i>					
<i>Resource</i>	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Of some importance</i>	<i>Less important</i>	<i>Not important</i>
Audios with communicative situations	174	73	7	2	1
Audios with transcriptions	85	109	52	10	1
Vocabulary with audio	128	97	26	3	3
Videos with communicative situations	173	73	10	1	0
Videos with subtitles	69	102	59	20	7
Space to repeat phrases (vocabulary) and record voice	113	99	35	8	2
Pronunciation exercises that require students to record themselves	126	90	34	5	2
Presentations about grammatical aspects	124	109	21	3	0
Interactive reading with hyperlinks to meaning of vocabulary	103	114	36	4	0
Quiz-type exercises (graded automatically)	134	97	20	6	0
Grammar games	117	102	38	0	0
Vocabulary games	126	99	31	0	1
Platform space for teamwork	120	94	34	7	2
Forums to discuss a topic	115	101	29	10	2
Forum to ask questions to the teacher	154	82	19	1	1

Note. N = 257. The highest numbers in each row are the ones marked in bold. Also, the activities marked in bold are the ones which selection adds up to 90% or more, considering the "very important" and "important" columns.

chronous time was a good option. They also stated that they could work better if they did not have the pressure to have a synchronous class for every class since they needed time to prepare better exercises and activities, and evaluate and give feedback to students. As we notice here, these results can be connected with the recommendations by Lee (2021) about providing prompt feedback and improve tasks to make them meaningful. Additionally, as found in Liang *et al.*, (2021) the activities mentioned are related to the use of authentic tasks.

Figure 7. *Ideal option for teaching an online language course*

Note. N = 257.

Other recommendations reported in the interview phase were related to the use of a platform to have the information organized and resources such as *Quizziz* and *Canva* to keep the interaction between students and teacher as recommended by Shieh and Hsieh (2021). Some teachers mentioned that it seemed time-consuming to create exams, activities and exercises, however, once created, it was a “great help” to have them and even more if they were set up to give students immediate feedback. A teacher mentioned that even if the courses were not online he was going to “continue using the platform to let students know about activities, exercises and exams in order to avoid the use of paper”. About the available resources that they discovered during the Pandemic, a teacher stated that she was going to be able to give her students a more individual feedback and also, students could become more “autonomous” by selecting from the activities which ones to do or deciding the order to follow. According to an instructor of undergraduate students, the online environment provided space for a “closer contact with the students (individually) through virtual sessions: advice and tutoring”.

Conclusion

The Emergency Remote Teaching experience of language teachers has stimulated a reevaluation of pedagogical practices, professional development needs, and technological considerations in language education. The previous idea that face-to-face courses were better than online courses has definitely changed. The combination proposed by Fiock (2020) of the *CoI* presences and *the seven principles* adapted by Sorensen and Baylen (2009), can be a great blueprint for the development and evaluation of online courses in general. The aspects to consider for online language courses mentioned by Compton (2009) are also important to keep in mind if we want to have a well-designed fully online or hybrid language course. The combination of synchronous and asynchronous sessions for a more effective online course is one that should be researched to be able to recommend it with more support.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

As with most research about or related to the use of technology, there is the need to update the tools or resources mentioned here. Additionally, some authors have criticized the *CoI* framework and have mentioned the need for more presences. Thus, this is also something to consider as there is constant change in instructional strategies and instructional design in general.

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