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Emergency Remote Teaching Challenges: The Case of Mexican EFL University Teachers Experiences

Desafíos de Enseñanza Remota de Emergencia:

El caso de las experiencias de los docentes universitarios mexicanos de inglés como lengua extranjera

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to record and document experiences and difficulties faced by English teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as their outcomes and achievements during the implementation of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). Delivery of classes through an online environment has been one of the options worldwide to continue with all education programs at all levels in the wake of this current pandemic situation. In this scenario, in most senior high schools and universities in Mexico, online classes have been made mandatory. This case study describes the perceptions and concerns of teachers at these education levels regarding this compulsory transition from face-to-face teaching to ERT. The participants were 7 teachers from different public and private universities in a capital city in the southeast of Mexico. Data was gathered through semi-structured online interviews. Findings suggest that among the key issues that teachers face are technology mishaps, the inadequacy of the materials provided by their institution, privacy issues and institutional slow response to ERT.

RESUMEN

El propósito de este estudio fue registrar y documentar las experiencias y dificultades que enfrentaron los profesores de inglés durante la pandemia de COVID-19, así como sus resultados y logros durante la implementación de la Enseñanza Remota de Emergencia (ERT). La impartición de clases a través de un entorno en línea ha sido una de las opciones a nivel mundial para continuar con todos los programas educativos en todos los niveles a raíz de la pandemia. En este escenario, las clases en línea se han vuelto obligatorias en la mayoría de las escuelas y

universidades de México. Este estudio de caso describe las percepciones y preocupaciones de los docentes de universidad con respecto a esta transición obligatoria de la enseñanza presencial a la ERT. Los participantes fueron 7 profesores de diferentes universidades públicas y privadas de una ciudad capital en el sureste de México. Se utilizaron entrevistas semiestructuradas en línea para recopilar datos. Los hallazgos sugieren que entre los problemas clave que enfrentan los maestros se encuentran los contratiempos tecnológicos, la insuficiencia de los materiales proporcionados por su institución, los problemas de privacidad y la lenta respuesta institucional a la ERT.

Introduction

COVID-19 has presented unparalleled challenges to teachers and educational institutions since its outbreak in 2020. Teachers and students had to involve in online learning environments with a wide variety of accessibility, connectivity, and ability in the use of ICT as they faced this changing landscape. Lesson plans have been derailed, and teachers' experience and expertise in ICT literacy have been tested. This change in education procedure due to COVID-19 has been coined as Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) (Hodges et al., 2020). Educators, including language teachers, were compelled to transition to this type of teaching. To adapt to ERT, teachers have resorted to all sorts of technological resources and become more experimental, interactive, independent, and self-directed in their use, but it has all come at a price.

Teachers' general response to ERT has very commonly been to attempt to equate what can be done in face-to-face teaching contexts to online learning environments (Bailey, 2020). This is not an ideal situation and may result in poor teaching and learning processes, adding to the idea that online learning is lesser quality than face-to-face learning (Besser et al., 2020). These teaching adjustments may consolidate the belief of online learning as a poor choice. Nonetheless, no one transitioning to online education under the conditions imposed by the pandemic would be firmly assessed to reap the benefits of the capabilities and opportunities of the online format (Hodges et al., 2020) For decades, researchers have been studying these affordances of online education, particularly online teaching and learning. Numerous academic reviews, hypotheses, patterns, principles and assessment guidelines are devoted to improving online teaching, and course design. In this current COVID-19 pandemic, and as a response to the global education crisis, online ERT has become the new research trend.

As Zhou et al. (2020), Mishra et al. (2020) and Wang et al. (2020) discuss, there are multiple ways to improve Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) proposed by teachers, but they all have their pitfalls. While teacher ICT literacy has been extensively and systematically studied as well as its implementation at different levels of education in different subject areas, there is yet no exploration of the challenges as perceived by language teachers. Although accessible research on online language teaching through COVID-19 is still ongoing, it provides insights into further research. Therefore, this study aims to examine higher education academics' perspectives of their own experiences with online language teaching during this ERT along with the challenges they faced.

The transition

As an emergency response to COVID-19, rapid online transitions for all stages of teaching were suggested by most education authorities, which was coined as Emergency Remote Teaching

(ERT). ERT differentiates from Online teaching in many aspects. Online teaching has been prepared and built to be online from the beginning. ERT, on the other hand, is a temporary shift beyond face-to-face instruction delivery to an alternate distant delivery of instruction as a result of the critical condition. This involves the employment of totally remote teaching methodologies for teaching or learning that would ordinarily be offered face-to-face, as blended or hybrid courses, and that will return to that format once the crisis or emergency has passed. The major goal in these circumstances is not to re-create a viable learning environment, but rather to grant special access to quality education that is as rapidly established and regularly available during an emergency or crisis.

The ERT produced by COVID-19 signaled a dramatic shift in English language instruction towards online learning activities from face-to-face classroom experiences, resulting in a variety of new experiences for English teachers while using interactive tools. First, ERT took both institutions and teachers by surprise as never before had any other situation (Merrill, 2020). Second, teachers to adjust to certain changes in their teaching practices, such as the use of technology, the design of online resources, and the evaluation of student work (Rahiem, 2020). Third, moving from inside to outside language classrooms posed a range of challenges and difficulties, especially for teachers (Manfuso, 2020). It is therefore important to explore the challenges of teachers in this transition as well as their insights about online learning activities.

Broad Challenges of ERT

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, teachers are less physically active, spending more time in front of the computers, which deteriorates their sleeping and eating patterns; besides these detrimental consequences is social alienation (Wang et al., 2020). It is, therefore, necessary for educators and academic institutions to equip themselves with the necessary skills and resources for this transition. The biggest challenge, however, is that most institutions lack the advanced technologies and skills in designing such platforms. In addition, according to the International Telecommunication Union (2020), while 93% of the world's population lives inside Internet zones, about 53% only use the Internet, which is an additional barrier to the continuity of the educational process (Merrill, 2020).

Students who do not have Internet access can use other media forms including television and radio, as it is currently being implemented in this research context, Mexico. Nevertheless, the teaching resources developed for this type of mass media were not prepared to cover all the needs during this ERT. Remote teaching also requires an adequate environment and climate for an effective delivery process, which many homes were not prepared to offer. Family conditions and living spaces are secondary stressors that impact education quality and frustrate learners and educators (De la Cruz, 2020).

Furthermore, during the isolation process, distance learning has resulted in students going through conditions for which they have not been sufficiently trained, such as the challenge of managing their time. In addition, factors such as family instability, lack of social interaction, and physical and emotional abuse have also affected them. Moreover, the lack of tools needed to complete schoolwork makes students end-up with a high amount of pressure on their shoulders (De la Cruz, 2020). These factors may contribute to students experiencing anxiety or depression symptoms.

Disparities among students emerge given the significant economic, social and educational differences between people around Mexico. This is further increased in rural areas (Sánchez-Soto

& Bautista, 2020). Based on INEGI data (INEGI, 2019, as cited in Limón-Vázquez et al., 2020) just forty-three percent of the population has access to a computer and fifty-six-point-four percent has a contract with an Internet Service Provider (ISP). Expanding deeper the inequalities is the fact that technology is not distributed equally in Mexico. Access to a computer in urban areas is forty-nine percent, with sixty-five-point-five of that percentage having access to internet through an ISP. On the other hand, only twenty-two-point-one percent has access to a computer and twenty-three-point-four of that percentage has access to internet connection in rural areas.

Perspectives of Teachers on Emergency Remote Teaching

As a reference point, recent studies are now focused on online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, but most of these studies are concerned with student issues, rather than those of teachers. Just a few studies have centered on teachers' difficulties in online learning. As the results found on Smith's (2020) study of faculty members' willingness to teach online and their resistance to change, teachers reported a lack of online teaching skills, lack of time to plan online courses, and the unsuitability of their subject to online teaching. Teachers have had many difficulties in their practice, including a lack of ICT skills, low student participation, and a lack of personal contact and interaction affecting the students' progress during this COVID-19 pandemic (Gündüz, 2020; Rahiem, 2020). Moreover, teachers usually do not have enough resources to effectively provide education, including optimized computers, internet, and microphones. Many teachers prefer to use online platforms for their lessons, however, by using these resources they face a variety of accessibility problems, device failure, bandwidth issues, etc. Without professional technicians to resort to, many teachers find addressing these issues to be challenging. Many institutions are unable to operate remotely and do not have qualified teachers who can work online, and yet they require their faculty members to conduct classes from their residences, without specific guidance about how to do it (Vakaliuk et al., 2020). Several research documents indicated that the introduction of new technology into EFL classrooms is difficult, but feasible, though during the current sudden COVID-19 pandemic state it is found to be challenging, for both teachers and learners alike, this makes for a subject worth exploring.

Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the experiences and challenges from seven Mexican EFL teachers' perspectives of the implementation of ERT during the lockdown due to COVID-19 in Higher Education. Therefore, the study aims to shed light on the changes that academics experienced in their professional lives due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges they faced and the outcomes they obtained from implementing ERT.

Research context and participants

The participants of this study were seven English teachers purposively selected from four Higher Education institutions across the State of Veracruz. The institutions established ERT to convey the limitations of the outbreak. Teachers were ordered to stay at home and provide classes using either a designated platform such as Google Classroom, Moodle, Eminus and Kahoot, or contact their students through a WhatsApp or Facebook group and then provide the classes using VOIP software such as Skype, Zoom, or Meet. Several challenges arose from the fact that neither the institutions nor the academics had prior experience in full-online courses. Therefore, these teachers provided a valuable source of information regarding their experiences in ERT. The purposeful sampling (Rapley, 2014) in this study considered as the selection criteria three main aspects: the participants were EFL teachers from both public and private universities, they

were teaching at the moment of the abrupt switch to ERT, and they were willing to participate in the study. The use of such type of sampling elicits data that are illustrative and, while findings may not be generalizable, they do provide insights into the views of this particular population. The ages of these academics range from 27 to 55 years old and their experience in face-to-face education range between three to 20 years. All academics were trained English language teachers with BAs in ELT.

Data collection method and procedures

To gather the perceptions of academics about ERT, internet video calls and real-time audio/video link-up interviews via Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) applications such as Google Meet or Zoom were used to conduct semi-structured interviews. The study also acknowledges introducing remote interviewing into research that has traditionally employed physical co-present interviews. Data were collected using three-step semi-structured interviews. The first was a simple interview to discover the academic profile of teachers in general. The second was a follow-up semi-structured interview to explore the general and specific conditions of the participants throughout the initial deployment of ERT. Finally, a semi-structured interview was conducted to track the development of ERT in their working environment and find new challenges.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) since it implies identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data, which fits appropriately for the type of study performed. As a result, large categories emerged after repeated readings of complete orthographic and verbatim transcriptions of the interviews. The transcriptions were then encoded into the initial themes, which were then reviewed and refined and encoded into a hierarchical diagram. Finally, the themes were identified and labelled, and several sub-themes emerged from this process, using quotes from the original data, in an effort to retain and portray academic voices as precisely as possible. In the presentation of the results, teachers were provided with pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

Findings

The academics within this research shared their points of view in regard of online EFL teaching throughout the COVID-19 breakout. This study exhibits some challenges of ERT, which some participants compared to traditional teaching in a specific classroom. From the thematic analysis of the transcriptions of the online interviews emerged 5 categories, which combined to tell the story of the 7 teachers' experiences during the first months of ERT in Mexico.

ICT in the ERT classroom

One of the most evident categories found within the thematic analysis was related to the use of ICT in the ERT classroom. On the one hand, there was the issue of the ICT proficiency of academics, and on the other, the technological limitations, such as glitches, bugs, and hardware related, as well as connectivity issues. Regarding the academics' ICT proficiency, the use of an educative platform (e.g., Teams and Google classroom) played a vital role to provide synchronous instruction during the initial implementation of ERT. This was one of the most common resources that the participants selected as a delivery system, and one of the most effectively implemented during the pandemic online synchronous classes. Some teachers expressed feeling comfortable with the development of synchronous online classes and even perceived a positive impact on

the students' learning:

John S.

Technology has made learning easier for students; it is popular and interesting among them to use all sorts of applications during class. Using ICT will not be an obstacle for students to continue learning English during this situation.

This led to an increasing amount of motivation among the participants. For some teachers, their interactions with ICT evolved as they became familiar with new platforms and began to implement new websites, resources, and even hardware to help with their online environment. Similar findings were reported in Rahiem's (2020) study.

Some other teachers, however, experienced difficulties to start their practice within ERT. For some of them, their institutions only provided cellphone numbers to establish contact with their students, and due to their lack of familiarity with educative online platforms, they did so by using either an app or a social network:

Helen

When the pandemic started, I was not sure how to use an online platform, so I decided to go for something basic such as a WhatsApp group, other teachers in my school did something similar using Facebook

Nevertheless, they overcame the restraints of these social networks and applications, which are not intended to be educational tools, as they became familiar with the use of an educative platform triggered by the involvement of the institutions for which the academics work. This progression was witnessed throughout the pandemic and is currently ongoing.

Helen

After receiving some basic training on how to use Google Classroom, I attempted to use it, and now I see that it is easier because all of my activities and homework are organized, and I know which student goes in which group, because having so many phone numbers was very confusing.

Even though proficiency in ICT among participants was increasing, glitches and technical issues added a layer of complexity to their teaching practice. This type of problem can interrupt the class and both teachers and students lose focus and even waste time trying to cope with the problems. The participants experienced most of these problems at least once in every class. Some were more recurrent, and severely distressed academics during their classes.

Faulty microphones, for example, made it impossible at times to understand what the teachers were saying during their lessons, and thus participants had to continuously rephrase instructions. Moreover, internet connection slowdowns were also a major challenge. Academics mentioned that their network connection tended to fail when several students turned their cameras on, or when they shared their screen. These constant interruptions due to the unstable internet connection made it very difficult for the EFL teachers to maintain their students' attention. Having a limited internet connection was one of the most common complaints among participants.

Juliana

Problems with the Internet may decrease our teaching quality. One of the main problems is that our country has slow Internet speed, especially in the place I live.

Internet speed plays a key role in synchronous teaching (Rahiem, 2020), and it did correlate with the complications encountered by academics who participated in this research. As matter of fact, Mexico is a country that is far from the average internet speed around the world, with 34.1Mbps out of 73.6 Mbps (Steckman & Andrews, 2017).

Therefore, while teachers may take precautions when planning classes, unforeseen issues can occur, and it is not anyone's fault. Among these unexpected problems, teachers may face incompatibility issues between applications and ICT devices, lack of correlation between internet speed and the sharing of devices, and scarce internet connection when sharing with other family members. Similar results were reported by Rahiem (2020). This suggests that the characteristics of teachers' electronic devices inevitably have an impact on the way teachers plan and implement their online classes.

The Importance of a Platform

While many academics point out that they knew how to use the platforms assigned by their institutions, they acknowledged the lack of experience in certain areas of these platforms, which open the door to several questions. According to the participants, the absence of a representative Learning Management system, as problematic; only two of them had an institutional platform (EMINUS). One teacher commented that his university was designing its courses in the online platform known as Moodle. This implementation, however, was still under progress at the time of data collection, and both teachers and students were unfamiliar with the platform. In other cases, institutions were not prepared to provide such support:

Kido

This represents quite a challenge since our institution has not developed an up-to-date platform. Consequently, I should continue to check for sites available that can assist me in my class. In this scenario, I use Google Classroom as an online learning platform.

The rapid introduction of online teaching and learning as a result of the global pandemic seemed to have a profound effect on the institutions' ability to promote a fast change towards online learning activity:

Trudy

The issue with online classes is that the university, the staff and the authorities in schools are not ready to assist with online learning activities.

In addition, the situation was affected by the fact that the teachers did not have enough experience and skills of technology integration to perform online instruction, as they were used to face-to-face classroom interaction prior to the outbreak of this global pandemic:

Wilhelm

I am unsure about how to feel about the fact that the government decided to promote online learning to avoid the spread of COVID-19. I am not well-equipped with enough skills and knowledge about digital apps to teach online. I, therefore, decided to use WhatsApp, because I believe my students are familiar with the mobile app. So, I use this app only to share materials with them and zoom to give classes.

In addition, teachers admit that they did find it difficult to build materials that met the needs of

the learners and were easy to learn from the selected platform of the institution. Most teachers complain that they had to spend a lot of time thinking and developing the required online teaching materials, uploading them to the selected platform, and troubleshooting these so they did not 'fail' when presented to the class. This is consistent with Besser et al.'s (2020) findings, who claim that new programs or applications, inexperience, a lack of ICT skills, and unsuitable learning platforms all offer substantial challenges to educators' practice.

Therefore, all online-based classrooms have issues that need to be worked on and monitored. Limitations when using platforms generate a great amount of class interruption. The lack of preparation when presented with a new platform, for example, causes conflict with an adequate flow of the class. Additionally, limitations on each VOIP service, such as 40 min Zoom deadline, cause further modification of the class structure. However, educative platform incorporation is also viewed as the most efficient way to optimize learning opportunities for EFL teachers and minimize students' learning difficulties.

Internet Issues and The Financial Standpoint

As previously mentioned, to have a successful online class, internet access is the basis for any kind of interaction; having an adequate device is next in line; selecting a suitable platform goes third. Therefore, unstable internet connection and limited device performance access become a nightmare in the online teaching world. The data obtained from the interviews revealed that one of the major challenges faced by the teachers was an unreliable internet connection, particularly encountered by their students:

Wyatt

Most of my students decided to go back to their hometowns when the COVID-19 pandemic struck the whole world. Most of my students come from deprived areas where signal reception is poor. This situation causes my online teaching to fall short while having an online course. What I can do is allowing my students to submit their assignments through WhatsApp and submit them at any time they manage to have access to a reliable internet connection.

The precarious financial situation that the students are facing has brought an even more critical issue to light. Some of the students admitted to the teachers that they could only afford the internet mobile data plans from regional mobile data providers. These were not suitable to access the educational platforms nor VOIP services:

John S.

I sometimes find that my students do not have enough data because they acquired a cellular data plan that only enables them to a limited amount of data each week to enter zoom. It is clear that my class is not their only class, so they have to use a lot of internet data to enter their other classes. To solve this problem, I began working in Google classroom by posting homework there and telling my students to do it and upload it whenever they could.

Academics thus try their best to solve problems related to the e-learning mode, but these restrictions appear to have a greater impact on students than on teachers. This in turn leads academics to point out that this is a worrying aspect for which the government should be more concerned:

Wilhelm

I often feel bad for my students, usually they do not have a reliable internet connection, so they have to go to a neighbour, friend or a public place to be able to connect to my class. I believe this should be a government priority. I believe that our state authorities are not doing enough; they ask us to continue with our classes, but they do not acknowledge all of these difficulties.

Teachers do acknowledge the difficulties that their students face but are tied to what they can do to help them; in the end, it is not much what they can do to assist the students with the limitations they have to connect to their class. Support is necessary to achieve a quality of education. It is clear then that restricted internet connectivity, represented by unstable connection and limited or non-available internet access, and the cost associated with the internet and new devices, both add complexity to teachers' practice under these ERT circumstances (Mishra, 2020). Furthermore, economic limitations often generate issues such as incompatibility with online learning platforms, limited access to technological devices (a single one for several family members, for example), lack of storage on students' devices, and poor connectivity (Rahiem, 2020).

Lack of Student Motivation

Another major challenge was the students' lack of enthusiasm and participation in online learning activities, which hindered their ability to learn. The data showed that the students did not comprehend the teachers' instructions despite explicit instructions and despite the instructions being written. Based on the teachers' accounts, the student's lack of focus was the primary cause of their inability to follow the teachers' instructions:

Kido

In my view, during online courses, my students lack motivation and commitment. They sometimes struggle to comprehend my instructions to develop projects or perform tasks. During class, I have to repeatedly give my students the same description or details. Also, when I am using the Google classroom forum, and the debate is conducted in a written manner via the notes, only a small number of my students are truly pursuing the debate.

Academics also commented that some students are not on time to attend online synchronous classes, not only because of the unstable internet connection but also because they did not have a strong motivation or commitment to pursue online learning activities:

Kido

I also think it is like a holiday for my students to learn online from their own homes. My students often come late for the online lessons, especially for classes early in the morning. They often just mention in our WhatsApp group that they will be arriving late for whatever reason. Likewise, several of my students do not send their work on time making any sort of excuses.

Further comments by the academics demonstrate that student lack of motivation is a deterrent to their teaching practice. Class management becomes a nightmare as there are students who do not care about their grades, or because they simply believe that being home does not weigh as formal instruction, such as face-to-face interaction does:

Trudy

Students often react to my comments with apathetic comments such as 'You have to give me a passing grade anyway, so the class is pointless,' which is a big deal considering they are in a BA degree. They should be more aware of their acts; they are not high school teenagers anymore. It is even harder because our institutions do nothing about it.

Student motivation is crucial in this ERT scenario, and it is something that must be addressed shortly according to the participants, as it is affecting the students, the teachers and the institutions at levels never seen before. This social phenomenon, as perceived by the participants, is mostly due to a loss of human connection between teachers and students, as well as a lack of physical locations at home to receive lessons, and a lack of support from parents who typically work remotely in the same locations.

ERT positive effects on Teachers, Students, and Institutions

There is also a bright side to this story. During the chaotic shift to emergency remote learning, all of the academics participating in this research and their learning institutions incorporated new pedagogical and technological knowledge and skills to their teaching strategies. Many academics were impressed by the amount of knowledge and expertise acquired through this situation, influencing every aspect of their lives, not only the professional one. As Kido pointed out, "Being a teacher under these circumstances is something we were not trained for [...] but we must focus on the things that we are doing right."

ERT has also had a positive impact on all educational handlers. The participants involved in this research admitted that, as they were not the only ones affected by the pandemic, they were open to suggestions, that there was always room for improvement, and that empathy towards everyone involved in the education process became even more significant. They mentioned that despite all the challenges that ERT posed, they should *keep moving forward* (Kido). Many teachers believed their responsibility for assisting students during this critical situation was not limited to using technology; they believed it was their responsibility to continue teaching and pass the torch to future generations of teachers with the experience gained from this difficult situation. Several agreed with John S. in that *what is happening worldwide these days is 'a call to action' for Mexican universities to begin creating a representative online learning platform.*

Admittedly, ERT affected every hierarchy in the educational sector. But, according to participants, this gives room for the implementation of further changes to cope with this situation. They are more aware than ever that it is necessary to be prepared and assimilate these changes faster to continue providing quality education. In Europe, they have also concluded that it is necessary to address these ERT challenges at various levels and from different actors' perspectives (Ferri et al., 2020). They also anticipate that the problems posed by this major emergency will be important in enhancing the capacity to deliver effective online learning, expanding educational models to address disparities and isolation in crisis, and reducing social exclusion. Finally, just as the participants of this study, they believe that policymakers, businesses, experts, schools, students, and families should work together to provide accessible and smart learning environments, educational materials, and tools that can also sustain education's sociality, inclusion, and accessibility.

Conclusions

The present study discovered key challenges among higher education EFL teachers during the initial months of the breakout of COVID-19 that required them to adapt to a new teaching environment. The teachers were first shocked at how this pandemic affecting the whole world changed their way to provide classes, which made it difficult for them to ensure that their students continued with their learning process. They faced many challenges in teaching under these circumstances, but in the end, they were optimistic that technology could help them solve these problems once they were able to handle new educational platforms.

The results showed that teachers felt marginalized in the education reform system and often felt that their position was not recognized. However, they opened to a more consistent integration of technology using platforms in their online teaching. Research results also suggest that most teachers view online teaching not only as an unavoidable consequence of these unique circumstances but also as an opportunity to improve real English language learning through more sophisticated technology.

Additionally, results indicate that there is a big difference in terms of financial resources dedicated to education compared to similar research conducted in developed countries. To achieve quality in an educational course, academics had to address the difficulties of the students with limited economic resources, such as internet speed and low performance of technological devices, among others. These circumstances constitute a key limitation for them, as it required a strenuous effort to try to cover all the contents of the syllabi, which was not always achieved.

This paper, arguably limited in scope to a small sample of academics, has some distinctive contributions to offer compared to similar research conducted worldwide. The effect of the paradigmatic change was prevalent in a variety of negative and positive aspects emerging from the data. Some academics evidently prefer face-to-face online experiences over online interactions, but although they may not have been very technologically skilled when they first transitioned to virtual teaching, they proved themselves they were capable of significant improvement to this respect, and thus, of making great changes. Moreover, despite the many problems arising when integrating technology into the EFL courses, such as low internet speed, poor connectivity, un attendance, and lack of motivation and appropriate platforms, EFL teachers were concerned mostly on the academic performance of students, showing a considerable increase in empathy towards their learners.

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This call is addressed to: Professors – Researchers, undergraduate and graduate students from the BA in English Letters and Masters in Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics at CIEX and any researcher and scholar who wish to publish research articles, research essays, or thesis results, all related to the main topic of the Journal: Language, Culture and Teaching. The sections of the Journal are:

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- a) Introduction:** This section describes the context where the research was carried out, reason why the topic was selected, importance of the study, reason why the research was carried out.
- b) Purpose:** Here the writer states and explains the research objectives, intentions, questions or hypothesis.
- c) Research method:** In this part, the author mentions and justifies the research method that was selected, describes briefly the subjects, the context and the research procedures, as well as the instruments that were used for the data and information collection.
- d) Product:** Here, the writer presents the main findings, the degree to which the research objectives were reached and the answers to the research questions.
- e) Conclusion:** This section suggests the importance of the findings, considering the contribution to the theory, the research area and professional practice and suggest practical uses as well as possible applications for further research.

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