

Examining enablers and constraints of e-learning/teaching: Lecturers and students' perspectives at the University of Namibia

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Abstract

This study, conducted at the University of Namibia (UNAM) in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, explores the perspectives of students and lecturers on the experience of learning/teaching foreign languages during the COVID 19 pandemic. The study sought to establish and delimit the enablers and constraints of Foreign Language online teaching/learning, to improve the quality of UNAM service. A quantitative method using online questionnaires was proposed to collect data from all foreign language lecturers of the Department of Languages and Literature Studies at UNAM and their students enrolled in the first and third years in the Applied and Business Language stream. The main results revealed that both lecturers and students had no prejudices about Foreign Language e-learning/teaching but students had mixed feelings about their overall experience. Although the student reported some key advantages in e-learning (independence, flexibility and possibility to freely consult learning material), their lack of equipment and difficult access to platforms and electronic documents presented significant constraints in their digital learning experience. For most of them, their motivation and self-organizational skills were hardly tested and not always successful. In addition, lecturers were not sufficiently trained or experienced to adapt their usual pedagogical practice to virtual teaching while some of them were unequally equipped with ICT skills.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, online learning and teaching, remote learning, foreign languages

Introduction

In recent years, with technological development and widespread use of the Internet, online teaching/learning has attracted interest in most universities (Balcikanli, Calli, Cebeci & Seymen, 2013; Sun, 2011). Cakir and Yurtsever (2012) argue that e-learning can remedy the insufficient infrastructure of some universities and extend the accessibility of their programs to a wider audience. Grosu and David (2013) recognize various benefits in e-learning from “accessibility and time-management to the issue of reduced costs” (p. 50). But in the case of foreign language (FL) teaching, they recommend blended teaching because “both students and teachers have voiced their concerns about the challenge of improving students’ speaking skills in the absence of immediate teacher-feedback, about possible technical difficulties and the large number of e-learning platforms which can confuse students in their choice” (*Ibid*). The results of Hubackova (2015) showed that students at the University of Hradec Kralove also considered blended teaching to be the most suitable method for learning FLs. Research by Klimova and Semradova (2012) concluded that blending teaching in FL promotes greater learner autonomy. At the time of

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this research, blended teaching was not an option as face-to-face lessons were excluded, but the COVID-19 pandemic revealed its need for the future.

On 17 March 2020, H.E. Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, declared the State of Emergency in light of the increase in COVID-19 cases (United Nations Namibia, 2020). Like in most African countries after the first wave (see Appendix 1), Namibian schools have closed. At the end of March 2020, the University of Namibia (UNAM) announced the closure of its campuses, implemented a COVID-19 Regulation Policy and shifted from face-to-face to remote learning.

It is important for this paper to note that, back in 2014, the UNAM Centre for External Studies was combined with the Centre for e-learning. By creating the Centre for Open, Distance and e-Learning (CODEL), the university intended to improve the access of its programs to the diversity of students' educational backgrounds and environments. Moodle was the Learning Management System (LMS) selected to run the e-learning service. This system was introduced to all staff members but it could be unlikely that some of the lecturers had moved from traditional classroom instruction to blended teaching when COVID-19 struck. Before the lockdown, Moodle was primarily used as a tool for communicating with students. However, as Toquemo (2020) reports on Philippine higher education institutions, UNAM remote teaching during COVID-19 offered "an opportunity for higher education institutions to scale up the training of the teachers for online learning instruction" (p. 2). Thus, CODEL quickly prepared online tutorials on ICT tools (such as Moodle platform and Panopto) and made them available for all users. At the end of 2020, CODEL completed its basic training by providing access to various virtual presentations, webinars, and conferences dealing with the challenges of digital education.

Despite the support and interventions of UNAM, the rapid and unexpected shift to full remote teaching shattered the possibility of a gradual transition to the implementation of e-learning. This contrasts with the assertion of Karaaslan and Kilic (2019) that, "Considering the potential problems that might result from any untimely or premature implementation of blended learning procedures, institutions planning to incorporate e-learning options more widely need to adopt a gradual transition period" (p. 3). Although technical trainings on ICT tools were delivered on time at UNAM, it was not the case for distance education training. Therefore, as of March 2020, UNAM had at least one LMS in place placing its staff and students in a better place than in primary and secondary schools. Even so, students and lecturers were not fully equipped to convert to digital teaching and learning.

E-learning/teaching assessment

According to Khan (2001, pp. 6-7), designing and delivering instruction on the Web requires an in-depth analysis of the web-based environment. This includes investigating different aspects: pedagogical, technological, interface design, evaluation, management, resource support, ethical and institutional components. He proposes a non-exhaustive list of 7 main components involved in the evaluation of e-learning: content development; multimedia component; internet tools; computers and storage devices; connections and service providers; authoring/management programs; and server and related applications. To assess language learning experience of UNAM students and lecturers, the researcher chose to group Khan's 7 indicators into four main areas: System access, Quality and use; Content quality; Support quality; and Language competences.

The researcher used Fullan et al. (2020) glossary:

- *Online Learning/ e-Learning*: refers to learning that is facilitated wholly by the use of digital tools.

- *Distance Learning*: occurs when teachers, students and classrooms are separate and uses a range of approaches including online usually over significant physical distances.
- *Remote Learning*: has emerged to describe emergency measures to move instruction from physical schools to homes in online and offline modes.
- *Blended Learning*: involves a 'blend' of face-to-face and digital experiences usually delivered as part of a physical classroom experience.
- *Flipped Learning*: is a pedagogical approach that inverts the traditional method of the teacher leading learning, instead handing responsibility over to the student. Students receive and engage with material prior to the classroom learning through videos/ tutorials delivered online.
- *Hybrid Learning*: is a hybrid approach that builds on the successes of flipped, blended, remote, distance and online learning to intentionally create learner-centered experiences that are profoundly personalized, relevant and engaging.

It is, therefore against this background that this study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the benefits and inconveniences of online learning Foreign Language from students' perspective?
2. What are the benefits and inconveniences of online teaching Foreign Language from lecturers' perspective?
3. How could lecturers improve their e-teaching methods, material and assessment?

Methodology and Population

The data for this study were collected through online questionnaires administered to all FL lecturers in the Department of Language and Literature Studies (8 staff members representing: 1 lecturer for Spanish, 1 lecturer for Portuguese, 2 lecturers for German, 1 lecturer for Mandarin, 1 lecturer for Afrikaans and 2 lecturers for French FLs) and beginner 1st and 3rd year students (around 130 students in total). Two questionnaires were developed, one for lecturers and one for students. Both questionnaires offered closed multiple-choice questions and Likert-rated scale questions (see Appendix 2: Annexes 2.1 and 2.2, respectively). The two questionnaires presented almost similar questions to cross-examine the results between students and lecturers. Series of questions were grouped into 4 categories corresponding to the four areas studied: system access, quality and use, content quality, support quality and language competences. All the lecturers of FL responded to the questionnaire. A total of 59 questionnaires were collected from students in the 6 languages. The data was retrieved from the Monkey Survey website and was statistically analysed in percentages to summarise the data, describe the patterns, relationships and connections between student and lecturer experiences in e-learning and teaching.

Regarding ethical consideration, permission was obtained from the UNAM Office of the Dean of Students to involve students in this research, and from the UNAM Office of the Director: Human Resources, to involve staff. The researcher received her Ethical Clearance from the UNAM Research Ethics Committee. All the identified participants received a consent form in which all aspects of ethics were described and explained. This consent form appeared at the beginning of the online questionnaire. No potential risk was considered in the research. The principles and commitments of confidentiality, as clearly outlined in the consent form, protected such disclosure. Participants' names were not requested and their anonymity was guaranteed in reporting the research. Participants were in any way forced to disclose information unintentionally and were informed that they would under no circumstances be penalized for refusing to participate in this research, that they could withdraw their consent at any time and discontinue their participation in

this research. All data were kept in a secure place accessible only to the investigator and destroyed after the study was completed.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study are presented based on the four main areas (System access, quality and use; Content quality; Support quality; and Language competences) derived from Khan's (2001) 7 indicators in the evaluation of e-learning.

System Access, Quality and Use

Internet access and connection

The analysis showed that most of the students used smartphones and computers to access online learning. 78% of the participants declared that they used their own private Wi-fi to access the Internet while 14% benefited from UNAM data bundles and 7% used UNAM library computers. Since March 26 2020, Telecom Namibia has provided 4G Pocket Wifi devices to UNAM students. In UNAM Echo of April 2020 (an online student publication of UNAM), Kudzanai Kazambara highlighted the difficulties faced by some students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds who suffer from a lack of adequate technical material. They either have to work on a smartphone or borrow a computer. However, Kazambara acknowledged that "UNAM has tried its level best to mitigate such situations by issuing students with post-paid internet devices which come with a mammoth five to 10 gigabytes of data for students' academic needs" (p. 13).

While the financial implication of e-learning did not seem to be a problem for most FL students to access their courses online, the disruption of Internet connection was a huge source of frustration. 66% of participants confirmed having experienced regular Internet disconnections. According to Telecom Namibia's 2018/2019 report, the ICT Development Index ranked Namibia 8th in Africa and 118th in the world (see Figure 2). Despite these positive numbers, students living in rural areas still face problems accessing high-speed internet that can support live streaming, videos or online activities; thus, most of them had to travel to neighboring urban areas.

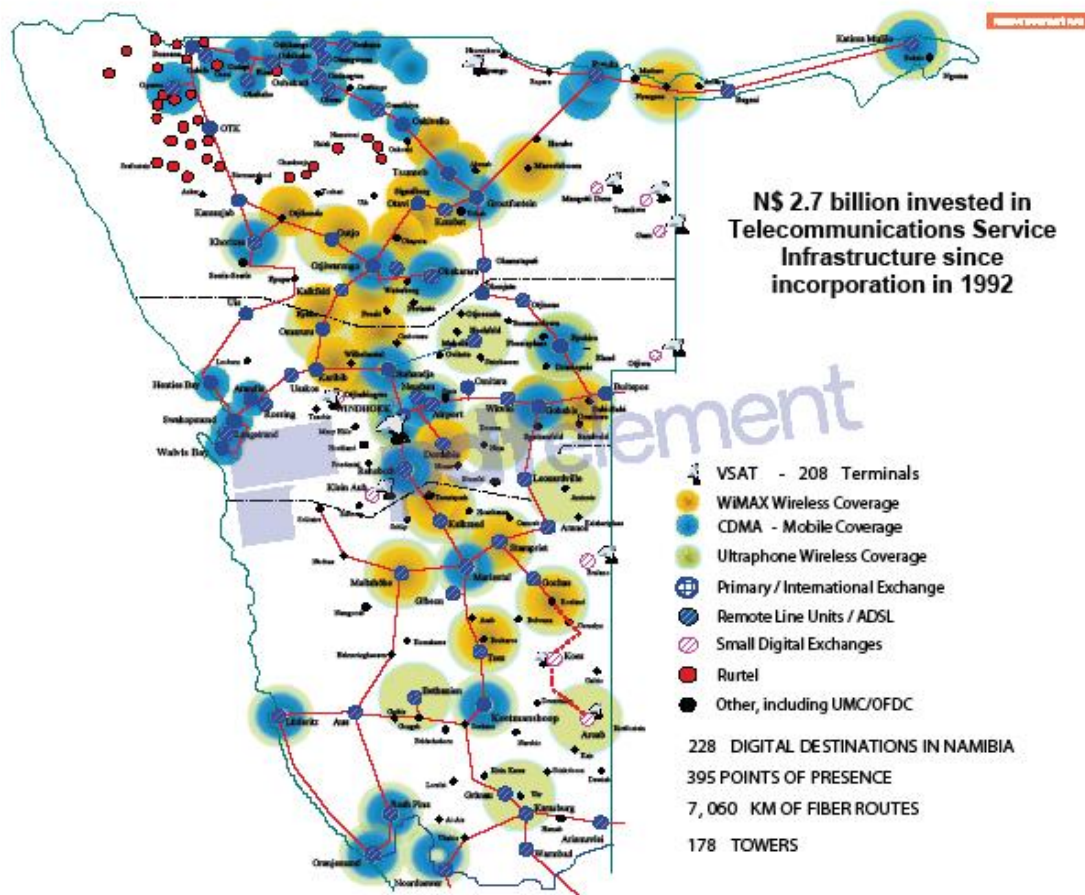


Figure 2. Network Map by Telecom Namibia. (Telecom Namibia, 2020)

In addition, Internet shutdowns have compromised online assessments and documents downloads. It appears from the responses of participating students that the university LMS was not sufficiently consistent in the first semester of 2020. Some students were disconnected which probably led to some dropouts. These challenges were acknowledged by CODEL and in response they updated Moodle several times during the year. In addition to this, lecturers were asked to allow multiple attempts for students to complete online activities and tests.

Devices and Applications Use

The majority of lecturers and students reported using mainly WhatsApp and Moodle for learning. This corroborates the fact that many students used smartphones. Only 33% and 20% of students used the UNAM portal and emails, respectively. Although 71% of lecturers reported using Zoom, only 33% of students confirmed using Zoom with their lecturers. This result reveals a divergence in the responses of students and lecturers. In other words, while lecturers were using Zoom to conduct their course, it is possible that most students did not have access to the platform. In this regard, this study confirms the position of the World Bank (2020) that to support learners with e-learning, instructors should:

Make content available through a variety of devices. Online learning tools and platforms should run on a variety of operating systems and software applications. Given the near ubiquity of mobile phones in many households, and the low availability of other

technologies (especially desktop and laptop computers), ensuring that online learning opportunities can be accessed using mobile devices can be critical to ensure access by the widest possible user base (p. 3).

However, it emerges from the results that the lecturers made an effort to make all documents and general communication available on all UNAM ICT tools.

Learning System Management: Moodle

Since Moodle was the chosen communication and course delivery platform, participants were asked to rate its overall effectiveness. The results revealed that the students seemed satisfied with the performance of the system despite the occasional system interruptions. On the other hand, lecturers were dissatisfied with the system and half of them indicated that they had encountered technical problems. In a way, this corresponds to the statistics of the lecturers who participated in the Moodle trainings that were provided by CODEL on several occasions during the year. The analysis showed that 59% of the students responded that they had never received any training on Moodle although the platform itself provides links to tutorials.

This study found that the majority of students found it easy to navigate and locate learning resources on Moodle. The analysis showed that 53% of them confirmed that easy and continuous access to e-learning was an advantage and that they spent as much time online as in class on their language subject. The lecturers' opinions on the latter statement were not as consensual: 42% disagreed and 57% agreed. 57% of lecturers believed that the flexibility of time offered in e-learning was appreciable while only 33% of students saw an advantage. It is interesting to note the congruence between the results of this study and those of Karaaslan and Kilic (2019) according to which the students were satisfied with "being able to access and use learning materials when they needed at their own pace" (p. 182). Correlatively, the conclusions of Bencheva cited by Solak et al. (2014) claim that online learning gives learners time to digest and react. This statement has been unanimously recognized as a pro by the lecturers and students of UNAM.

Content Quality

Adaptation of Content to Online Learning

The questionable readiness of lecturers and students cannot be attributed to a lack of technical skills but rather to a lack of pedagogical guidance. As Louis-Jean and Cenat (2020) indicate in the conclusions of their article, "It is relevant for educators to understand that e-learning is more than providing students with files and information and asking them to learn the materials. E-learning can be effective given successful planning, resources, collaborations with educational technology, and thoughtful designs" (p. 3).

While 71% of lecturers were convinced that the content of the language course was in line with the course outline, only 56% of students agreed. Moreover, the World Bank (2020) advises to:

Organize content to align with existing curricula, ensuring the learning opportunities correspond to educational objectives. Simply pointing students and teachers to a large repository of materials is not enough; this may be overwhelming and self-defeating. Existing content should be organized so that students, their caregivers, and teachers understand what is available and the sequence in which it should be taught (p. 3).

The lecturers and participating students were divided on whether the lessons content was long enough to cover the module content. Regarding the e-learning material, the lecturers' notes were

supplemented by multimedia tools (audio, video and Zoom). The results show that 71% of the students described the exercises as sufficient and diverse. They also confirmed that lecturers uploaded additional material that stimulates students' curiosity and critical thinking. Most lecturers admitted that it was difficult to develop e-learning-strategies, but 57% of them felt that they had finally overcome the challenges of e-teaching.

Assessment

As presented in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2000, p. 183), the types of language assessment are varied and complementary (see Table 2).

Table 2
Types of assessment by CEFRL

Achievement assessment	Proficiency assessment
Norm-referencing (NR)	Criterion-referencing (CR)
Mastery learning CR	Continuum CR
Continuous assessment	Fixed assessment points
Formative assessment	Summative assessment
Direct assessment	Indirect assessment
Performance assessment	Knowledge assessment
Subjective assessment	Objective assessment
Checklist rating	Performance rating
Impression	Guided judgement
Holistic assessment	Analytic assessment
Series assessment	Category assessment
Assessment by others	Self-assessment

The profusion of types of assessment and the range of skills expected of language learners are not always easily compatible with computerized assessment. The Moodle's test/quiz feature is too limited to cater for such a variety of assessments. Of course, lecturers can supplement the Moodle tests with other media such as making videos, Zoom presentations or e-portfolios. Formative assessment and peer-review remained more difficult to assess in online learning than in face-to-face teaching.

When it came to online assessment, 56% of the lecturers found it difficult to align online assessment with face-to-face assessment. On the other hand, 91% of the students considered the e-assessment to be equivalent to the classroom assessment, which was exactly the opposite in the opinion of the lecturers; 71% of lecturers disagreed with the notion of equivalence. The FL lecturers also encountered problems with the format of the exams. They reported that certain types of exercises were not easily supported by Moodle features and that the automatic grading was not suitable for certain error tolerances (e.g. at beginner level, some errors are not considered false or totally false). With Moodle, this tolerance is almost impossible to program as lecturers simply cannot grasp all of the solutions on the platform. In addition, at the beginner level, spelling memorization plays an important role in vocabulary assessment but Google translate can easily be used by students. Although CODEL provided some tips for avoiding cheating, they were not always applicable to language assessment issues.

Support Quality

General Communication

The World Bank (2020) commits teachers to "provide supplemental guidance and support on how to use and access remote learning content to students, caregivers, and teachers. Simply making

content available to students is not enough” (p. 3). This study found that students were given clear instructions on how to use online learning materials. General communication with lecturers was satisfactory for 73% of students, but lecturers were less positive about student feedback; up to 44% were not satisfied with students’ response to communication. For the students, the lecturers’ feedback was clear and delivered in a reasonable time. The analysis also showed that 66% of lecturers were concerned by the impersonal aspect of online education, but students’ opinion remained neutral on this point. Additionally, 66% of students and lecturers agreed that e-learning was a major barrier to socializing. Hampel and Stickler (2005) have developed a pyramid grouping together the skills necessary for effective e-learning (see figure 3) where online socialization plays a major role:

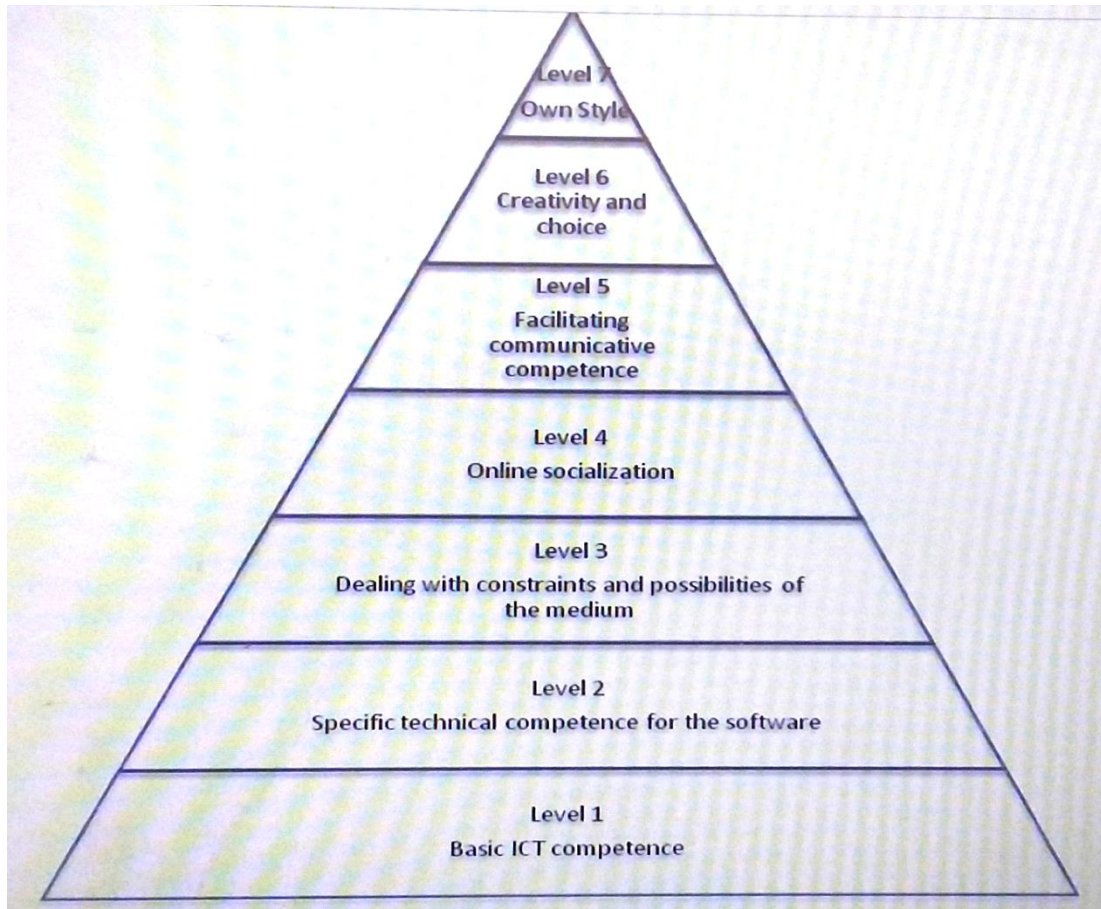


Figure 3. Hampel and Stickler pyramid of skills for e-learning.

They explain that:

A particular challenge of dealing with online courses is the sense of isolation often felt by online students. Their relative distance to the teacher and the group, sometimes in time as well as in space, means that they are unable to develop a group identity. Most of the information we take in about individuals is communicated non-verbally, and in some online media, these additional channels of information are not available. Therefore, the skill of creating an online community out of a disparate and dispersed group of learners who may not even be online at the same time constitutes another level on the pyramid of skills. A first step towards creating an online community is for the group to develop a "netiquette", that is, dos and don'ts of online behaviour. Engaging participants, reacting to contributions and encouraging personal features in online communications are also

part of this level of skills. Even tutors who are particularly skilled in transforming a face-to-face class into a dedicated language learning group might need additional training in the skill of socialization in an online medium (p. 317).

Students and Lecturers Interactions

In language education programs, student motivation and satisfaction are key elements of their continuous learning and performance. Even though they are partially intrinsic, lecturers constantly stimulate student motivation in the classroom. As mentioned by Yalman et al. (2016), referring to the study by Kaba, Gunes and Altintas, “Limited interaction between the faculty member and students is reported to be the most probable drawbacks of e-learning systems” (p. 1709). In the case of FL e-learning at UNAM, 86% of the students were satisfied with the support from lecturers and 77% of them reported that their language lecturers were helpful enough and made constant efforts to maintain their motivation at a high level. Students also stated that lecturers have created a conducive online environment. Despite the support and contribution of lecturers, students felt that online learning lowered their overall motivation. The results showed that 60% of the students felt isolated and more distracted.

Students’ Learning Autonomy

In a remote learning environment, student autonomy and self-discipline in learning is essential. In FL didactics, the CEFRL (2000) recommends using all means to promote learner autonomy in their language learning process. Ozudogru and Hismanoglu (2016) argue that online learning requires students to have self-regulated learning skills. The results of this study showed that lecturers (57%) and students (59%) agreed that remote learning promotes learning autonomy. E-learning is, in this sense, a good learner-centered tool if it is supported by lecturers’ guidance in autonomy-building and self-regulated learning. Overall, the FL lecturers seemed to have made an effort to be available and motivate their students with technical support or advice on the subject. However, some lecturers denounced the low participation of students in Zoom sessions and others pointed to a lack of student commitment to meet the work deadlines.

Language Competences

As mentioned by Hubackova (2015), “Foreign language teaching without face-to-face contact and the possibility of oral communication with a tutor is hardly imaginable. In every case, a foreign language teaching requires some conversation, authentic listening, team work, [and] group work ...” (p. 526).

Oral Competences

In Grosu and David’s (2013) research, lecturers and students “voiced their concerns about the challenge of improving students’ speaking skills” (p. 50). Their findings are consistent with the current research findings that 59% of students and 82% of lecturers agreed that developing students’ speaking skills through e-learning was not as satisfying as in face-to-face teaching. The results showed that most of FL lecturers were well aware of the potential negative impact of online learning on the development of speaking skills. Some of the lecturers included live screening (WhatsApp videos or Zoom) to recreate the obligatory spontaneity and natural interactions involved in FL teaching. This also explains the reason for the intensive use of role plays and game-like activities in FL teaching. According to the recommendations of the CEFRL (2000), FL educators should equip learners with verbal and non-verbal knowledge encountered in daily life, interpersonal relations, values, beliefs and attitudes, body language, social conventions and ritual behaviours. It is also important to note in Little’s (2008) discussion paper that the CEFRL also defines language as “one of the foundations of human behavior” that “we use... continuously to perform communicative acts. Those acts may be external and social.” (p. 3). These aspects can

be more difficult to convey in e-learning. Students and lecturers believed that learning to read and write online was more equivalent to face-to-face acquisition.

Group Emulation

The results showed that 73% of students declared that they missed class exchanges with both their instructor and peers although 59% of FL students agreed that not having peer pressure was a benefit. Research on undergraduate students learning FL at Bucharest University in Economic Studies placed the lack of peer pressure among the most important benefits of e-learning.

Language E-Teaching Challenges

The results of this study showed that lecturers and students rated the overall effectiveness of online learning in FL as lower than that of face-to-face learning. In her study, Sun (2011) highlights the pedagogical challenges of online language teaching and proposes a learner-centred conception of online language teaching that offers promising solutions to address these challenges (see Table 1).

Table 1

Proposed learned-centred Online Language Teaching Design (Sun, 2011, p. 445)

Teaching Components	New Strategies/Methods	Pedagogical Characteristics
Lessons	-leave room for students to nominate topic/subject areas of study -students find learning contents of interest	-learner co-construct class resources -assert learning control
Lessons in Audio & Video	- stay	-use authentic learning materials
Electronic Flashcards	-provide software package for students to work in groups to make flashcards (record sounds, find pictures, etc.)	-group work, cooperation & collaboration
Online Interactive Exercises Individual Voice Recorder	-more pair/group tasks - move culture/grammar questions to Class Blog and have specific blog page for each group of questions - solicit/generate culture/grammar questions from students then discuss them in Class Blog	-encourage participation and interactions -encourage learner initiatives, creativity, problem-solving -community building

		-move some individual oral recordings to Class Podcast	-individuals share own learning experience and progress, help develop sense of belonging in the community
Character-writing	Movie Clips	-invite students to browse the Internet (e.g., web dictionary: nciku) and find more character –writing samples	-co-create new learning and knowledge
Online Learning Community	Mini Lectures	-reduce to a minimum – pre -record the lectures and make it available online	-increase learner choice - promote personalised learning
	Virtual Drop-in	- stay	-participation, engagement, interaction
	Class Blog	- stay	-community building Individual
	Blogs	- stay, but encourage more postings on target language and culture created or found by individual students	-socialising, community building -learner creativity
	Email/Voicemail Centre	- stay	-socialising, community building
	Pair/Group Work Corner	- stay, but consider adding Second Life and bring in native speakers	-authentic, real-life problem-solving
	Studio – for recording Paired/Group Oral Presentations	- stay, but encourage other methods of making oral presentations, e.g., filming	- task-based, group work - learner creativity
	Class Podcast	- stay - stay, especially individual feedback	- community building
Assessment presentations)	(assignments/oral	- more learner-focused, real-life, problem-solving tasks	-personalised learning and teaching -real-life problem solving

Comparing our findings to Sun’s design, it can be argued that FL lecturers under study did not design their online course to support an effective and strong online learning community. Even though students seemed satisfied with their online interactions, the findings showed that there might still be a need to sufficiently explore the ways to create an online learning community using virtual classrooms, facilitating online forums, organizing virtual events, class blogs, and class podcasts.

Conclusions

The sudden onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has substantially changed the way people teach and learn. According to Ozudogru and Hismanoglu (2016):

Instructors teaching competence, personal characteristics, subject matter expertise and relationships with students are also vital for e-learning course. Therefore, before launching an online course, instructors should be trained about how to conduct online teaching and learning, arouse learners' interest and maintain student attendance and participation.... instructors should be friendly, proficient, accessible and quick to respond to students' needs and concerns (p. 14).

Contemporary language teaching methods tend to follow the communicative approach which requires multiple observations from lecturers to constantly adapt to the needs of the learners. Online learning is not as suitable for applying some aspects of this approach. For instance, an error is used as a teaching aid for the benefit of the class, and part of the learning is to stimulate learners to ask questions and develop critical thinking. The communicative approach (heir of the constructivism theory) bases its learning process on the discovery of the rules of language by learners and their encouragement to think and ask questions. In e-learning, students were less comfortable presenting their questions on the platforms in the presence of others. Instead, the students individually requested clarification from their lecturers (via WhatsApp or email). The group remediation process was therefore not as effective as it is in classroom. The communicative approach also requires more interaction with the lecturer and peers. In this case study, students had fewer opportunities to replicate these intercommunications in e-learning. A communication approach in FL teaching-learning also involves a target language consistent with real-life situations (which is why interactions are so crucial). Keeping the language authentic and the interactions spontaneous was much more difficult with e-learning. Overall, communicating and teaching a language only through computers did not seem natural. This may be the reason why most universities opt for blended FL education instead of full online learning.

This study also found that the process of building an online community, whether among students or among practitioners, has not been optimal. In comparison, McQuirter (2020) credits Brock university (Canada) with very good institutional educational support consisting of "... numerous synchronous workshops provided, ... time ... dedicated in department meetings for sharing concerns and experiences" (p. 49). She then states that "In essence, they became a Learning Community." which prompted academics to create their own support and sharing groups. As McQuirter points out, with the COVID-19 pandemic still ongoing in 2021, FL lecturers could start a discussion on e-learning. McQuirter further states that "we have generated ideas about using technology tools that we hope to incorporate in future classes when we return to face-to-face or blended instruction" (p. 50) and build on their current experience to improve their e-learning practice.

In view of the current findings, this study recommends an evaluation of e-learning pedagogical practice in other UNAM departments and faculties. There is also a need to encourage lecturers to participate in workshops that address the didactic challenges of UNAM online learning. More regular virtual sessions where UNAM practitioners could share their experience and e-learning challenges would also help to improve the quality of distance education at UNAM. If educators create an online learning community, it may be easier to stimulate the online building community of their students.

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Appendix 1

Global map of schools closures due to COVID-19 pandemic on the 25/05/2020 by UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2020)

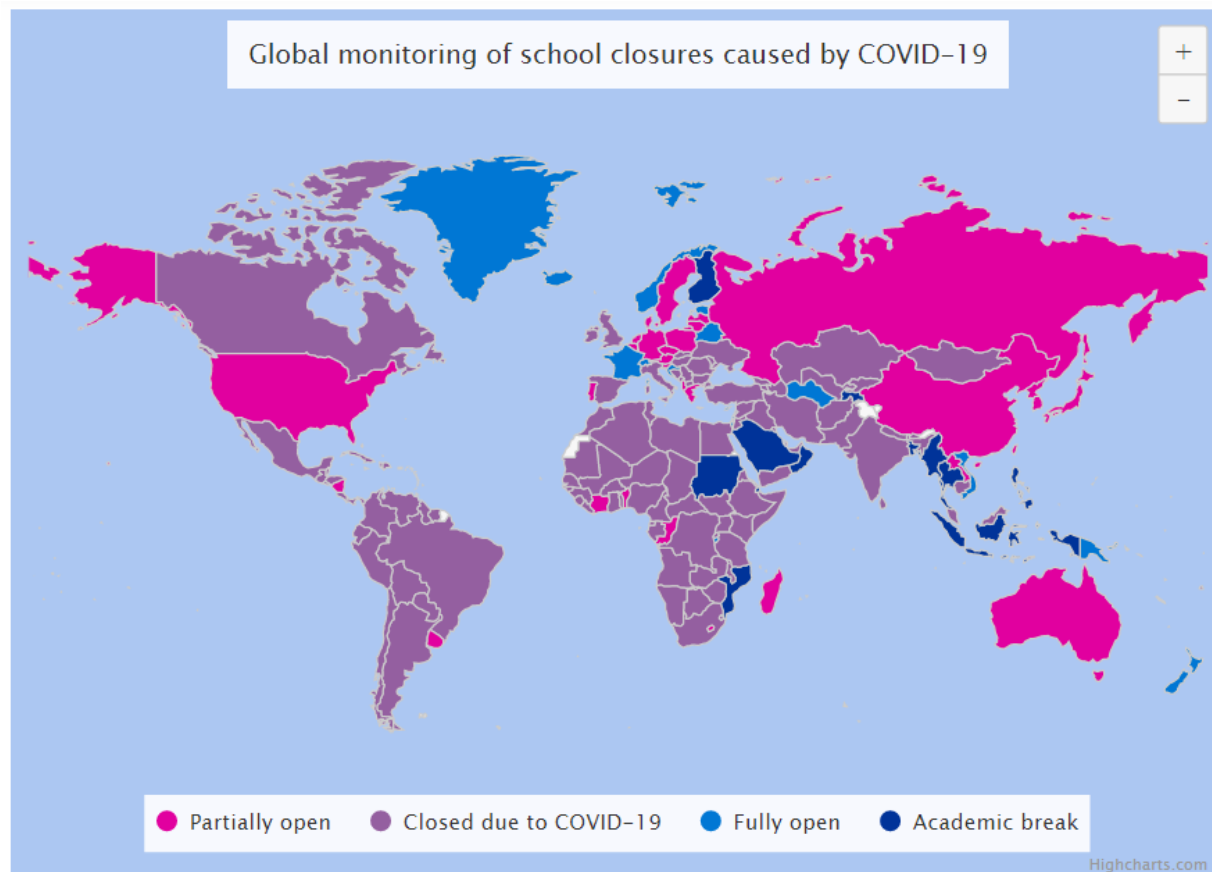


Figure 1. Global map of schools closures due to COVID-19 pandemic on the 25/05/2020 by UNESCO (Source: <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>)

Appendix 2

Annex 2.1: Questionnaire for Lecturers

Please tick one item for each question/statement.

CATEGORY

1. Which Foreign Language do you lecture?
 - a. Afrikaans
 - b. French
 - c. German
 - d. Portuguese
 - e. Mandarin
 - f. Spanish

2. Which year(s) are you lecturing?
 - a. First year course
 - b. Third year course
 - c. Both

PART 1: SYSTEM QUALITY AND SYSTEM USE

1. Which platforms do you mainly use for E-learning courses?

Moodle	
Unam Portal	
Zoom /BBB	
Outlook (E-mails)	
Whats App	
Others (Precise which one)

2. Rate the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. You had opportunities to be trained on Unam platforms/software before the lockdown.					
b. The overall technical performance of the platforms is good.					
c. You had regular technical issues.					

d. You are satisfied with Unam IT support.					
e. The time spent on E-teaching is equivalent to face-to-face teaching.					
f. The flexibility on time is appreciable.					
g. The easy and continuous access online is an advantage for students.					
h. Having no fixed location is an advantage for students.					
i. E-learning allows students to learn at their own pace.					

PART 2: CONTENT QUALITY

1. Rate the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. The language E-course content is in line with the outline.					
b. Course content and presentation are long enough to cover all content.					
c. Lecture notes are the core learning material on e-learning system.					
d. You add supplementary material to the core material.					
e. Your lecture notes are supported by multimedia tools (video, powerpoint presentation, panopto, Zoom, etc...)					
f. The E-assessment is comparable to face-to-face assessment.					
g. You find it difficult to adapt your assessment to E-learning.					
h. The assignments are numerous and diversified.					
i. There are enough exercises.					

PART 3: SERVICE QUALITY

1. Rate the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. You are satisfied about the general communication with your students.					
b. You posted instructions about the E-learning procedure.					
c. You posted an outline for each semester course.					
d. You posted a calendar or timeframe for the semester program.					
e. You find it difficult to develop learning strategies for E-learning.					
f. Having access to the full module history in one location is valuable for students.					
g. E-learning is a challenge for you.					
h. E-learning is too impersonal.					
i. E-learning prevents socialization of students.					
j. E-learning is time saving.					

PART 4: LANGUAGE COMPETENCES

1. Rate the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. E-learning provides students with more autonomy in their learning.					
b. You miss the class exchanges.					
c. The lessons online are of the same effectiveness as the face-to-face lessons.					
d. The reading skill development within the E-learning course is of the same effectiveness as the face-to-face lessons.					
e. The listening skill development within the E-learning course is of					

the same effectiveness as the face-to-face lessons.					
f. The speaking skill development within the E-learning course is of the same effectiveness as the face-to-face lessons.					
g. The writing skill development within the E-learning course is of the same effectiveness as the face-to-face lessons.					
h. The vocabulary skill development within the E-learning course is of the same effectiveness as the face-to-face lessons.					

Annex 2.2: Questionnaire for Students

Please tick one item for each question/statement except if indicated otherwise.

CATEGORY

1. Are you a:

-1st year student

-3rd year student

2. Which Foreign Language are you studying:

Afrikaans

French

German

Portuguese

Spanish

Mandarin

PART 1: SYSTEM QUALITY AND SYSTEM USE

3. Which type of device do you mainly use during the E-learning? (*You can tick more than one item*).

a. Computers (desktop/laptop)	
b. Tablets	
c. Smart phones	
d. Internet access	
e. Social networking Apps such as Whats App	

4. For Internet access, do you use?

Private WIFI	
Campus Labs / Library	
Public WIFI	
Data from private provider	
Data from Unam	

5. Which platforms do you mainly use? (you can tick more than one item)

Moodle	
Unam Portal	
Zoom	
E-mail	
Whatsapp	
Facebook	
Others (Precise which one)

6. Please rate the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I received a training about Unam platforms before the lockdown.					
a. The navigation is easy on Moodle.					
b. Material is easy to find.					
c. The overall technical performance of the platforms is good.					
d. You had many Internet disconnections when working online.					
e. The flexibility on time is appreciable.					
f. The easy and continuous access online is an advantage in your learning.					
g. Having no fixed location is an advantage.					
h. E-learning allows you to learn at your own pace.					

PART 2: CONTENT QUALITY

2. Please rate the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
j. The language E-course content is in line with the outline.					
k. Course content and presentation are long enough to cover all content.					

l. Lecture notes are the core learning material on e-learning system.					
m. The lecturer adds supplementary material to the core material.					
n. Course material is easy to understand and follow.					
o. Lecture notes are supported by multimedia tools (video, powerpoint presentation, panopto, Zoom, etc...)					
p. The E-assessment is comparable to face-to-face assessment.					
q. The assignments are numerous and diversified.					
r. There are enough exercises.					
s. The lecturer's feedbacks are clear.					

PART 3: SERVICE QUALITY

2. Please rate the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
k. The lecturer returns emails/posts in a reasonable time.					
l. The lecturer is supportive and helpful.					
m. The lecturer motivates us.					
n. The general communication between my lecturer and me is satisfactory.					
o. The lecturer posts clear instructions about the E-learning procedure.					
p. Overall, the lecturer creates a conducive online environment to learn.					
q. I found it difficult to develop learning strategies with E-learning.					
r. Having access to the full module history in one location is valuable.					
s. E-learning increases my motivation to learn.					

t. E-learning is too impersonal.					
u. E-learning prevents socialization of students.					
v. I feel very isolated learning online.					
w. I am more distracted when I learn online.					

PART 4: LANGUAGE COMPETENCES

2. Answer these statements by Yes or No.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
i. E-learning provides me with more autonomy in my learning.					
j. I enjoy not having my peers' pressure.					
k. I miss the class exchanges and interactions.					
l. The lessons online are of the same effectiveness as the face-to-face lessons.					
m. The reading skill development within the E-learning course is of the same effectiveness as the face-to-face lessons.					
n. The listening skill development within the E-learning course is of the same effectiveness as the face-to-face lessons.					
o. The speaking skill development within the E-learning course is of the same effectiveness as the face-to-face lessons.					
p. The writing skill development within the E-learning course is of the same effectiveness as the face-to-face lessons.					
q. The vocabulary skill development within the E-learning course is of the same effectiveness as the face-to-face lessons.					