

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING AMID THE CRISIS GENERATED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ROL DE LA TECNOLOGÍA EN LA ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE DE LENGUAS DURANTE LA CRISIS GENERADA POR LA PANDEMIA DE COVID-19

LE RÔLE DE LA TECHNOLOGIE SUR L'ENSEIGNEMENT DES LANGUES PARMIS LA CRISE PROVOQUÉE PAR LA PANDEMIE DU COVID-19

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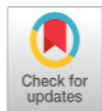
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The measures that governments have taken due to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as lockdowns, mandatory mask-wearing, permanent school closings, etc., have had tremendous effects on education in general and language teaching in particular. One of the elements that emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic was the concept of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) that Hodges et al. (2020) define as not being an attempt to recreate a robust ecosystem but rather to provide temporary access to instruction and instructional support in a manner that is quick to set up and is readily available during an emergency crisis. Regardless of its permanency, ERT has significantly impacted teachers and students.

This special issue is an attempt to understand how teachers and students reacted to the unexpected teaching and learning situations they faced. We hope it will be of interest to teachers, students, administrators, and language practitioners who want to know how other colleagues worldwide reacted to the COVID-19 measures. In it, we present 15 papers that explore how the authors coped with the teaching and learning situations that emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic from different perspectives and methodologies and how their experiences inform their current and future practices. The large variety of contexts (i.e., geographical, institutional, methodological) demonstrates that this pandemic has affected teaching all over the world, and we are all collaboratively trying to figure out how to move forward and how we can extract knowledge from our collective experiences.

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Special issue on *The Role of Technology in Language Teaching and Learning amid the Crisis Generated by the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Editors: Marta González-Lloret, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, USA; Laia Canals, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain; Jorge Pineda, Universidad de Antioquia, Colombia.

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The issue is divided into two main categories which comprise 13 empirical and 2 methodological studies. These cover a variety of geographical areas (from Colombia to Poland and Malaysia through Mexico, Spain, Czechia and the USA) and institutions (universities, primary and middle schools, and language programs). They also include a large diversity of participants, which illustrates how the pandemic and the switch to ERT affected learners of all levels and types. These range from pre-service and in-service language teachers, to primary and pre-school teachers; and from English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners; to students in a middle school dual immersion program, and students with autistic disorder (ASD) and Down syndrome (DS) learning English.

Finally, the special issue includes five quantitative studies, eight qualitative studies, using a variety of methodologies, and two articles with a detailed description of theoretical and methodological models for two very different learning contexts (a German as a Foreign language university program and a middle school dual immersion program) based on the lessons learned during the pandemic.

The first set of studies is composed of three investigations. In the first paper, Shayna Katz presents a quantitative study that explores the impact of interaction on the development of teacher-student and student-student relationships in a Spanish as a foreign language classroom that transitioned from face-to-face (FtoF) to online. She concludes that it is necessary to bring qualities from face-to-face instruction to online. The second article by Nicola Fořtová, Jitka Sedláčková, and František Tůma explores how student-teachers perceive technology use when teaching online. The authors carry out a qualitative study and conclude that the participants normalize technology as a platform for teaching, and they use technology-specific language for teaching strategies and classroom events. In the third article of the first set of studies of this special issue, Maria Ángeles Escobar Álvarez and Julie Ciancio call our attention to the experience of implementing a Massive Online Open course (MOOC) on elementary English. The authors conduct a quantitative study and conclude that MOOCs can be considered as an alternative way to build specific content in situations of crisis.

The second set of studies of this special issue has three qualitative studies and two quantitative investigations. In the first qualitative study, Jacqueline García Botero, Gustavo García Botero and Margarita Alexandra Botero Restrepo explore the psychosocial aspects and educational conditions of students with their technology-mediated learning. They conclude that teacher support and structural conditions of technology-mediated learning affect students' satisfaction with courses. Amanda K. Wilson and Martha M. Lengeling carry out a qualitative study exploring the lived experiences and emotional

responses of students in an English teaching program when it was moved to online learning. Their investigation shows that students had emotions that go from youthful optimism to overwhelming anxiety. In another qualitative study, Azlin Zaiti Zainal and Siti Zaidah Zainuddin explore language teachers' professional development during the pandemic through agency. They use interviews from teachers from rural areas in Malaysia to contribute to broadening the scope of theories of teacher agency in professional development. In two quantitative studies, Bruno Echauri Galván, Silvia García Hernández, and María Jesús Fernández Gil explore the repercussions of the sudden immersion in an online teaching environment. They highlight certain benefits such as an enhanced handling and knowledge of technological tools. They also find that learners highly value the use of digital applications for assessment. Anna Czura and Małgorzata Baran-Łucarz compare students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to assessment in a face-to-face and an online course. They show that students value formative assessment in the course.

The third section of this special issue includes five studies. Juan Antonio Núñez-Cortés, María Constanza Errázuri, Adrián Neubauer Esteban, and Claudia Parada conducted a qualitative study comparing face-to-face and online academic writing tutoring sessions. Their findings suggest that tutoring sessions, whether online or face-to-face, are useful to improve the process of writing for university students. Next, Jesús Izquierdo, María del Carmen Sandoval Caraveo, Verónica de la Cruz Villegas, and Rubén Zapata Díaz conducted a quantitative study in which they explore the preparedness of teachers for technology mediated L2 instruction and the effect that the change from face-to-face instruction brought to them. They conclude that teachers have a large number of teaching hours and hold sustained computer or internet access, but they lack training. In a qualitative study, Jairo Enrique Castañeda-Trujillo and María Fernanda Jaime-Osorio investigate the challenges teachers face with the imposition of RET. Their findings indicate that the teachers face challenges related to the social realities of students and they have to adapt to respond to the challenges that emerged from the imposition of RET. Zoila Liliana Giraldo-Martínez and Sigrid Andrea Ramos Carvajal explore teaching English online to students with ASD and DS. Their study suggests that teaching English to these students requires knowledge of their condition and suitable teaching strategies. The last empirical study is by Sarah Cohen and Daniel Calderón-Aponte. They conduct a case study on the collaboration of two university educators to create a trans-national model of learning. Their model can afford meaningful opportunities for language development.

The methodological contributions start with a paper by Joseph Cunningham. The author details the adaptation of an undergraduate German curriculum for a distance language education context. The article highlights the role of synchronous instruction and asynchronous tools in supporting multiliteracies instruction. Finally, Jordi Solsona-Puig, María Capdevila-Gutiérrez, and Fernando Rodríguez-Valls present a theoretical model for dual immersion digital instruction. In their model, they focus on five dimensions (i.e., technological, content, social, linguistic, and pedagogical) to better understand the dynamics of a program for equitable, just, and inclusive teaching and learning.

As Payne (2020) points out, “Transitioning to teaching fully online requires reimagining how to help students achieve the learning outcomes you have set for them under a different configuration of capabilities and constraints” (p. 247). These studies demonstrate how teachers navigated those new capabilities and constraints, adjusting their methodologies, environments, and types of activities to the new context. Several decades of research have proved that online language learning can be effective (Blake et al., 2008; Golonka et al., 2014; Sallem et al., 2020; Violin-Wigent, 2014) but the content, the selection of materials and tools, and teacher preparation are key elements for the success of an online course. Some of the articles presented above highlight, through the lens of existing distance education and distance learning theories, the need for teacher preparedness to teach languages with technology in an effective manner and the importance of continuing to develop teacher-learner relationships during ERT and beyond. Teachers’ technological preparedness is a fundamental skill and prerequisite in teaching languages online (Hampel & Stickler, 2005) and equally important in distance education is the need for teachers to show their social presence (Garrison et al., 2010) by communicating with students in online learning environments.

Some of the authors in the special issue took advantage of the advent of ERT to implement technologies and activities that had already proved to be effective for language learning such as telecollaborative transnational projects (Helm, 2015) that connect language learners and pre-service language teachers from different countries creating mutually beneficial collaborations for the former to practice their English and the later to conduct language assessment. We believe that any attempt to integrate any technology, during ERT or beyond, must be based on the existing research in the fields of Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and Computer-mediated communication (CMC) which has set the basis of much of what we know about online learning and the effective use of technologies in L2 classes today.

We hope that this special issue about the role of technology in language teaching and learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic helps demonstrate that language teachers and learners are highly adaptable to challenging situations. The articles in the issue show that language teachers are resilient and flexible professionals. They have adapted and prevailed after enduring the pedagogical and emotional challenges of COVID-19. The articles also illustrate their journey and the journey of their students through innovation and change and show how some of the tools and ideas implemented during these months can be adopted when we return to more traditional face-to-face environments. Finally, the articles in this special issue show that the adoption of technology in learning and teaching offers both opportunities and contingencies that require a high level of resilience from teachers and students (Salmon, 2014).

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