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English teachers' beliefs and practices: A mixed-methods study of 25 countries in the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract: This study aimed to investigate what language teachers believe and practice regarding the transition to online teaching, which needs more extensive research to understand the effect of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) on language teaching and learning. 156 teachers of English teachers in higher education across 5 regions stated their beliefs and practices regarding ERT that were studied through the analytical framework of data analysis informed by quantitative and qualitative tools. Descriptive statistics with the use of frequencies and percentages were used for the quantitative approach. As for the qualitative approach, qualitative content analysis was employed as the analytical tool for data analysis. Four main themes emerged from the analysis in which English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' beliefs and experiences gathered around the areas of teacher training and readiness for ERT, motivation, learner autonomy and engagement. Lack of training both on technological and pedagogical approaches was cited as one of the main challenges. In this sense, it was found that the pedagogy-informed design of new educational technology was not formed to deliver online teaching effectively. Therefore, this study adds to the knowledge of the current insights into online education amid the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly from EFL teachers' perspectives.

Keywords: COVID-19, emergency remote teaching, English language teaching, higher education, teachers' beliefs

Highlights

What is already known about this topic:

- Online education is mostly preferred during an emergency.
- Teachers and students need a variety of support in online education.

What this paper contributes:

- In a time of crisis, teachers need more support and face a double challenge.
- Teachers are positively inclined in theory towards learner autonomy and motivational boost.
- There is a common-sense among teachers that their students are deprived of the ability and eagerness to utilize the opportunities that come along with remote teaching, especially in the Middle Eastern and Asian contexts.

Implications for theory, practice and/or policy:

- Technology should not be considered a resolution for language education but as a means that needs to be utilized appropriately.
- There is a need to design the curriculum with both technology-driven and pedagogically driven teaching and learning approaches.

Introduction

With the widespread use of technology, the education sector has changed so much that higher education institutions (HEIs) advertised themselves as a leader to integrate online education into their programs. Furthermore, since foreign language learning requires practising and experiencing the

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language and lifestyle of the target language, learners have found online learning beneficial in receiving the information anytime and anywhere (Meri-Yilan, 2017). In this sense, several online educational platforms have been set up for a wider group of learners in institutional settings, such as Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) and Learning Management Systems (LMSs) and/or around the world, e.g. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Both learners' demand and HEIs' supply have enabled institutions to sustain online education. However, sustainability remained as optional or region-based till the outbreak of COVID-19, which forced online teaching and learning globally and entirely.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which erupted in the Wuhan district of China first in December 2019 and mushroomed across the world at the beginning of 2020, has led to a suspension in education, which gave educators just one choice, i.e. to move to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) and learning (ERL). ERT differs from online teaching and learning (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). This is not online teaching as it was referred to at times, but rather crisis-prompted remote teaching as correctly stated by Hodges et al. (2020). This is because it is not planned online teaching. The remarkable difference between ERT and online teaching is that the latter is an option while the former is a compulsion that emerged from a necessity (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Therefore, it is important to distinguish these two terms and conceptualize them differently so as not to cause misconstructions in implementations. Online teaching, to illustrate, is well-planned teaching and its enactment is supported through theory- and practice-based knowledge with thoroughly designed frameworks whereas in the case of ERT, it is not very sustainable as it is a temporary shift to alternative remote education means and is mostly about surviving at a time of a crisis, emergency or disaster until the crisis circumstances are abated (Bozkurt et al., 2020; Hodges et al. 2020).

However, while moving to ERT during the COVID-19, a large number of institutions have not considered a basic infrastructure of this remote teaching, they have just given their teachers a PC or laptop and asked them to deliver their lessons remotely from home without being trained to develop programs and courses to meet the demand for this method of delivery. Previous research on using technologies has found several challenges, such as the inability of students and teachers alike to use technology (Gacs et al., 2020). Additionally, some studies (e.g. Koruyan, 2016; Lin & Gao, 2020) indicate that the development of technologies has impacted motivation and autonomy positively. A correlation has been observed between added inducements and positive affective states in the act of learning a language (Ellis, 2003). That is to say, technology-assisted courses can function as a supplementary asset in connecting autonomy and motivation as two states of affect. Through ERT and an appropriate design, students can be involved in learning and teaching both individually and collaboratively, such as by conducting an online study to sort real-world problems (COVID-19) out as well as demonstrating the findings as a group on an online platform. This sort of teaching can enable learners to be intrinsically motivated to learn the language (Chapelle & Jamieson, 2008) and give them a sense of ownership (Benson, 2013; Godwin-Jones, 2019; Reinders & White, 2016). However, ERT is not without challenges (Bozkurt et al., 2020), such as pandemic related anxiety, technology-related challenges and delivering high-quality instruction.

The ways institutions and concerned stakeholders deal with such crises using ERT have become an interesting research topic for researchers of different disciplinary backgrounds who have largely investigated stakeholder perspectives, primarily those of teachers, on various aspects of ERT (e.g. Aguliera & Nightengale-Lee, 2020; Albó et al., 2020). Language researchers are not an exception in this trend. A closer inspection of the literature on ERT displays that teachers' voices about teaching in a time of crisis, however, have been widely absent from such analyses, and little information is gathered about what language teachers put into practice and how they overcome the challenges during this time of crisis. This is because the existing body of literature has largely dealt with students instead of teachers (Jeffery & Bauer, 2020; Petillion & McNeil, 2020). This is a significant gap given the influence of teachers' beliefs on the ways they teach through education and information technologies, and, of particular interest here, on whether they can survive in this sudden transition. Thus, this study addresses this gap by examining teachers' readiness for the transition to ERT during this pandemic and what is missing while

teaching online. Additionally, these insights into teachers' views and actual practices will help course and curriculum designers to improve their highly-quality instruction, which is largely missing due to the sudden move to ERT. Therefore, the study is likely to contribute to the knowledge and educational field in this respect, and seeks out to answer the following research question and the sub-questions:

RQ1: What are English language teachers' beliefs and experiences in online teaching during emergency remote teaching with regards to

a) readiness for emergency remote education?
b) learner motivation, collaboration and autonomy in online classes?
c) technical-pedagogical and psychological aspects of online teaching?
d) learner engagement in online teaching?

The central focus of this research is to scrutinize EFL teachers' beliefs and practices concerning the unexpected move towards the emergency remote teaching amid the COVID-19 pandemic across different locations of the world. For this, the current paper first presents the materials and methodology of this investigation. Then, it shows the results based on data from the questionnaire and interview in a combined way. These results are subsequently discussed with reference to the related literature and the findings of the previous studies. Ultimately, the conclusion section summarizes the points raised in the study and replies to the research question and offers some implications as well as suggestions for further studies.

Literature

Theoretical and Empirical Foundations

The incorporation of technology in language education has revolutionized learning and teaching for decades. The integration is regarded as a means to promote teachers' creativity and skills, so it should help students' engagement and active involvement in the learning process. In this regard, numerous articles, journals and books have been published on the technology use for the purpose of teaching and learning over the last 50 years (e.g. Meri-Yilan & Koruyan, 2020; Sabiri, 2020). However, only a little is known about English language teachers' beliefs and practices and learners' engagement regarding ERT, especially with the spread of the COVID-19, which has forced nationwide closures, with an impact upon a large proportion (around 70%) of student population across the world (UNESCO, 2020).

ERT, therefore, has been a critical point in coping with the negative impacts caused by this pandemic, and here the range of technologies used in language learning, especially the employment of web-based platforms and other technological instruments with a pedagogically informed design of new educational technology is very crucial to serving the purpose. As Stanley (2019) aptly points out, to take maximum advantage of online teaching, necessary transformations in pedagogy should be embraced. The literature (e.g. Hampel, 2006; Hampel & Stickler, 2015; Hauck, 2007) on the use of educational technologies and language education in particular also cautions us about the reality that the implementation of technology should not be based on just a technology-driven approach but a pedagogically driven approach. This means that educational technologies should be part of this approach to prove the achievement of the teaching and learning goals, and create and establish an educational community. It is, therefore, important to find out whether the institutions have considered the pedagogical aspect of the technology while moving to ERT, which is one of the objectives of this research.

Furthermore, the ability to be beneficial and successful in an ERT environment depends on a teacher's ability to understand the strengths and weaknesses of a virtual teaching and learning environment and use appropriate pedagogical strategies and practices. This in turn will enhance students' learning process in a more meaningful way. Therefore, language teachers should understand what pedagogy

includes while teaching virtually, which teaching styles, methodology, online activities, and the technological functions and affordances are provided during a training program if provided before they start teaching. Nonetheless, even today, very often language teachers believe that teaching remotely is a simple transition from an in-person situation, and some of the studies into remote teaching handle online design only separately, and most teachers habitually substitute "tasks used in face-to-face settings … [with] online environments without adapting them to the new setting" (Hampel, 2006, p. 106). Chapelle (2003, p. 135) explains that language teachers should be able to devise appropriate online tasks and activities to a virtual environment. As pertinently put by Kaplan (2019, p. 4), "the presence of technology liberates […] classroom teachers from their comfort zones, and enables them to meet challenges, to find new pedagogies, new forms of teaching and learning, and new alliances among themselves and with their students".

However, there is a problem with supplying beneficial and adequate technology and pedagogical training, which, consecutively, causes teaching staff to integrate technology into their teaching acts professionally and efficiently. Those teachers are expected to teach and at the same time deal with all technological and learning problems their students may face during remote teaching, which puts an extra burden on their shoulders. Successful introduction and implementation of remote teaching and effective use of online platforms require teachers to be mentored in suitable pedagogical approaches as well as technological skills. This will help them feel prepared and confident while teaching online courses. Previous research on using technologies has identified many issues, such as teachers' and students' lacking technological skills (Hampel, 2006), feelings of discomfort when dealing with remote teaching and related technical issues (Palloff & Pratt, 2013), stress-driven feelings of frustration while making the transition to remote learning environments (Brooks & Grajek, 2020; Goertler, 2019). Consequently, teachers and students need sufficient training for effective technology use in order to render their teaching-learning process more effective (Gönen & Akbarov, 2015), which should be enriched by mentoring, assistance and allowance to facilitate learning provided in online platforms by teachers (Kaplan, 2019).

Another important focus of online teaching is its desirability and feasibility to promote students' autonomy and enhance students' motivation. The role of educational technologies in boosting motivation and autonomy has been a key issue over the years, with many claims (e.g. Benson, 2011; Chik, 2018; Payne, 2020; Warner & Chen, 2017) put forward in support of technology-assisted language learning. However, the interactions of either learner-learner or learner-teacher concerning quality and quantity are restricted depending on the nature of the students. Shaw (2013) suggested that language materials should be set up for language learners in discussion groups both to support learners and to encourage learner-learner engagements and interactions during online lessons.

All things considered, despite the growing number of learners and faculty taking part in online learning at tertiary level education, building quality online learning environments is still challenging, and it is even more problematic. The reason is that teachers hold concerns about the effort and time which are put into teaching remotely, and the shortage of assistance offered by their institutions (Seaman, 2009) as well as the lack of readiness and preparation, which teachers find arduous as to adopting new educational practices (Baran, 2011).

Reactions to ERT across countries

Countries reacted to the effect of COVID-19 on teaching by either school suspensions across the nation, or a local-wide closure, or termination or suspension of education. The reactions in different contexts have led to various research trends in online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic (for further detail see Mishra et al., 2021). To illustrate a few, some studies in the intra-period of the pandemic explored administrators' beliefs (Johnson et al., 2020) or collected reports from news magazines, institutions, administrators or teachers (Bozkurt et al., 2020; Crawford et al., 2020; Jankowski, 2020). Furthermore,

several studies drew attention to the inequity in educational practices between urban and rural regions (Aguliera & Nightengale-Lee, 2020; Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Bozkurt et al., 2020). Likewise, some studies, such as that of Bozkurt (2022), indicate that the majority of the studies carried out during the COVID-19 crisis addressed themes relating to the educational crisis in the higher education sector, psychological pressures, social uncertainty, sustainability and the prominence of online education as well as blended hybrid modes of education.

Crawford et al. (2020) examined the digital pedagogy responses of 20 countries to COVID-19 and demonstrated diverse responses to one challenging problem. Their study found that many countries moved to online campuses except the United States of America (USA). It also showed that countries with higher COVID-19 cases (i.e. South Korea, Indonesia and China) had an online strategy for higher education around the country. Although the majority closed their schools around the nations, some (i.e. Brazil and Singapore) preferred a local-based closure. Based on the report by UNESCO (2020), counties such as South Africa and South Korea applied an online teaching strategy to help students sustain their learning. According to the study by Bozkurt et al. (2020), which provides reflections from 31 countries, all parties (i.e. students, teachers, administrators and parents) were involved in the affected learning process and asked for physical, technical and emotional support.

A report prepared by Jankowski (2020) displayed that 97% of 787 USA-wide institutions made changes on their assessment, for example, by extending deadlines, shifting to online assessment or implementing different assessment criteria. This aligns with an exploration by Johnson et al. (2020) that also revealed that administrators had to maintain their students' studies although it was their first online teaching experience for some of them. Additionally, a systematic review study on the experiences of the stakeholders in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that much research has, so far, focused on the experience of high school students and teachers (Bond, 2020).

Second language-related studies on ERT, however, being very few, have been restricted to either one context or nation, for instance, Bailey and Lee's (2020) study on South Korea, Gao and Zhang's (2020) on China and Famularsih's (2020) on Indonesia, or one research theme, such as MacIntyre et al.'s (2020) research surveying 600 language teachers' strategies across countries. English language teachers regarded ERT's benefits as providing feedback, grading and assembling assignments, while challenges were uttered as meeting online and helping students to tackle technical problems (Bailey & Lee, 2020). According to the teachers, students had problems such as meeting online, collaborating with peers and being distracted online, whereas they benefited from ERT in that they could practice writing more and had fewer mistakes thanks to online tools, which was also mentioned by English language students having partaken in a study by Famularsih (2020). However, the use and practice of online tools assisted teachers to acquire online skills and affected teacher cognition (Gao & Zhang, 2020).

Above-stated studies seeming to agree on the need and necessity for approaching and exploring ERT more deeply but lacking insights into teachers' voices across nations have led the present research to look more closely into what teachers believe and practice in the transition to ERT. On the other side, previous research on language learning has displayed that the complexity of and challenge on developing the second language are reduced through digital learning (Godwin-Jones, 2019) and suggested implementing a systematic model for teachers to enable the sustainability of education (Egbert, 2020; Ross & DiSalvo, 2020). Its challenge in a time of crisis needs to be investigated, as what is required in a language classroom might be missing.

Methodology

Research Design and Setting

To explore EFL teachers' experiences with ERT, a sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design was adopted (Creswell, 2013). Within the scope of this design, this research started with the quantitative strand followed by the qualitative one to further delve into the issues that emerged in the quantitative data and accordingly supplement the quantitative results with explanatory results providing the opportunity for further analysis, specifically through qualitative results to refine and extend the general picture. In other words, with this research design, it is aimed to portray a broader picture of the phenomenon, i.e. language teachers' beliefs and practices regarding teaching online (Creswell, 2013; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008). Therefore, a survey questionnaire was administered first to reach a high number of participants from around the world and then the voluntary participants from the survey study were interviewed to elaborate on the issues addressed in the surveys at length. In the presentation of the results, the quantitative and qualitative results were merged in a comparative and complementary manner to demonstrate how interview participants detailed the overall issues under several themes.

As for the setting of the study, it consisted of 25 countries from which the participants were sampled. These countries were representative of five main regions, namely the European region, Asia Pacific region, South/ Latin America region, Middle East region and North America region albeit not being represented equally in terms of the number of participants from these regions. The inclusion of such different settings was in line with the global impact of the pandemic on English language teachers' practices and perspectives as they were globally affected by the sudden shift to ERT all around the world. Thus, it was vital to incorporate as many different settings as possible to capture a better snapshot of what these teachers experienced in different settings and what perspectives they held about their linguistic practices while teaching online.

The Sampling and Data Collection Process

The participants were recruited through an invitation to take part in the study shared on several commercial and non-commercial social networking sites and messaging services, such as ResearchGate (RG), LinkedIn, Facebook and WhatsApp groups. Since our target population is based in different geographical locations, i.e. EFL teachers from different parts of the world, the likelihood of reaching them physically was difficult. Due to our desire to reach this widely dispersed population, we decided to use online questionnaires created on google documents so that we could take an "advantage of reaching out to a larger and more diverse pool of potential participants" (Wilson & Dewaele, 2010, p. 103).

The questionnaire was designed by the researchers after a thorough literature review and consisted of two sections: a section on participants' demographic information and a section on their perceptions and practices as regards teaching online during the pandemic. The questionnaire mostly consisted of closed-ended items with a five-point Likert scale. There were also items, which required participants to elaborate on their responses. There were 26 items in the questionnaire. Good internal consistency was calculated in the questionnaire items, and the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Rating was found to be 0.82. A five-point Likert-type scale, which is frequently used in social-psychological research as it allows participants to remain neutral in cases of having no experience, familiarity or perspectives about the research phenomenon was used (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). The scale ranged from a negative to a positive response ("1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree"), yes or no and on a scale of 1 (negative) to 10 (positive/negative) items were used in questionnaires. The categorization of the average scores were done as follows: 1.0–2.9 (Low = Negative); 3.0–3.9 (somewhat positive); 4.0–5.0 (very positive).

Furthermore, to ascertain the validity and reliability of the data collected, clarify potential doubts and reduce the scope for bias within in this research, the results gathered from different methods of data collection were compared to achieve triangulation. To ensure inter-coder reliability, the researchers internally agreed on the codes generated, and an independent third-party researcher was invited to discuss the codes. He also agreed with the coding based on the research questions, and there were no controversial themes that emerged during data analysis, which ensured the credibility and trustworthiness of the study, as well.

Data collection took place between March and July 2020, when tertiary level institutions across countries shifted to ERT via online learning platforms. 156 participants (63% female, 35% male, 2% with no gender statement) from 25 countries responded to the survey questionnaires. The informed consent was obtained from the participants by getting them to read and agree/disagree with the consent statement, "I consent to participate in this survey", on the introductory page for our survey that also included information about the purpose of our study and a data protection statement.

The majority are from the European and Middle East regions (for a summary of countries by region, see Table 1). The countries are listed based on the participants' statements. However, the regions are classified based on the classification of the International Telecommunications Union.

Table 1. Frequency and percentages of the participants across countries

Region	Countries	f	%
European region (Global South/North)	Turkey, UK, Netherlands, Spain, Scotland, Bulgaria, Malta, Russia, Ukraine, Cyprus	72	46.16
Asia Pacific region	Bangladesh, India, Thailand, New Zealand	18	11.54
South/Latin America region	Peru, Chile	7	4.48
Middle East region	Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iran, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Iraq	52	33.34
North America region	Canada, USA	7	4.48
		156	100

As for their educational levels and teaching experiences, 50% of them indicated having a master's degree, and 20% (31 participants) reported having a doctoral degree. The others (47 participants) had an undergraduate degree. Meanwhile, 10 reported having a certificate along with the undergraduate degree, such as the TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Certificate. 60% (94 participants) enjoyed more than 11-years of experience in teaching and 31% (49 participants) had 6 to 10 years of experience while the rest had between 2 and 5-year teaching experience. However, more than four-fifths (130 participants) had less than 1-year experience in teaching online. Very few (2 participants) said more than 11 years, whereas less than one-fifth (18 participants) stated between 2 and 5 years, and just 6 of them reported between 6 and 10 years.

Out of 156 participants, 15 English language teachers (9 females and 6 males) hailing from the UK (10 participants), USA (2 participants), Turkey (2 participants) and Netherlands (1 participant) participated in one-on-one interviews. The interviews were held in online platforms, such as Zoom and Skype. The interviews lasted around 15 minutes. The majority of them (12 participants) reported to have a master's degree, and two of them stated to have an undergraduate degree and just one indicated having a doctoral degree. As for their teaching experience, seven of them said to have between 6 and 10 years of teaching, while three of them reported more than 11 years. Just a couple of them (2 participants) stated less than one year, and the rest (3 participants) had between 2 and 5 years of teaching. Despite

differences in years of teaching as an instructor, all of them expressed having one-year experience in online teaching.

Data Analysis

The analytical framework of data analysis consisted of quantitative and qualitative tools of analysis. Within this framework, firstly, the quantitative data were subjected to descriptive statistics with the use of frequencies and percentages. In doing so, the major objective is to reach a broader picture of the EFL teachers' experiences and beliefs regarding their shift to teaching remote English courses on online platforms following the COVID-19 pandemic.

As for the qualitative data obtained through interviews, qualitative content analysis was employed as the analytical tool for data analysis owing to the descriptive nature of the data (Miles et al., 2014; Schreier, 2012). With this, it is aimed to reach a "subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). The central focus in the analysis is not on the latent content, i.e. "a second-level, interpretative analysis of the underlying deeper meaning of the data" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 246), but on the manifest content, i.e. "descriptive account of the surface meaning of the data" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 245). With a particular emphasis on the manifest content, our purpose was "understanding the perspective(s) of the producers of these words", i.e. EFL teachers across 25 countries from a variety of perspectives (Berg, 2001, p. 242). Four steps were followed to analyze the data following Dörnyei's (2007) suggestion for qualitative content analysis: (1) pre-coding and coding, (2) developing ideas, (3) interpreting the data and (4) drawing conclusions. During these steps, the data were transcribed, read recurrently for pre-coding and coding to "obtain a general sense of the information and reflect on its overall meaning' (Creswell, 2013, p. 185). Next, key points were jotted down around certain themes considering their relevance to the research questions. Finally, the categories that emerged from the coding were clustered around four overarching themes consistent with the themes addressed in the questionnaire. Four main themes emerged from the analysis in which EFL teachers' beliefs and experiences gathered around the areas of teacher training and readiness for ERT, motivation, learner autonomy and engagement.

Findings

In sequential explanatory designs, researchers interpret quantitative findings by means of qualitative findings. Therefore, the findings from quantitative and qualitative data are given below with the quantitative results merged with qualitative extracts with the aim of sufficiently unveiling the underlying issues behind quantitative results. The reason for this is that while quantitative results paint an overall picture regarding ELF teachers' beliefs and practices in ERT, it draws on the responses of the majority, yet in research, what the least-heard participants may need to state in the interviews individually might be more vital and valuable than what the majority think and feel. Thus, apart from seeing the overall picture, it is vital to gain insights into individual experiences and practice.

Table 2. Major themes and sub-categories for participants' comments on ERT

Themes	Major issues discussed under the themes
Readiness and lack of training for ERT	Lack of institutional support for ERT Lack of self-confidence in teaching online Geographical differences in receiving training Coping strategies for compensating the lack of preparedness • Getting help from colleagues • Getting help from social media platforms Feelings of readiness • Familiarity with ICT tools provided by institutions Learners' unpreparedness for ERT • Lack of knowledge about how to use ICT tools
Motivation, autonomy and collaboration in case of online teaching	Enhancing student motivation and autonomy by online learning Teachers' role in developing learner autonomy and motivation during ERT • implementation of interactive classroom tasks • adopting humanistic approaches in teaching Student resistance to gaining autonomy • Contextual conditions (e.g. educational values, learning styles) • Unwillingness to engage in interactive tasks Perceiving face-to-face education to be more ideal for increasing student motivation • Social interaction opportunity • Non-verbal elements (facial expressions, posture, body language) • Existence of fun elements in classes Need for training to help students gain autonomy
Technical-pedagogical and psychological aspects of online teaching	Access to ICT tools in certain countries • Difficulty in accessing basic ICT tools • Poor internet infrastructure • A dearth of technical support for students/staff Feeling emotionally overwhelmed • A sudden shift to online teaching & lack of pre-planning • No experience in online teaching platforms • Increased workload
Learner engagement in online teaching	Factors contributing to learner engagement • Offline and interactive nature of courses Negative impacts of online courses on student engagement • Lack of motivation and being unprepared for online courses • Lack of control mechanism on student behaviour in online classes Negative impacts of online courses on teachers' practices • Non-interactional nature of courses • Lack of non-verbal clues

Readiness and Lack of Training for ERT

The results demonstrated that although only 27% (42) of the EFL instructors reported having some training for teaching online previously, around half of the participants (59.3%) felt prepared to teach their classes online. More precisely, the feeling of readiness for ERT was observed among many participants with regard to the use of educational technologies, such as Edmodo, Zoom, e-whiteboards, blogs, and computers (78.2%). It became clear that the feeling of readiness largely originated from their belief in having confidence in the use of technology to support language learning and teaching online (73.8%) and overall confidence in teaching at online platforms (66.7%). Many teachers (77%) also reported that they could easily use plenty of visual media, interactive tools and learning activities during their online classes and confidently utilize learning management systems, such as folders and pages to keep their files organized. It is probably because of this feeling of readiness that only less than half (42.3%) felt challenged by the shift to online teaching. However, when it comes to students' readiness for online learning, only around one-fifth of the EFL instructors (19.3%) considered their students well-prepared to manage ERT while the rest did not think that the students could satisfactorily benefit from online classes.

In relation to these issues, particularly the issue of training for ERT, several interviewees expressed their concerns about the lack of training and its consequences on their practices. Even worse, some complained about the lack of institutional support services and how it gave rise to a lack of confidence in teachers while running their online classes. Talking about these issues of training, some instructors made the following remarks:

> **T1:** Another point is the current rate at which most educational institutes are having to deliver lessons online but have hardly had the opportunity to train their instructors on using it (Saudi Arabia).
>
> **T2:** Just a few virtual learning sessions. (Saudi Arabia).
>
> **T3:** To be confident? I am still struggling, and I learn by doing it. It might happen that a good teacher in a real classroom might lose face when teaching online because of a lack of skills. (Saudi Arabia).
>
> **T4:** Just a few virtual learning sessions (Oman).
>
> **T5:** Almost none (Iraq).

It also emerged from the interviews that there are geographical differences in terms of receiving training. It seemed that some countries, particularly those of European, were much more prepared for such ERT cases than others were at the macro level and institutional level.

> **T6:** There was some training for the course material converted to meet the needs of the online medium with a pedagogically informed design delivered through Zoom" (United Kingdom).
>
> **T7:** Some educational technologists from the Department of Education delivered few sessions on the use of the platforms and their benefits in terms of the language learning process such as students' collaboration, interactions and independent learning (Spain).

In countries where there was not much room for training, EFL instructors were seen to develop some strategies to compensate for their lack of preparedness. In this sense, some reported getting help from their colleagues and some reported consulting social media for further help as to preparing their online classes. The comments below illustrate these issues:

> **T8:** My manager was amazingly supportive, as well as all the colleagues! We all were very happy to help each other! (Saudi Arabia).

> **T9:** YouTube is amazing! I learn lots of stuff … how to create content, quizzes, games and share them with my students … for example, Russell Standard (Saudi Arabia).

As for the EFL instructors' confidence in teaching online courses through technological tools, it emerged that their feelings of readiness came from their previous familiarity with, expertise in and active use of such tools and some support services locally provided by the institution or department. For example, one participant explained this as follows:

> **T10:** I really did not need preparation as I am an educational technologist and teach computer-assisted language learning/teaching in teacher education courses as well. But the university officials uploaded instructional videos and screencasts on how to hold online sessions, how to use LMS, how to create interactive content, etc. for the faculty members in the LMS (Saudi Arabia).

Lastly, the EFL instructors explained in the interviews the reasons why they considered their learners unprepared for online classes. They highlighted the fact that their students have the required technological tools and infrastructure, yet do not know how to utilize these tools for instructional purposes. In this respect, the following extracts illustrate the common beliefs among instructors about students' lack of readiness in ERT.

> **T11:** Some students use their phones and tablets, but they need training in how to use them for educational purposes, etc. (Turkey).

> **T12:** Students need serious training in learning how to learn in general and learning online in particular. I think this must be a priority in both real and virtual classrooms. Better do this training before moving to online learning, but unfortunately, they failed to do this (the UK).

Motivation, Autonomy and Collaboration in Case of Online Teaching

In relation to this theme, varied responses were given by the participants. Overall, most instructors did not perceive teaching online as enjoyable as teaching in person (66%), yet around half reported being motivated by moving to online teaching (47.4%). With respect to the nature of their classes, the widely held belief among instructors is that the online lessons delivered by them are not dry, boring and unappealing (57.1%). Most highlighted the role of collaboration at the time of online teaching, noting that they can connect with their colleagues trying to do their best as online teachers when they are in need of help and assistance with certain pedagogical issues (56.2%). However, it appeared that students cannot collaborate with one another while learning their courses online to a level that meets instructors' expectations (68.3%). Seeing the lack of learner autonomy in this respect, around half of the instructors (46.8%) found online teaching desirable and feasible in terms of promoting students' autonomy while a small minority did not share this view.

In the interviews, the participants particularly talked about two issues: motivation and autonomy. The results from the interviews support the questionnaire findings that the online environment is regarded as conducive to the development of learner autonomy and is perceived to enhance students' motivation by several participants. Some believe that autonomy emerges as an inherent element in online teaching. Talking of these points, some instructors reported that:

> **T13:** Online teaching enhances learners' self-directedness as they adopt their own learning style, find resources, and manage their time independently most of the time. Instructors support

their learners by giving them continuous constructive feedback, share their tech experience with their learners to use hard/ software effectively, guide them to reliable resources (Canada).

T14: Learner autonomy is somewhat forced on students with online learning and it is my duty to support them in that (Saudi Arabia).

It is also evident from the interviews that digital technologies are perceived to make an increasingly significant contribution to language learning in many parts of the world, especially with the outbreak of COVID-19 and some participants consider teachers responsible for helping students enhance learner autonomy and motivation.

T15: It is not online teaching itself. It is the delivery or the content/lesson itself that repels the students off in some contexts." (Netherlands).

T16: It is the responsibility of teachers and institutions that encourage learners' autonomy and motivation by designing an appropriate curriculum aligned with those concepts and delivering the lesson that in accordance with autonomy and motivation the Glasgow University applies for decades (The United Kingdom).

Some instructors came up with quite a few recommendations as to how instructors' can increase the level of student motivation and learner autonomy as well as add a fun element into their classes. There were references to the teachers' personal characteristics, implementation of interactive classroom tasks and interactive nature of the course content at times as elements playing a role in motivating students and helping them become autonomous learners. Some extracts that aptly illustrate these issues are given below:

T17: Using a lot of interacting exercises and engaging them by making the lesson relating to their interest topics motivate my students and help them to take responsibilities. (Turkey).

T18: Within this context, applying more friendly/personalized approach to continually encouraging engagement and motivation, as well as simplifying instructions and using adapted course materials." (The United Kingdom).

However, there were many references in the interviews indicating that some teachers did not believe that online teaching and learning promote learners' autonomy and motivation as illustrated by the following exemplary comments:

T19: Students do not engage here in Oman despite the continuous effort and invitation to participate (Oman).

T20: Teachers try to motivate and design interactive classes, but if the students don't have a reason to be interactive, you cannot force them (Saudi Arabia).

T21: In the GCC area, context and social setting, it is not feasible at all. In other societies, there may be a possibility (UAE).

The above comments suggest that it is the educational values and learning styles of some cultures where students are used to being spoon-fed by their teachers and according to the participants online setting made it even worse. About 80 % of the participants found face-to-face teaching in the classroom more useful to enhance learner motivation.

T22: Lack of face-to-face interaction, lack of students' motivations, technical issues and above all class participation. I am a person who interacts socially, I use my body language, posture,

> gesture, facial expressions and reading students' faces whether they are getting bored or not, iceberg exercise and create a scene of humor that I feel I like (Saudi Arabia).

Finally, there were some suggestions by instructors as to how learner autonomy and motivation can be nurtured in online teaching. Particular emphasis in this respect was placed on training teachers as shown in the following extracts:

> **T23:** Learners this semester hasn't been all too motivated nor independent. To help facilitate the shift to online learning, the institution needs to prepare guidelines for both teachers and students (Spain).

> **T24:** Online learning/teaching should promote autonomy and motivation but in reality, this is not always the case. Training the learners how to learn is my answer (Cyprus).

Technical-pedagogical and Psychological Aspects of Online Teaching

Most instructors (71.8%) reported having a good internet connection for conducting their online classes; however, in the case of students, only a small ratio of instructors believed that their students have a good internet connection, too (30.2%). Moreover, in terms of having the required technological tools, while a large number of instructors (73.1%) reported having a good computer (laptop or desktop), they did not think that this is the case with their students (27%). These observations as to having a good internet connection and required technological tools among instructors and students point to the problem of equality of opportunity in education caused primarily by the shift to online teaching as many students, particularly those in the rural areas, are deprived of the required technical infrastructure and techno-pedagogical tools to attend online classes. As the interview data showed, such technical issues were often country- and region-specific. A few participants commented on the technical issues as follows:

> **T25:** The challenges include students who do not have laptops, computers or internet (Saudi Arabia).

> **T26:** The worst difficulty both my students and I face is the poor connection to the internet in our area (Turkey).

> **T27:** Here in Egypt, most of the students who live in villages do not have a laptop or Internet connection (Egypt).

Some instructors even noted that while most students suffer from the lack of access to the Internet and technological devices, those who have the privilege of having such facilities cannot make extreme use of such facilities thanks to their lack of knowledge on how to use these tools for pedagogical purposes. In one case, the participants thought that

> **T28:** The main challenges of online teaching are: 1-Most of my students do not have adequate tools to study such as laptops and good internet connections. 2- Lack of knowledge of online interaction tools (i.e. Edmodo, Zoom, e-whiteboards, blogs, and computers), thus they need to get adequate training to allow them to use those tools efficiently … students are not fully ready for online learning and this adds more burden on us (Iran).

> **T29:** We used WhatsApp to keep in communication with students, sending and receiving work. This made it difficult to keep on top of who is doing work as a lot of my students weren't available on WhatsApp or had a poor internet connection that they couldn't access (Canada)

In certain cases, some instructors complained about the fact that they often had to resort to their own resources for running online classes and that there is a dearth of technical support from their institutions

vis-à-vis the technical problems they encounter in the act of conducting online classes. Commenting on this issue, a participant reported that

> **T30:** There is no back-up support for teachers who had to rely on their own resources for internet connectivity, data, etc. There is no contingency plan or design that when there is a problem such as technical issues for working offline in the event of disruption … In other words, there is no pedagogical consideration teaching online (Saudi Arabia).

Turning now to the psychological aspects of online teaching from the perspectives of EFL instructors, we have seen that only a small ratio of the instructors (28.2%) felt that teaching online has overwhelmed them whereas the rest did not agree with this statement. Likewise, the interview results indicated that teaching online is not considered to be a rather wearisome activity among a few participants as they reported that it does not take long to set up activities and can get as much done as they do in traditional in-person teaching. Two of those participants who reported feeling emotionally overwhelmed in online teaching attributed this feeling to the lack of planning and preparation for teaching online in times of crisis commented that

> **T31:** Teaching online is somehow overwhelming due to the lack of pre-planning. We are not teaching online now; we are reacting/trying to teach in a crisis situation.

> **T32:** No one is properly prepared to teach online; it was all of a sudden. The disaster has struck (COVID-19) and we are firefighting the situation. I was not trained to become an online teacher and my students never enrolled in school to be taught online. It is a nightmare. Lack of effective training and controlling a class full of young learners is not easy nor is it conducive.

Another instructor cited the amount of work they have to do in online teaching as a factor that causes stress and traumatic experiences while running online classes. Here is what this participant remarked:

> **T33:** There are too many things to do at one time for a teacher, from muting students, kicking out students who aren't in the class, switching screens, annotating over screens, and deleting the annotations etc. (Canada)

These responses once again show the connection between certain themes across the data. The perceived lack of preparation for teaching online coupled with the scarcity of technological-pedagogical facilities seems to emotionally influence some instructors and their teaching practices in negative manners. It is for these reasons that even though for most the psychological aspect of online classes does not appear a big concern, for a few, it has become an experience that causes a strong emotional response from the mind, typically stress but also despair and anxiety.

Learner Engagement in Online Teaching

As for running online classes which are inviting, interacting and engaging, apart from a minority (13.5%), the majority perceived that their learners are quite engaged in their online classes, thus being not prone to minimal engagement or drifting away from online classes at the time of teaching hours. Despite certain problems both instructors and students meet, only a small number of instructors believe that online classes do not work (21.8%) whereas the rest believe in the effectiveness of their online classes, particularly in respect of learner engagement.

In the interviews, some instructors explained the factors, which contributed to learner engagement. One of the oft-cited factors was the offline and interactive nature of course content, which is believed to liberate students from temporal and time-related constraints in their endeavour to access course content. One instructor commented on this matter as follows.

> **T34:** The majority of students in all of my classes actively engage with such content. This might be attributed to the offline nature of the content that enables them to use it or share their responses at any time they find convenient, even in case of poor internet connection. It might also be related to the multimedia and interactive nature of content that can be more engaging for some of the students (The United Kingdom).

Unlike the questionnaire participants, the interviewees were rather negative about learner engagement in online classes. The majority of the interviewees (13 out of 15) maintained that the current transition to online teaching has undesirably affected their students' level of engagement in classes. Thus, they did not feel that their students engage in their classes. Often, the lack of engagement was seen as a direct consequence of a lack of motivation and being unprepared for such emergency cases, as is shown in the following instructor accounts.

> **T35:** The problem is little to absolutely no student engagement is taking place. Quite often, teaching GCC area students is an uphill battle on account of issues surrounding motivation levels, but now, teaching online has compounded it further (Saudi Arabia).

> **T36:** Online teaching is something that we were thrown into due to the current pandemic of COVID19. Management, teachers and students were not ready for it … Keeping them engaged is a struggle. They have so many distractions that as a teacher I cannot manage online (Saudi Arabia).

A few teachers complained about the lack of control mechanism in relation to learner engagement citing the reason that they could not see what students are doing at the time of teaching as even though they appear to be online and present, often they may be busy with something else. Even in cases where there is learner engagement, some problems may arise when some students start talking at the same time in order to be heard or noticed. Here is a comment that illustrates these issues:

> **T37**: Sometimes it is difficult to get students to participate or engaged as they always leave the class in the background and do other things, like playing PS4. When some students do engage, it is hard to get a constructive discourse from students as they are always talking over each other, which I have to resort in muting students (Canada).

One instructor also alluded to the fact that not only learner engagement but instructors' engagements are influenced in a negative fashion during online classes. He made the following remarks with the disapproval of online teaching due to the non-interactional nature of such classes in which paralinguistic elements (non-verbal clues) are missing.

> **T38**: Teaching is not just talking in front of a camera and showing pictures or sharing materials from a screen. It is a show in which you include your mimics, your body, your energy... You have to feel "in" it and the students need to feel included. So, it's a no from me.

Discussions

With the eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, many educational organizations across the world have been forced to move to online teaching on an untested and unprecedented scale. It is very crucial that teachers' voices which have been largely absent from the analysis about online teaching are included in the research, and little is actually known about this sudden and unexpected move (Jeffery & Bauer, 2020; Petillion & McNeil, 2020). In exploring varied teaching contexts, this study identified more emerging obstacles than positive aspects the participants came across about technological pedagogy and implementation of high-quality instruction. Despite this, the education technology literature has some shortcomings (e.g. Drew & Mann, 2018). A significant gap occurs in investigating teachers' beliefs

on how they teach using different online platforms, and, of particular interest here, on whether and in what ways they purpose to cope with the challenges they face during online teaching, to promote learner autonomy and motivation and to find out whether the technology used is informed by the pedagogy or not. Due to limited research on exploring and analyzing teachers' perceptions and practices, the present study explored teachers' views from diverse contexts and aimed to find out their ERT experiences and practices (American Psychological Society, 2020) in the wider global higher education context (Metscher et al., 2020).

To prepare students and teachers for a new digital learning environment, adequate assistance and training are essential, as reported in most of the participants' responses. It becomes also significant to ensure the extent to which teachers have familiarity with the tools, platforms and applications they need to use while teaching online. However, in a time of crisis, teachers take more responsibility for designing and reframing their instruction. This indicates the narrations made by the participants that despite lack of training, they even learned to use digital tools for teaching and apply their background knowledge into a new situation, ERT. Teachers' readiness because of the background knowledge contrasted markedly with students' preparedness; however, the teachers were not happy with the current teaching situation they were thrown into due to the current pandemic of COVID19 without proper training and they were frustrated. It transpired from the questionnaire and interview data that many participants needed training and mentoring in using the technology for educational purposes. Indeed, the participants came across a double challenge: teaching without seeing their students, feeling their presence and interacting socially and the technology used. In the meantime, language learning and teaching is a difficult task and requires a long time commitment. In addition to this challenge of language education, a perceived technological burden can cause teachers to be stressed before they even start teaching. This posits that the pedagogy-driven design of educational technologies has an essential part in facilitating both teaching and learning. (Hampel, 2006; Hampel & Stickler, 2015; Hauck, 2007; Stanley, 2019). Besides, the pedagogy-driven design is getting more and more necessary in the transition to ERT, especially to overcome frustration, as also corroborated by Brooks and Grajek (2020) and Goerthler (2019), and to promote teacher cognition, as also aligned with Gao and Zhang (2020).

Based on the context of teaching, countries responded to the transition to ERT in diverse ways (Bozkurt et al., 2020; Crawford et al., 2020), which has affected teaching as well as teachers' experiences as shown in the present research. The respondents teaching in the West such as the UK, Netherlands, and the US higher education institutions and having appropriate training on the use of technological devices and platforms, had more positive views than those teaching in Saudi Arabia, Oman, UAE, Iraq, Egypt and Turkey. Even before this global threat, there was a call for guidance to implement and integrate technologies for language learning aims (Gönen & Akbarov, 2015). As stated by some scholars, "[t]his is particularly relevant in technology-enhanced language learning and teaching where […] activities are – by default – mediated twice: by the technology used and helplessness due to insufficient understanding of variations in the nature of virtual learning and teaching" (Kurek & Hauck, 2014, p. 5). Curriculum designers, policymakers and institutions often disregard this apparent reality, though (Boy, 2013), and this case accurately reflects current teaching contexts in this pandemic. Some degree of technology training is surely needed to make productive use of the devices and successfully integrate them into online teaching.

Nearly all agreed on the reasons for their answers that they needed to see their students' reactions, and they believed that social interaction is needed in education because learning happens through human interaction. The impact of the social dimension of language learning is observed here, which is based on the sociocultural theory developed by Vygotsky (1978) believing that social interaction plays a critical role in learning. Those challenges in turn may affect learner autonomy and motivation, which will be discussed next.

There is a general conception that educational technologies promote learner autonomy and motivation (Benson, 2011; Chik, 2018; Godwin-Jones, 2019; Payne, 2020; Warner & Chen, 2017), which is parallel

with the findings in this study. Despite the challenges mentioned earlier, many teachers thought that it is desirable and, to some extent, feasible that online teaching and learning can promote learner autonomy and motivation. The participants narrated that online teaching 'enhances learners' self - directedness as they adopt their own learning style, find resources, and manage their time independently most of the time. Instructors support their learners by giving them continuous constructive feedback, share their tech experience with their learners to use hard/ software effectively, and guide them to reliable resources.' In other words, teachers facilitated their students' independent and interdependent learning as the students had to carry out tasks and activities on their own, and collaborate on the platform to some extent that they had an opportunity to engage and reflect on their experiences and learning from each other as also found in other contexts (Bailey & Lee, 2020; Samur et al., 2015; Sotiriou & Primalis, 2013).

It emerged from the extracts that it might be stimulating to set up an extended learning environment, such as a classroom where easily accessible learning materials are made available to students and where students can think about their opinions about the learning process (Koruyan, 2016; Noskova et al., 2021). However, educational institutions play an active and crucial role in creating an effective online learning environment and many of them, especially in some contexts such as Middle Eastern and Asia and some EU and US institutions failed to create this environment. That is why there were also many references indicating that teachers do not believe that online teaching and learning promote learners' autonomy and motivation. Some of the reasons cited are the importance of in-person interaction, absence of interaction and engagement on online platforms; psychological aspects (e.g. anger, frustration, stress and despair) because of lack of training and planning; and both teachers' and students' technical issues, and the most important one is the lack of necessary technical and pedagogical training, particularly in ERT (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). These differences amongst teachers' perceptions are likely to arise from the challenges experienced by some more than the others. As regards not holding a strong autonomy and motivation to learn English, attributes can be assigned to the conventional tools of teaching as found in previous studies (e.g. Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Boyno, 2011; Mohamadpour, 2013; Saraç, 2013). Therefore, in agreement with the study of Johnson et al. (2020), teachers need support and proper training which should be provided by professional staff in their institutions. This lack of guidance for teachers was also applicable to students' lack of digital readiness. Students should be trained for digital skills as argued by Bhaumik and Priyadarshini (2020).

In exploring the design of new educational technology informed by pedagogy, the majority (64%) of the participants believe that technologically informed pedagogy covering implementation of high-quality instruction was a missing aspect. It is very important that technological use in virtual education must be coincided with sufficient reference to clear-cut research evidence or theoretical frameworks to inform designs (Kirkwood & Price, 2013). In fact, large-scale technology projects that have experienced publicized failures (e.g. the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) iPad program researched by Cuban (2013) and Turkey's FATIH program researched by Isci and Demir (2015)) are the examples of the failure of device-focused approaches that widely disregard technological teaching practice and informed pedagogy. In this study, only three respondents indicated that their universities considered the design of using technology informed by pedagogical approaches during this sudden move. Others commented that without any training to adapt teachers to the new learning environment, they frequently substitute tasks used in classroom settings for online environments. On one side, teaching online was seen to have missing parts in terms of motivating and engaging students. On the other side, the flexibility of online education was regarded as a benefit for engagement by most of the participants (86.5%) in that students can attend and engage themselves with learning materials and records without any time constraints, which, however, does not imply how effectively learning occurs. Therefore, online teaching should be designed considering pedagogical approaches aligned with technology-driven approaches. Drawing from the suggestions made by the respondents, this study has contributed to the knowledge and understanding of what online teaching and learning environments should be like by answering: How can emergency remote education be designed for better learning? Online and/or remote teaching and learning environments should have a foundation in terms of design. The curriculum needs to be informed by both technology-driven and pedagogically driven teaching and learning approaches supported by different language theories and considering differences among students (Sarı & Yüce, 2020). This means that the use of technology needs to be informed by pedagogy rather than simply being

technology-driven. Merely, by providing technological tools, learning will not occur on its own (Healey, 1999, p. 136), but rather, as Motteram (2013, p. 182) suggests, how to deploy those technologies in practice and 'how they mediate that practice' are more important. Therefore, technology should be part of a comprehensive pedagogical framework. ERT presented new and unique challenges for teachers required to adapt rapidly to the dramatically different digital teaching and learning environment without proper preparation and without consulting the theories of language learning and teaching.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This study emerged from the need to understand English language teachers' beliefs and practices during the COVID-19 pandemic on a global scale. Since ERT of this kind caught teachers unprepared, it was important to gain insights into how they coped with teaching online, especially in terms of teacher readiness for ERT; learner motivation, collaboration, autonomy and engagement in online classes; and technical-pedagogical and psychological aspects of online teaching. Regarding this research problem, the findings demonstrated that most participants stressed out a variety of elements, which restricted the extent to which they felt they were able to cope with the sudden shift from their classroom to complete online teaching. It came out from the study that teacher readiness is mostly dependent on institutional support, self-confidence, geographical closeness, self-management and learner preparedness. Although this study notes that teachers have a vital role in enhancing learner motivation, collaboration, engagement and autonomy, especially in online learning environments, through implementing interactive tasks and humanistic approaches, students' unwillingness, lack of training and contextual conditions can impede learning development. Also, this research addresses that technical-pedagogical and psychological aspects of online teaching can differ across countries because teachers in some countries can access ICT tools easily, whereas others cannot, or some are supported before and during online teaching, while others are not.

All in all, what springs up in the context of this research is a struggle of experienced and knowledgeable English language teachers theoretically are oriented, in a positive way, towards the way remote teaching being desirable and feasible to promote students' autonomy (learner autonomy) and motivation. Concerning their working contexts, as was in the findings, many teachers held a bit negative feelings about the promotion of their students' autonomous learning. Although facilities existed to enhance autonomy, there was a common view that the students were deprived of the ability and eagerness to utilize the opportunities the remote teaching provided, especially in the Middle Eastern and Asian contexts. Also, pedagogy-informed design of new educational technology should be formed to deliver online teaching effectively. In this sense, the paper makes a pedagogical recommendation on the design of online learning environments in that technology, as Furstenberg (1997) stressed, should not be considered a resolution for language education but as a means that needs to be utilized appropriately with informed pedagogical approaches and design taking the new educational technology into consideration. In other words, learning does not take place on its own by offering digital tools, but rather, as suggested by Motteram (2013, p. 182), in what ways they take advantage of those technologies in online teaching practice and "they mediate that practice" is more imperative. Thus, systematic guidance for learners and both teachers' and students' training are needed, whereby they can both benefit from the remote teaching and learning environment in this digital age. Moreover, it suggests further research to investigate designed online learning environments from the perspectives of both students and teachers across countries.

In addition, the study suggests that the ERT may help deliver teaching and learning online as it creates opportunities for active engagement in some online activities and encourages learner autonomy and independent learning along with motivation in language learning. On the other hand, the identified constraints and negatives, such as the lack of physical contact with the students, lack of human touch and the inability to monitor their studying while carrying out learning tasks and activities and interactions outside the live sessions, may be demanding for the language instructors and may have a negative impact the efficiency of the approach. For this reason, the scales of a larger group of teachers including

their students may provide more insights into this aspect of teaching online. They could also offer solutions to overcome these challenges and minimize the limitations, and negative views identified. Finally, a follow-up study is needed using the design of the technology-enhanced tasks, as well as comparing student responses with their teachers. For this follow-up study, teachers should be given more pedagogical control and recognition so that they can design their own tasks according to their students' needs and interests with abundant help and time needed.

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