Univerza v Mariboru

Filozofska fakulteta

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ENGLISH TEACHING UPDATE AVAILABLE: A STUDY ON ONLINE EFL EDUCATORS

MAGISTRSKO DELO

Maribor, november 2021

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MASTER'S THESIS

Maribor, november 2021

MOŽNOST POSODOBITVE POUČEVANJA ANGLEŠČINE: ŠTUDIJA O SPLETNIH UČITELJIH ANGLEŠČINE KOT TUJEGA JEZIKA

ENGLISH TEACHING UPDATE AVAILABLE: A STUDY ON ONLINE EFL EDUCATORS

MAGISTRSKO DELO

Študentka: Andreja Benković

Študijski program: Magistrski študijski program

Angleščina

Smer: Poučevanje angleščine, dvopredmetni

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my mentors doc. dr. Katja Plemenitaš and lekt. Kirsten Margaret Hempkin for their invaluable guidance, support and help.

I would also like to thank prof.dr. Urška Sešek for devoting her time.

I would like to thank the administrative support and English teachers in schools which participated in the survey.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their wise counsel and support throughout my studies.

ABSTRACT

"If it hadn't been for online teaching, we would all have had to change jobs."

Respondent no. 4

The master's thesis explores the north-Croatian teachers' readiness for teaching online. With technology slowly, but steadily, taking over everyday actions, it was only a matter of time when it would take over education. With March 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, technology was the safest way of conducting lessons and was instantaneously implemented into education. This master's thesis aims to determine how English teachers in the three northernmost Croatian counties managed the new challenge. Specifically, it tests factors that influenced their e-readiness through 7 hypotheses. The research is based on questionnaire results – the questionnaire was sent to 86 primary schools, 30 secondary schools and 11 private language schools in Međimurje county, Varaždin county and Koprivnica-Križevci county via email with a request to forward it to their English teachers. Analysing responses with quantitative research methods, the study showed that factors such as age, gender and professional development influence teachers' e-readiness, while there were no differences among the three counties. Furthermore, the results revealed that the teachers generally feel ready for conducting online lessons, although Gay's questionnaire on Carribean teachers' online teaching readiness proved otherwise. Interestingly, some of the teachers did have online teaching experience prior to the pandemic, which along with organized professional development offered to them, helped them feel ready to teach online. Ultimately, teachers are better prepared to teach online than they were prior to the pandemic; however, there is still a lot of room for improvement.

Keywords: Croatian English teachers, online education, technical readiness, lifestyle readiness, pedagogical readiness, questionnaire by Glenda H. E. Gay

POVZETEK

Magistrsko delo preučuje pripravljenost severnohrvaških učiteljev angleščine na spletno poučevanje. Z marcem 2020 in pojavom pandemije bolezni COVID-19 se je celotno izvajanje pouka naenkrat začelo izvajati po spletu. Sklepamo, da učitelji angleščine pred tem niso imeli ali pa so imeli zelo malo izkušenj s spletnim poučevanjem, vendar so se kljub temu dobro znašli in med izvajanjem pouka na daljavo pridobili dovolj izkušenj.

Magistrska naloga najprej obravnava terminologijo, ki se uporablja v povezavi s spletnim poučevanjem. Različni avtorji uporabljajo različne termine, kot so spletno poučevanje (angl. online learning), spletno izobraževanje (angl. online education) in učenje na daljavo (angl. distance or remote learning). Kljub temu pa jih definirajo podobno, in sicer kot formalno organizirano poučevanje, pri katerem sta učitelj in učenec geografsko oddaljena, za izvajanje pouka pa uporabljata različne oblike tehnologije in splet. Glede na to, da magistrska naloga obravnava pripravljenost hrvaških učiteljev angleščine na poučevanje na daljavo, je pomembno opredeliti tudi terminologijo, ki definira, kako je spletni pouk organiziran v času pandemije. Obstajajo trije modeli: t. i. model A, ki pomeni, da se pouk v celoti izvaja v šolah; t. i. model B, ki združuje pouk v šoli s spletnim poukom, in t. i. model C, ki pomeni, da se pouk v celoti izvaja na daljavo.

Spletni pouk se dokaj razlikuje od pouka v učilnicah, kar ovira številne učitelje pri odločitvi za izvajanje le-tega. Čeprav je interakcija učitelj–učenec in učenec–učenec prisotna tako pri spletnem pouku kot pri pouku v učilnicah, je pri spletnem pouku težko zagotoviti kvalitetno interakcijo. Ker je interakcija osrednjega pomena pri učenju tujega jezika, so asinhrone (angl. asynchronous) oblike spletnega pouka nezadostne. Drugi element primerjanja pouka v učilnicah in spletnega pouka so učni izidi. Mnenja avtorjev in raziskave kažejo nasprotujoče si trditve: na eni strani so tisti, ki trdijo, da učenci pridobijo več znanja in veščin pri pouku v učilnicah, na drugi strani pa tisti, ki pravijo, da sta ravni znanja in veščin pri spletnem pouku višji. Tretji element primerjave pouka v učilnicah in spletnega pouka se nanaša na

oblikovanje pouka. Pri oblikovanju obeh, tako pouka v učilnicah kot tudi spletnega pouka, učitelj izvaja štiri vloge: pedagoško, upraviteljsko, socialno in tehnično. Upraviteljska in tehnična vloga učitelja sta podobni pri obeh oblikah pouka, medtem ko se pedagoška in socialna dokaj razlikujeta med poukom v šolah in spletnim poukom. V učilnici ima učitelj vpogled v proces učenja, medtem ko je pri spletnem pouku učenec tisti, ki nosi aktivnejšo vlogo. Socialna vloga zajema interakcijo, ki je med dvema oblikama pouka različna. Četrti element primerjanja je prisotnost učitelja, ki jo delimo na verbalno vedenje in neverbalno vedenje. Verbalno vedenje zajema izražanje stališč, pohval ali povratnih informacij; neverbalno pa kretnje, mimiko ali očesni stik. Verbalno in neverbalno vedenje vplivata na učenje, saj zmanjšujeta tveganje socialne in psihološke distance med učiteljem in učencem.

Magistrska naloga razlikuje med sinhronim spletnim učenjem (angl. synchronous online learning), asinhronim spletnim učenjem (angl. asynchronous online learning), mešanim učenjem (angl. blended learning), mešanim spletnim učenjem (angl. blended online learning) in hibridnim sinhronim učenjem (angl. hybrid synchronous learning). Sinhrono spletno učenje je poučevanje po spletu, pri katerem so pri pouku učitelj in učenci istočasno prisotni, ampak geografsko oddaljeni. Asinhrono spletno učenje je poučevanje po spletu, pri katerem so učenci in učitelj tako geografsko kot tudi časovno oddaljeni – učenci sami določajo, kdaj in kje bodo pouk poslušali. Mešano učenje kombinira pouk v učilnicah s spletnim poukom za namen zmanjševanja števila srečanj v učilnicah. Mešano spletno poučevanje kombinira sinhrono in asinhrono spletno poučevanje. Hibridno sinhrono poučevanje hkrati kombinira spletno poučevanje in poučevanje v učilnici – del učencev je v učilnici, medtem ko drugi del sodeluje po spletu.

Učno okolje temelji na določeni stopnji osredotočenosti na učenca, znanje, ocenjevanje in socialno skupnost. Pri spletnem pouku imajo učitelji omejen nadzor nad učenčevo govorico telesa, kulturo in obliko izražanja. Zaradi tega je pomembno, da učitelji pri spletnem pouku omogočijo alternativne oblike izražanja svojih pogledov, prepričanj in kulture, saj so le-ti tisti, na podlagi katerih učenci oblikujejo svoja razmišljanja. Osredotočenost na znanje pri

spletnem pouku prinaša določene prednosti in pomanjkljivosti: učenci imajo dostop do obilja informacij, vendar je težko določiti, katere informacije so točne in posodobljene. Da je spletno poučevanje osredotočeno na znanje, se morajo učenci naučiti, kako pravilno filtrirati vsebino in informacije, najdene na spletu. Zelo pomemben del učinkovitega učnega okolja je ocenjevanje, ki se deli na formativno (sprotno dajanje povratnih informacij za izboljšanje znanja) in sumativno ocenjevanje (ocena na koncu učne enote). Ker je pri spletnem poučevanju manj priložnosti za interakcijo učitelj–učenec in učenec–učenec, je tudi manj priložnosti za formativno ocenjevanje; nekateri pa menijo, da je omogočanje formativnega ocenjevanja med poukom pomembna učiteljeva naloga. Pri spletnem pouku še posebej zaradi geografskega potenciala njegovih udeležencev obstajajo številne možnosti oblikovanja socialnih skupnosti. Kljub temu obstaja tveganje občutka izoliranosti od vrstnikov, kateremu se lahko med drugih izognemo z oblikovanjem spletnih skupnosti.

Z vedno večjo vsakdanjo uporabo spleta in tehnologij na vseh področjih življenja se spreminja tudi vloga učitelja. Da bi bila tehnologija integrirana v pouk, morajo učitelji premagati določene ovire: notranje in zunanje. Zunanje ovire se nanašajo na dostop do tehnologije, ki jo učitelji lahko vključijo v pouk, notranje pa na prepričanja učiteljev o novih oblikah poučevanja ter njihova pripravljenost na uporabo nove tehnologije in na spremembo metod poučevanja. Pri premagovanju teh težav je učiteljem na voljo formalno strokovno izobraževanje, ki ga organizira institucija, v kateri so zaposleni, in tudi neformalno strokovno izobraževanje, ki se ga lahko samoiniciativno udeležijo. Na učiteljeva prepričanja o izvajanju spletnega pouka vplivajo tudi faktorji, kot so starost, spol, kultura in delovne izkušnje.

Glenda H. E. Gay je izvedla raziskavo pripravljenosti učiteljev na pouk po spletu. Raziskava je testirala pripravljenost na podlagi treh faktorjev: tehnične pripravljenosti (angl. technical readiness (TR)), pripravljenosti življenjskega stila (angl. lifestyle readiness (LR)) in pedagoške pripravljenosti (angl. pedagogical readiness (PR)). Tehnična pripravljenost se nanaša na ujemanje uporabljene tehnologije z učnimi cilji pouka; pripravljenost življenjskega stila

zaobjema učiteljevo strokovno znanje, organizacijske sposobnosti, administrativne značilnosti in spletno okolje; pedagoška pripravljenost pa določa, ali ima učitelj potrebne predispozicije in veščine za implementacijo nove tehnologije.

Vprašalnik, ki je uporabljen v raziskavi Gayeve, je uporabljen tudi v empirični raziskavi te magistrske naloge. Namen raziskave magistrske naloge je določiti, do kolikšne mere so severnohrvaški učitelji angleščine pripravljeni na izvajanje spletnega pouka. Vprašalnik pri magistrski nalogi je sestavljen iz treh delov, in sicer iz biografskih podatkov v prvem delu, vprašalnika Gayeve v drugem in odprtih vprašanj v tretjem delu. Vprašalnik je poslan na 86 osnovnih šol, 30 srednjih šol in 11 privatnih šol tujih jezikov v Medžimurskem okrožju (org: županija), Varaždinskem okrožju in Koprivničko-križevačkem okrožju. V raziskavi je sodelovalo 100 učiteljev angleščine: 91 je bilo ženskega in 9 moškega spola. Udeleženci v glavnem pripadajo srednji starostni skupini: 47 je med 30. in 39. letom starosti, 35 pa med 40. in 49. letom starosti. Največ udeležencev (42 učiteljev) je iz Varaždinskega okrožja. 67 udeležencev je označilo, da imajo magisterij iz angleščine ali angleške literature. Največ jih dela v osnovnih šolah.

Glede na trditve Gayeve, da je učitelj pripravljen na izvajanje spletnega pouka, ko je vrednost njegovih odgovorov nad 4, so bili pred analizo odgovorov drugega dela vprašalnika, le-ti kodirani: popolnoma se strinjam = 5; strinjam se = 4; niti se strinjam niti ne strinjam = 3; ne strinjam se = 2; popolnoma se ne strinjam = 1. Z analizo podatkov smo preverili sedem v nadaljevanju predstavljenih hipotez. H1: Faktorji, kot so starost, spol in profesionalne kvalifikacije, vplivajo na učiteljevo pripravljenost na izvajanje spletnega pouka. H2: Ne obstaja pomembna razlika v pripravljenosti med učitelji iz različnih okrožij. H3: Malo učiteljev angleščine je imelo izkušnje z izvajanjem spletnega pouka pred pandemijo bolezni COVID-19. H4: Ne obstaja veliko strokovnega izobraževanja za izvajanje spletnega pouka. H5: Tehnična pripravljenost (TR) učiteljev je višja kot njihova pripravljenost življenjskega stila (LR) in pedagoška pripravljenost (PR). H6: Tehnična pripravljenost (TR), pedagoška pripravljenost (PR) in pripravljenost življenjskega stila so

zadostne. H7: Učitelji se ne počutijo pripravljeni na izvajanje spletnega pouka. Analiza podatkov je potrdila prvo, drugo in peto hipotezo, ovrgla četrto, šesto in sedmo ter niti potrdila niti ovrgla tretjo hipotezo. Raziskava je pokazala, da je imelo izkušnje s poučevanem po spletu pred pandemijo bolezni COVID-19 zelo malo učiteljev, vendar je večina pridobila dovolj izkušenj, da se sedaj počutijo pripravljeni na izvajanje spletnega pouka.

Ključne besede: hrvaški učitelji angleščine, spletno izobraževanje, tehnična pripravljenost, pripravljenost življenjskega stila, pedagoška pripravljenost, vprašalnik Glende H. E. Gay

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IZJAVA O AVTORSTVU ZAKLJUČNEGA DELA

Ime in priimek študent-a/-ke: Andreja Benković

Študijski program: Poučevanje angleščine

Naslov zaključnega dela: Možnost posodobitve poučevanja angleščine: študija o spletnih učiteljih angleščine kot tujega jezika

Mentor/-ica: doc. dr. Katja Plemenitaš

Somentor/ica: lekt. Kirsten Margaret Hempkin

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1. INTRODUCTION

With the global economy tightly intertwining various cultures and international relations, the need for broadening one's perspective has arisen. It seems that the simplest way of gaining international experience is enrolling into a study semester abroad; however, considering that this is financially unavailable to many students, other opportunities had to be created. Pedagogical methods have developed along with technology to the point where the two have intersected and created virtual classrooms (Little et al. 355). Along with the need for gaining international experience easily, many other benefits spurred the creation and wider use of online courses: flexibility of time and place, less infrastructure required, greater availability of courses. According to Potts and Potts, online courses count for more than 1 million enrolments from 2002 and 2012 (226). Virtual classrooms allow students to attend a class from anywhere and some of them even allow them to attend it anytime. Interacting electronically with their students, teachers choose between various methods of teaching: animation, audio narration, video or PowerPoints (Stone 1171).

Harmer believes English to have a "special position here since it has become the international language of communication" (1). Crystal supports that with a combination of two explanations: the geo-historical one and the socio-cultural one explaining how English has spread and how it remains widespread, respectively (31-32). Colonial developments made it possible for English to spread around the world in the past and it is unimaginable for many people not to use it in various domains of their lives today. There is a great variety of reasons people learn foreign languages: from the requirements of the school curriculum, through the possibility of career advancement to the simple desire of knowing another language (Harmer, 1-2). Widespread access to computers allows for the number of online courses to increase. The Internet, as an important and highly useful tool, plays an essential

role not only in online language courses but online courses in general. The more web-based technologies advance, the more educational technologies develop (Sung and Yeh 405).

Academically speaking, distance education is a relatively new discipline. Nevertheless, according to Anderson, its existence and evolution can be traced through 5 generations over the past 150 years (2). The first generation accounts for approximately half of that time. This was mostly an individual endeavour between a student and a teacher carried out through postal communication. In the last half of the twentieth century, distance learning began to develop rapidly and three more generations followed: "one supported by the mass media of television and radio, another by the synchronous tools of video and audio teleconferencing, and yet another based on computer conferencing" (Anderson 2). The fifth generation started forming in the early twenty-first century. It is characterized by users being more autonomous and learning being assisted with the use of tailored databases (Anderson 2). "The continuous development of mobile technology has expanded the opportunity to learn from mobile devices anywhere, anytime" (Panigrahi et al. 11). The mobility of technology allows for greater flexibility in online learning, whether that is formal or informal learning.

As Harasim predicted, attitudes toward online learning and teaching have changed (42). The beginning of the 21st century prophesized an alteration of the "global civilization as educators and learners worldwide adopt and adapt networked collaborative learning" (Harasim 2). The ever-increasing use of online forms of education was widely expanded in the year 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many restrictions took place, among them lockdowns, which shut down schools and universities, forcing educational institutions to move to online lessons. The transfer from school classrooms to virtual classrooms forced teachers to embrace digital technology and communication platforms and incorporate them into their teaching methods (Mishra et al. 1-2). The rapid transition to online teaching and learning offers us an insight into if and how teachers were actually prepared for it (Scherer et al. 1).

2. OVERVIEW OF TERMINOLOGY

Although there are many forms of online education, many authors have discovered that both the terminology as well as definitions are somewhat inconsistent. Carliner defines online learning as using computer-based resources for learning purposes (1). Khan explains that web-based training and learning is an approach to teaching a remote audience based on the resources of the Internet (5). In order to produce a definition of online learning, King et al., being concerned about the use of the word learning, first propose the following definition: 'Learning is improved capabilities in knowledge and/or behaviour as a result of mediated experiences that are constrained by interactions with the situation' (4). Based on that definition, King et al. emphasize that there is a difference between distance learning and distance education. They define distance learning as the ability of the learner to improve despite the time and/or distance constraints; while distance education is defined as an activity which happens between the learner and their instructor (10).

Following online education in the United States, the annual report consistently uses the same definition of online, traditional and blended education. As stated in the report, online education is every education which delivers 80% or more of the content online. On the other hand, traditional education is every form of education that has under 29% of the content delivered online. All other forms of education that combine traditional face-to-face education with online education in other ratios are categorized as blended education (Allen et al. 7).

Simonson and Schlosser use a definition that is comprised of 4 components. This definition explains that distance education is a) institutionally based, b) characterized by the separation of student and teacher, c) composed of interactive tasks, and d) involves sharing

of learning experiences (1). To explain it further, distance education is formal education provided by an institution – either traditional schools or non-traditional institutions. The teacher or the instructor and the student are separated geographically, in time and/or intellectually. The lessons should be formed interactively, either in a synchronous or asynchronous way in order to connect learners with each other as well as with resources and instructors (Simonson and Schlosser 1-2).

Anderson mentions various expressions used for web-based learning, such as 'e-learning, Internet learning, distributed learning, networked learning, tele-learning, virtual learning, computer-assisted learning, web-based learning, and distance learning' (16). He states that online learning is a major part of distance education. Moore et al. differentiate between distance learning, e-Learning and online learning (129). According to Moore et al., distance learning or distance education is an education offered to those who are physically not located in the same place as the instructor, and the authors state it as the oldest of the three forms (129-130). As the technology evolved, the term distance learning evolved as well, describing similar forms of learning. E-Learning and online learning originated within the same time frame. Online learning refers to the access individuals have to various learning experiences by using some forms of technology. E-Learning, on the other hand, is the use of technological tools which are web-based as well as media like CD-ROM, audio- and videotape, interactive TV and satellite broadcast (Moore et al. 129-130).

Larreamendy-Joerns and Leinhardt differentiate between distance education and online education (568). They adopted Holmberg's definition of distance education which states that it "covers the various forms of teaching and learning at all levels which are not under the continuous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning, guidance and tuition of a tutorial organisation" (2). On the other hand, online education is hereby seen as "instruction through a connection to a computer system at a venue distant from the learner's personal computer" (Larreamendy-Joerns and Leinhardt 568). As this

thesis focuses on online educators, the definition of online education provided by Larreamendy-Joerns and Leinhardt will be applied to describe their work setting. The definition will be further divided according to the amount of online/remote instruction they use to form their courses, as seen in the fourth chapter of this thesis: *Forms of Online Lessons* (568).

Apart from the terminology issues mentioned above, it is important to also mention certain English language learning/teaching related terminology. In both face-to-face and traditional English language courses there is inconsistency in the term used to refer to those who are learning English but are not native speakers. Webster and Lu mention terms such as "Second Language Learners (SLL), English as a Second Language (ESL) Student, Limited English Proficient (LEP), Language Minority Student, English learner (EL), and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD)" (84). What is more, there are several scales grading the student's language proficiency level. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) includes 6 categories to describe language proficiency: A1. A2, B1, B2, C1, C2. These can be further divided as needed ("The CEFR Levels"). The Interagency Language Roundtable (IRL) rates language proficiency from 0 to 5. It uses 'plus levels' for proficiency higher than a certain level, but lower than the next one ("ILR Scale"). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages scale (ACTFL) categorizes proficiency into five major levels: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior and Distinguished. The first three categories can be further subdivided into Low, Mid and High sublevels ("ACTFL").

Given that the main focus of the empirical part of this thesis is Croatian teachers, who have experienced online education due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, it is important to mention the terminology that defines how online education has been organized in Croatia. There are three models: Model A means that all classes are held face-to-face at school, Model B combines face-to-face classes at school with online classes and Model C means classes are held remotely. With the new restrictions, Model A follows the directions given by the health authorities, i.e., wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, washing hands,

etc. It also allows for some exceptions to the model, in case of student or teacher self-isolation or a positive COVID -19 test. In both Model A and Model B, primary school classes I. to IV. are held in schools. Following Model B, primary school students in classes V. to VII. and high school classes are divided into 2 groups: half of students in each class is attending classes in school and the other half online. The groups take turns every week or every few days. Remote classes in Model C include remote student-teacher and student-student interaction as well as student's individual work at home ("Modeli i preporuke za rad").

3. COMPARISON WITH FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING

Some research indicates that teaching online courses is more demanding than conventional classroom teaching. Lack of confidence or technological competencies hinder many educators from accepting to teach online courses. Teachers struggle with establishing and maintaining effective online environments. Some educators find online teaching stressful due to their lack of technical skills. “While online instructors are not expected to be technical support specialists, research suggests that online teaching requires instructors to have sufficient technical skills to be successful” (Richardson et al. 4).

New forms of technology allow for new formats of instruction: from those that are completely online, over those that blend online and traditional face-to-face instruction to the face-to-face ones. These labels often include some variations. Many formats are nowadays still classified as face-to-face. Even though they include some forms of technology, such as mobile devices, social networks etc., they still follow face-to-face format of instruction (Dziuban and Moskal 236). Although some of the first supporters of online learning have claimed it will replace the traditional classrooms, this is nowadays dismissed by many (Carliner 7). While some authors claim distance courses should provide the same instruction as traditional courses, others suggest technology should be used to improve instruction (Imel 3).

The very fact that online courses are characterized by a distance between a teacher and a student, means there is a number of significant differences that have to be examined. Nevertheless, online and traditional classroom courses also share some characteristics (Benigno and Trentin 259). The process of developing courses, both traditional and online, is the same:

1. Conduct a needs analysis.
2. State objectives.
3. Design the evaluation.
4. Choose the medium.
5. Develop the course (or choose an off-the-shelf course).
6. Conduct a formative evaluation.
7. Revise the course.
8. Produce the course materials.
9. Distribute the course materials.
10. Conduct post-course administration (testing, enrolments, record keeping).
11. Maintain the course.

Table 3.1 Process of developing courses (Carliner 108)

Both online and traditional education require a needs analysis of learners to determine the starting point as well as the purpose of the study program. This allows for greater efficiency of the curricula, because it reveals the learners' prior knowledge and skills as well as the knowledge and skills needed for their future (Carliner 108).

3.1 Interaction Patterns

Interaction plays a major role in creating any successful lessons, whether online or traditional. “A student's ability to ask a question, to share an opinion, or to disagree with a point of view are fundamental learning activities” (Ya Ni 201). Through all forms of interaction, from the simple conversation to a discussion or a debate, various kinds of skills are used, new content and ideas comprehended, and eventually the learning goals accomplished (Ya Ni 201). Despite being a treasure chest of information, the Internet actually does not allow for much nonverbal communication commonly used in traditional classrooms (Imel 3). “Face-to-face courses are perceived by students as offering higher levels of interaction, both with the instructor and with other students in the class, than online courses” (Platt et al. 491). To achieve a certain level of interaction, online courses implement discussion boards, chats, e-mails, but the quality of this kind of interaction has been debated. “Some scholars suggest that interaction in an online environment promotes student-centered learning, encourages wider student participation, and produces more in-depth and reasoned discussions than a traditional classroom setting does” (Ya Ni 201).

Much like the traditional classroom courses, online courses could also involve student-teacher and student-student interactions. Being in the comfort of one’s own home while still participating and interacting in an online course is not as intimidating as in a traditional classroom course. The virtual classroom encourages shy learners to be more active. Nonetheless, that very same comfort and independence could cause learners to feel isolated from other learners and the teacher (Ya Ni 201). The majority of students included in a survey conducted by Platt et al. claim that online courses provide fewer opportunities for interaction (497). This might be the result of the prevalence of the asynchronous online forms. In this form of lessons physical presence portrayed through gestures, body language and facial expressions is often not present. It is for this reason that the community atmosphere as well as opportunities for interaction must be carefully designed (Lanmantchion 19). Nevertheless, effectively constructed interactions in online classes

might have a positive impact on learning outcomes. “Since learning takes place in the social setting, online classes also create an aura of a mini-society; consequently, students can gain more knowledge through the increased levels of interaction with the teachers during the online sessions” (Sthapit and Shrestha 46).

Interaction is considered to be a crucial factor in language learning, which brings into question the quality of interaction in various forms of online courses. “After all, language learning activities inevitably involve teacher–student interactions as well as student–student interactions” (Ng et al. 220-222). One example of online student-teacher interaction is via e-mails. This asynchronous form of online learning can encourage learners to actively take charge of their own progress and with it enhance language proficiency. Discussion forums and bulletin postings have a similar effect, allowing learners to express their own views. Despite the benefits above mentioned asynchronous online forms offer, real-time interaction still plays an important role in language acquisition, whether it be in-class or online (Ng 223). Language learners often mention conversation practice with a native speaker as the most desired form of practising their language skills. Internet connection makes real conversation practice possible. “However, one major drawback has been connecting English language students with competent English speaking conversation partners” (Terhune 1071).

	Online	**Face-to-face**
Mode	Discussion through text only; Can be structured; Dense; permanent; limited; stark	Verbal discussions: a more common mode, but permanent
Sense of Instructor Control	Less sense of instructor control; Easier for participants to ignore instructor	More sense of leadership from instructor; Not so easy to ignore instructor
Discussion	Group contact continually maintained;	Little group contact between meetings;

	Depth of analysis often increased; Discussion often stops for periods of time, then is picked up and restarted; Level of reflection is high; Able to reshape conversation on basis of ongoing understandings and reflection	Analysis varies, dependent on time available; Discussions occur within a set of time frame; Often little time for reflection during meetings; Conversations are less likely being shaped during meeting
Group Dynamics	Less sense of anxiety; More equal participation; Less hierarchies; Dynamics are 'hidden' but traceable; No breaks, constantly in the meeting; Can be active listening without participation; Medium (technology) has an impact; Different expectation about participation; Slower, time delays in interactions or discussions	Anxiety at beginning/during meetings; Participation unequal; More chance of hierarchies; Dynamics evident but lost after the event; Breaks between meetings; Listening without participation may be frowned upon; Medium (room) may have less impact; Certain expectations about participation; Quicker, immediacy of interactions or discussions
Rejoining	High psychological/emotional stress of rejoining	Stress of rejoining not so high
Feedback	Feedback on each individual's piece of work very detailed and focused; Whole group can see and read each others feedback; Textual feedback only; No one can "hide" and not give feedback;	Less likely to cover as much detail, often more general discussion; Group hears feedback; Verbal/visual feedback; Possible to "free-ride" and avoid giving feedback; No permanent record of feedback;

	Permanent record of feedback obtained by all; Delayed reactions to feedback; Sometimes little discussion after feedback; Group looks at all participants' work at same time	Immediate reactions to feedback possible; Usually some discussion after feedback, looking at wider issues; Group looks at one participant's work at a time
Divergence /Choice Level	Loose-bound nature encourages divergent talk and adventitious learning; Medium frees the sender but may restrict the other participants (receivers) by increasing their uncertainty	More tightly bound, requiring adherence to accepted protocols; Uncertainty less likely due to common understandings about how to take part in discussions

Table 3.2 "Comparison of Interaction Between Online and Face-to-face Settings" (Ya Ni 202)

3.2 Learning Outcomes

The effectiveness of learning is probably the main factor by which any form of education is assessed (Swan 1). Learning outcomes are largely based on learner motivation. Because online courses offer flexibility and freedom to do the coursework at one's own pace, that very "ability to control the timing and pacing of their studies is critical to their academic success" (Platt et al. 490-491). Not all learners are motivated to complete the coursework and this procrastination might have a disastrous impact on their final grades (Platt et al. 490-491).

When comparing traditional face-to-face courses with online courses, one of the main concerns is whether they are of the same quality. "Such assessment is notoriously difficult to conduct" (Arias et al. 2). This is why there is no absolute agreement about the efficacy of online education in relation to traditional face-to-face education (Arias et al. 2). With online

courses, learners have the convenience of flexibility of place and, in some online course forms, also flexibility of time, and can, therefore customize their own learning. That very control keeps the learners motivated and positively affects learning outcomes. However, having a customized learning plan might make learners feel isolated from other learners or from the teacher. The level of frustration this could produce can result in decreased interest in the course and consequently in reduced learning effectiveness (Ya Ni 200-201).

Opinions are divided: some authors believe learners in online classes gain more knowledge, while others claim the level of gained knowledge in traditional classes is higher. Similarly, the results of studies comparing online and traditional classroom courses seem to be inconsistent as well (Platt et al. 491). In the study that compares online and traditional classroom performance, Koory reports that learners have achieved better results in the online environment (33). After conducting a study on Nepalese students attending management courses, Sthapit and Shrestha concluded there are no differences between the online and traditional classroom environment in terms of the gained knowledge (46). In a study comparing online and traditional sociology courses, conducted with 400 sociology majors, Bergstrand and Savage discovered that students expressed having learnt considerably less during online classes (300).

Claiming there had been no sufficient designs for researching the quality of online courses, Arias et al. proposed “a protocol for constructing a random assignment experiment” (3). They conducted a study in which one professor teaches the same content to both an online group and the traditional classroom group of students. Participants of the survey were assigned to one of the groups at random. “The face-to-face class performed statistically, significantly better than the online class in terms of the exam average and improvement in post-test instructor questions” (Arias et al. 16).

When reviewing the comparative studies literature on quality differences between online and traditional classroom courses, one of the most cited is the Russell collection of more

than 350 studies (Swan 2; Ramage 1; Conger 1; Bernard et al. 5). “From 1928 to the present, Russell has catalogued at least 355 studies, technical reports, and dissertations that have reviewed student learning outcomes in the form of satisfaction surveys, grade comparisons, standardized test scores, common embedded questions, frequency of interaction between students and faculty, and a dizzying array of other ‘measures’ ostensibly aimed at determining if any measurable or statistically significant differences exist” (Ramage 1). The ‘No significant Difference Phenomenon’ could be interpreted in one of two ways: either that technology does not harm learning outcomes, or that it does not help learning and is therefore not needed (Conger 1-2).

3.3 Course Design

When creating an online course, it is important to provide the same quality of experience to students as they would get in a traditional, face-to-face course. Nevertheless, the methods for achieving that are certainly not the same (Imel, 3 D). “As in many forms of distance education, the process of designing and planning the online course is usually more extensive and time-consuming than the analogous process in classroom based teaching” (Anderson et al. 5). The online course is “a unique environment for teaching and learning” (Anderson 273). One of the main features of creating an online environment is the ability to adjust the time and place of teaching or taking a course. In addition to that, the designer of the online course has to manage the content in many formats: multimedia, text or video in a way that utilizes all features of the media used. Next, with the access to the amount of content available on the Internet, learners have the opportunity to do extensive research. This used to be possible only in a research library. Anderson also claims that online environment offers many interaction possibilities through a wide range of formats: text, video, speech (273).

In creating an online course, the teacher's role might only be as an instructor using materials created by others, or the teachers themselves could be the ones designing both the course and content needed for it (Anderson 276). Ideally, every step of the process of designing an online course includes both the developer of the instructional media and the teacher or the instructor. This way, it would be assured that the design is based on proven learning theories, that it reflects the institution's quality standards and that it is "practical and can be developed in a cost-effective and timely way" (Anderson 175). However, the development of both the technology and the pedagogy of online education is still in its early stages and it therefore seems the instructors working in online environments are creating the necessary elements and processes along the way (Anderson 176). This novelty often results in pedagogically poorer lessons. "One way to address concerns about inferior pedagogy online is to dictate that the same educational standards will apply to the development of instruction for the Internet as to any other delivery medium, such as the classroom" (Anderson 180).

Online courses should be designed in a way that exploits all the available features of the technology and the Internet. That way, learners are encouraged to be more active in their studies and have more opportunities for developing technical skills (Anderson 182). Hutton claims that the structure of both face-to-face and online courses is based on Berge's model of four roles the instructor plays: pedagogical, managerial, social and technical (8). When designing a course, the teacher should take into consideration if and how these roles are going to change. Hutton discovered that the technical and managerial roles in the online environment are not that different from those roles in the traditional classroom environment. The planning of the pedagogical and social roles in the online setting seems to be quite different from those roles in a traditional classroom setting. In the face-to-face environment, the instructor has control over the teaching-learning process, while in the online environment learners take a more active role. The social role in the online

environment includes promoting human interaction and forming a supportive learning environment that assures the learners they are a part of the group (Hutton 8).

One of the main features that show the difference in designing an online course and a face-to-face one is the time aspect. When creating an online course, the designer or the teacher can choose between a synchronous and asynchronous course. That choice is usually not possible in the design of the traditional face-to-face course. There should be various kinds of instruction in the online courses, such as audio and video lessons, along with a precise timetable. These are the key components of both the synchronous and asynchronous courses (Škoda and Luić 6452). Hutton claims the instructor should bring the learners together to introduce them to each other and create the feeling of belonging to a group (9).

Another key element of designing a course is assessment and feedback. In both the traditional and online courses, the learners' success is measured by formative and summative assessment. Learners should have a clear overview of the schedule of assignments, "the criteria for participation in classes as well as the ways of monitoring their participation" (Škoda and Luić 6453).

3.4 Teacher's Presence

The teacher's presence can be divided into verbal behaviours and non-verbal behaviours. Verbal behaviours are expressing viewpoints, giving praise or feedback or even using humour during interaction, while non-verbal behaviours include gestures, facial expressions, eye contact or physical touch such as a pat on the shoulder. All of these behaviours positively affect learning, because they reduce the social and psychological distance between the instructor and the learners (Swan 11).

According to Škoda and Luić, the role of the teacher's presence in the online environment is not comparable with the role of their presence in the traditional classroom environment (6452). The authors claim that feedback on students' work as the key factor in the teacher's presence. "Since nonverbal communication is lacking, the teacher must be made available within a time frame known to students so that they can contact him or her and provide a quick and effective response to the tasks they have performed" (Škoda and Luić 6452). Because the teacher's social presence is lacking in asynchronous online learning environments, this form of education is seen by some theorists as "less capable of supporting learning" (Swan 12).

There are many categorizations of the roles through which instructors project their social presence in courses. Such categorizations include a range of roles and functions, such as: social role, pedagogical role, managerial or organizational role, technical role, intellectual role (Swan 12), cognitive role, disciplinary role, evaluative role, gatekeeper role, affective role (Coppola et al. 172). Communication is the base factor of all of these roles, whether it is verbal or non-verbal. In an asynchronous online environment, spoken communication is shifted to written or to one-way communication (in recorded lessons), which could be problematic for enacting all necessary roles (Coppola et al. 172).

4. FORMS OF ONLINE LESSONS

With the invention and implementation of the World Wide Web, online education came to life and created new pedagogical models (Harasim 42). Various technologies ranging from computers to smartphones are proven to be useful vehicles for language learning (van den Berghe et al. 259-260). Offering accessibility and flexibility, computers and online technologies are becoming popular among all educational institutions (Goertler 74). Integrating these technologies into language learning more and more every day brings opportunities to use forms of language learning not commonly used in traditional lessons (van den Berghe et al. 259-260).

Updating and extending language learning and teaching by utilising appropriate technology seems an excellent opportunity. Nevertheless, with every argument supporting online courses there are questions of whether it is of equal quality as conventional classroom education. Living in rural areas, not being able to commute to classes, having various time restrictions or even physical disability makes attending conventional classroom education difficult or perhaps even impossible for some students. Online courses allow individuals, who are not able to attend conventional face-to-face courses, access to those courses. Having an option to attend courses online can also benefit individuals who have many family or work responsibilities (O'Donoghue et al. 64). Online instruction comes in various modes, and each of these modes has their own strengths and limitations (Richardson et al. 36).

King et al. have divided distance education into two major categories: asynchronous and synchronous distance education (11-12). On the other hand, Fadde and Vu differentiate between four modes of online teaching (in Richardson et al. 36). Next to asynchronous and synchronous distance education, they add blended learning and blended online learning.

All of these forms have been positively or negatively assessed by a number of authors (Fadde and Vu 35).

Delivery Mode	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**
Asynchronous	- Learner access independent of Time and Place - Organization of content - Critical thinking in discussion forums (High efficiency)	- Lack of spontaneous interaction - Lack of immediate feedback (Low engagement)
Synchronous	- Learner access independent of place - Some F2F presence (audio and video) - Permanence (can be recorded) - Classroom-type technology (Higher engagement than asynchronous, lower than F2F)	- Requires meeting at the same time - Depends on learners' computer equipment and connection - Requires skill to run meetings (Lower efficiency than asynchronous, higher efficiency than F2F)
Blended learning	- Learner access partially independent of time and place - Technology aids to support live meetings	- Can lead to excessive work for learners and instructor

	- F2F allows for personal responses and relations (High engagement, high effectiveness)	- Still requires on-campus participation (Low efficiency)
Blended online learning	- Learner access independent of place - Adds presence in synchronous learning - Spontaneous thinking in synchronous learning - Critical thinking on asynchronous discussion forums (more engaging than asynchronous alone)	- Partially dependent on time - Susceptible to technical difficulties - Needs an event producer - May reinforce direct instruction methods (less efficient than asynchronous alone)

Table 4.1 Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of Online and Blended Learning Modes (Fadde and Vu 35-36 in Richardson et al.)

4.1 Synchronous Online Learning

Synchronous distance education allows real-time face-to-face interaction between a learner and a teacher. It is determined by time, but not by place. This means that both sides (student and teacher) have to be in the virtual classroom at the same time, but their geographical placement is irrelevant. As examples of this form of education, the authors mention various forms of teleconferencing and online chats (King et al 11-12).

Synchronous online learning requires that both the instructor and learners are online at the same time, but one of the major advantages is it is not necessary for them to be at the same

place. This mode of instruction is very similar to conventional classroom instruction, as it involves face to face online presence and live interaction among all participants of the course. Additionally, synchronous lessons can be recorded and later revised if necessary (Richardson et al. 38).

To conduct successful lessons, teachers must make sure all the participants have access to the required materials. One of the key elements is having a functional and properly tested webcam and microphone on both sides: teachers and learners. More often than not, both devices used for participating in online lessons as well as the strength of the internet connection vary greatly. This might lead to disruption of the online lesson, causing the teacher to spend too much time on solving problems. In addition to being perceived as technical support by learners, teachers also have to pay attention to learners' questions or comments in the chat section, notice if learners have problems or are raising hands digitally or otherwise (Richardson et al. 39).

4.2 Asynchronous Online Learning

Contrary to synchronous, asynchronous distance education is neither determined by time nor place. In other words, it is not necessary for the two sides participating in this form of education to be present in the virtual classroom at the same time and/or place, for instance: web-based instruction, e-mail or various correspondence courses (King et al 11-12).

One of the main strengths of asynchronous online instruction is convenience. Learners have a higher level of control regarding the time and place they wish to access the course materials. What is more, the materials for this form of online instruction are structured, and assignments and grades are well managed. This makes it possible for the learners to engage only with materials they are not yet familiar with and only scan or even skip those they already know (Richardson et al. 36).

Educators in asynchronous online courses are often confronted with the question of content delivery. Pre-recording lectures for delayed viewing, making and using PowerPoint slides or simply writing and drawing on the board leaves many educators dissatisfied, as this does not allow for immediate feedback from and to learners. As there is no spontaneous interaction or immediate feedback, there is a greater possibility of low engagement from the learners (Richardson et al. 37). One of the main challenges is shaping social presence. The geographical isolation between all the participants of the course creates a social distance between them, which is more difficult to overcome than in a conventional classroom setting. Communication, knowledge and information exchange, as well as nurturing a sense of belonging to the group are the key factors to implementing strong social presence from all participants. This is an especially large problem in asynchronous online environments due to delayed learning (Richardson et al. 3).

4.3 Blended Learning

The term blended learning is used to describe the mode of learning that combines conventional classroom learning with asynchronous learning. It was originally designed to reduce the number of conventional classroom lessons in order to increase the number of enrolments (Richardson et al. 39). This form of learning offers the availability of asynchronous learning and the social presence of both teachers and students typical for the classroom setting (Richardson et al. 34).

A lot of the research for both the advantages and disadvantages of blended learning comes from the research on asynchronous online courses. The asynchronous discussion boards used in blended learning are used by students between their conventional classroom meetings encouraging critical thinking at students' own convenience (Richardson et al. 40).

Despite being potentially more effective and engaging than conventional classroom learning alone, the efficiency of blended learning greatly rests on how it is constructed. Simply adding asynchronous activities to courses that were not originally meant to include those can lower the efficiency of blended learning. Re-designing the course, however, to fit the asynchronous activities into conventional classroom learning helps in reaching the targeted efficiency, but it imposes a great amount of additional work for instructors as well as students (Richardson et al. 40).

4.4 Blended Online Learning

Blended online learning combines asynchronous online learning and synchronous online learning. It is different from blended learning in that it is completely online. Furthermore, it does not add asynchronous learning to synchronous face-to-face learning, but the other way around. In blended online learning, asynchronous learning is dominant and synchronous online learning is being added to it (Richardson et al. 41).

One of the most obvious advantages of blended online learning is being able to evaluate the benefits and challenges of asynchronous, synchronous and blended learning. Adding synchronous learning to the dominant asynchronous one overcomes the drawbacks of having asynchronous learning alone. Specifically, blended online learning does not have to address the problem of the lacking social presence. This form of learning allows instructors an easier transition into the world of online learning, as it allows for adjusting conventional classroom materials to online forms. Not only does blended online learning overcome the issues asynchronous learning faces, but it also confronts the issues of synchronous learning. In the case of technical disruption, the content can be uploaded and presented through asynchronous platforms. The possibility of learning the content with no geographical limitations is one of the advantages blended online learning has over blended learning.

Blended learning requires students to be in the classroom for some of the sessions, whereas blended online learning allows participants to attend a lesson from the comfort of their own home (Richardson et al. 41).

Given that this form of learning is completely online, one of the key challenges blended online learning faces is appropriate pedagogical training, suitable equipment and technical support. Furthermore, the instructors experience plays an important role in managing effective online courses. The instructors who have little experience in performing online teaching tend to translate conventional classroom materials into online materials. This means that they tend to use synchronous learning more than asynchronous and have trouble deciding which of the two to use for which activities (Richardson et al. 41-42).

4.5 Hybrid Synchronous Instruction

Hybrid instruction combines elements of in-person and online learning (Ndon 3). In other words, a course is being taught simultaneously face-to-face in a traditional classroom and in an online one (Parker White et al. 34). This form of instruction allows students to attend a class either in a conventional classroom or via the Internet. The schedule of attendance can be determined either by students themselves or it can be prescribed by the instructor (Ndon 3). Some of the main reasons for using hybrid synchronous courses are the lack of physical space in educational facilities, learners' inability to attend a class due to illness or other restrictions, but also as an alternative in case of a pandemic or other catastrophic event (Parker White et al. 35).

Hybrid synchronous instruction combines the benefits of face-to-face and online instruction. Much like the other online learning variations, hybrid learning also provides flexibility of location for students. Of all the variations, this form is the most similar to conventional classroom setting in that it actually happens in a conventional classroom,

allowing for more frequent social interactions than asynchronous online classes. Unlike conventional classroom courses it allows a higher number of enrolments without the need for physical space (Romero-Hall and Vicentini 142). In the analysis of the study they conducted, Parker White et al. mention some of the advantages they noticed during hybrid synchronous courses: “The advantages of the tools and methodologies were ease of use, increased class participation, and additional learning resources” (39). The materials of their classes were archived for learners to be able to review them in the future. The authors also mention that the online platform they used kept learners focus on the materials rather on the challenging technology (Parker White et al. 39).

The obstacles frequently encountered in hybrid synchronous courses are usually related to the integration of multimedia tools (Parker White et al. 39). Studies show there is a negative impact of the technology limitations, such as the lag time of the video and audio, causing the learners to miss important information from the instructor. Another problem that occurs in hybrid synchronous instruction is the form of social interaction: difficulties working in a group or in pairs, missing classmates’ social cues, inability to create new relationships (Romero-Hall and Vicentini 142). The interaction patterns typical for in-class lessons do not occur as naturally in the online environment which creates a distance between the face-to-face and distance group taking part in the same hybrid synchronous class. Hybrid synchronous courses cannot function properly unless the equipment works properly. Functional hardware as well as an adequate internet connection are needed to create a proper basis for interaction and a feeling of equality between the learners (Romero-Hall and Vicentini 153-154).

5. ONLINE TEACHING APPROACHES

Nowadays all sorts of educators such as teachers, instructors and trainers are faced with a challenge that is the internet. Adopting the internet as a useful tool in language learning means that the educators have to reassess their teaching methods. This is why Harasim claims a new theory of learning needs to be created – a theory that would fit the requirements of the modern educating world (3). It has been argued by many theorists that online learning is only a part of general learning, which is why it is expected that certain issues will emerge in an online environment (Anderson 46-47). Anderson believes forming an educational theory within the online framework is important because it provides us with opportunities to visualize new settings, organize our time and resources efficiently, and allows us to build on the existing knowledge and plan on.

Bransford et al. explain that forming a learning theory does not guarantee a bulletproof learning environment design, yet they claim the learning environment should rest on a degree of learner-centredness, knowledge-centredness, assessment-centredness and community centredness (131). Looking into each of these concepts helps us to better understand the process of learning in order to apply it to online learning (Anderson 47).

5.1 Learner Centredness

Learners do not come to classrooms as clean slates but have already gained some knowledge in their previous education or in real life. The degree of knowledge, skills and attitudes they bring to the educational environment has to be taken into consideration when approaching teaching. Depending on the student and the content, these prior attributes can either benefit the acquisition of new knowledge or obstruct it. The goal is to detect those attributes in order to build on them using the right teaching approaches and methods (Bransford et al. 133-136).

The prerequisite knowledge and skills are important in an online learning environment as well. However, due to constraints brought by the computer hardware and software, detecting them in an online environment is far more demanding. Teachers either have a limited overview of the learners' body language, cultures and forms of expression or none at all. It is for this reason that teachers have to provide other opportunities for students to express their understanding, share their views and their culture (Anderson 47-48). To put it another way, teachers have to recognize the fact that learners form conclusions and acquire new knowledge based on their beliefs and cultural practices. Accepting that and recognizing learners' interests and abilities allows the teacher to adopt an approach that would incorporate these attributes as a base for further learning (Bransford et al. 136).

Keeping this in mind, it is clear that the online learning environment is somewhat more sensitive when it comes to learner-centredness. Learner-centred online settings require recognition of learners' computer and Internet skills as well as their ability to adapt to this form of learning (Anderson 48). Next to adjusting materials to fit the online context, teachers also have to anticipate possible difficulties learners might have with this form of content delivery. On the other hand, learners might become proactive in adapting to online classes (Khan 24).

5.2 Knowledge Centredness

In creating a functional member of society, having only the learner-centred environment is insufficient, because the abilities and knowledge the students have have to be supported by knowledge of strategic planning and learning. In the knowledge-centred contexts, learners are presented with ways of learning and understanding that will help them apply the new knowledge to their lives (Bransford et al. 136). Learners also need opportunities to experience the newly learnt ways of thinking in order to reflect upon it and bring it to an automotive level (Anderson 49). Knowledge-centred context is intertwined with the learner-centred one: the guidelines to understanding new knowledge have to rest on the learners' prerequisite attributes, otherwise, learners suffer gaps in their knowledge, which can cause even more harm in their future endeavours. The goal is to develop or improve learners' metacognitive thinking (Bransford et al. 136-137) to the point where they think, come to conclusions and apply new knowledge automatically. This is where a new challenge occurs: balancing the activities created for improving understanding and activities created for developing and improving automaticity. These activities should be "structured so that students are able to explore, explain, extend, and evaluate their progress" (Anderson 49).

Comparing knowledge-centredness in online learning to knowledge-centredness in a traditional classroom learning shows that it has some advantages and some disadvantages. In an online context, learners have plenty of resources they can research and learn from. Learners can find more information about the topic that interests them and can choose in which format or context to acquire it. But that exact plenteousness is what hinders or even threatens learners. Not always knowing if the information is up-to-date or even correct means that the e-teacher has to be rather skilful. For the online lessons to be knowledge-centred, it is essential to teach learners to properly filter content and information found online (Anderson 49).

5.3 Assessment Centredness

An important part of the equation for designing an effective learning environment is assessment. The understanding of assessment is twofold: assessment that involves feedback from teachers and students to improve their roles – formative assessment – and the assessment at the end of a unit or a set of activities to check progress – summative assessment (Bransford et al. 139-140). DiRanna et al. see formative assessment as the more important of the two, because it leads to a better summative assessment result (1). Teachers get feedback from learners and can, based on that, improve or modify their teaching methods and the curriculum in general. On the other hand, learners can analyse their learning tactics and progress (DiRanna et al. 2). This is not based only on the feedback they get from teachers, but also on the feedback they get from their peers (Anderson 49) as well as themselves (Bransford et al. 140). Being able to self-assess is one of the most important skills a learner can have (Bransford et al. 140).

More often than not, the teacher feedback includes only grades for various student work such as tests, homework etc. These represent summative assessment, and as soon as student get grades for one set of content, they move onto a new set, getting grades unrelated to the previously learnt content. Formative assessment improves that by providing the opportunity to revise or reuse both 'old' content and skills (Bransford et al. 140-141).

Depending on the type of the online course, there are fewer opportunities for teacher-learner and learner-learner interaction, which consequently means there are not as many opportunities to process (formative) assessment as in traditional classrooms. Some believe it is the teacher's role to create them, but this means the online teachers might be dangerously overwhelmed by the additional workload. To limit the teacher's direct impact some strategies and tools for formative and summative assessment have been developed,

such as computer-marked assessments, collaborative learning environments, social networks etc. (Anderson 50-51).

5.4 Community Centredness

In becoming a functional member of a community, we are being influenced by both our families and the community that surrounds us. As cultural and social creatures, we often learn best by being a part of a learning community (Anderson 51). The expression *community centred environment* can be used to talk about the classroom or the school as a community. The term can also include learners' and teachers' homes and families but also the entire nation or the world. The classroom and school communities largely reflect social norms and values but can also specify requirements of a particular school subject. Based on those norms and values, various teaching practices are formed in order to assess learners. Teachers form expectations for learners' success and failure and every once in a while, they try to mirror methods and activities of another school system expecting the same results. However, this can cause problems, because the two systems might not follow the same norms and values (Bransford et al.144-147).

On the other hand, school systems strive toward connecting the school curriculum with 'real life'. Considering that not all learning happens in school, it is important to design as many connections to the broader community as possible. The main learning environment outside school is the learner's family. As the source of primary socialization, the family provides resources for learning about the world outside the comfort of the home. It is the family that provides guidance and teaches attitudes toward institutions such as schools, businesses, etc. (Bransford et al. 147-148). Epstein and Sanders claim that through practices that are either a part of the school curriculum, or created by the families themselves, the learner's success tends to improve as the family becomes more involved in their education

(414). Being exposed to other institutions outside school and family not only prepares learners for sharing their knowledge and abilities with the world around them, but also prepares them for life after school. For this purpose, many technologies have been created and used in classrooms (Bransford et al. 149).

The social component in online learning offers many opportunities for creating a learning community due to its geographical potential. However, it might be challenging to create a proper learning community, due to lack of body language, learner attention and participation and social presence of both learners and teachers, especially in an asynchronous online learning environment (Anderson 51). The feeling of being isolated from one's peers might repel a learner from even starting an online course or at least doubt the quality of the course. Additionally, these initial concerns may affect the learner's final result. It is for that reason many experts highlight the importance of having interaction and social presence as key parts of any online programmes. Building online communities gives learners a sense of being connected with their peers. The sense of belonging gives the learners confidence and they may perform better (Ouzts 286).

6. ONLINE TEACHER PROFILE

The online pedagogical practices should reflect the teachers' needs for them to be able to form their online teacher persona. Despite the number of enrolments into online courses being on the rise, many teachers are still sceptical about the quality of these kinds of courses (Baran et al. 96). Nevertheless, the ever-expanding use of the Internet creates a sense of urgency to reform the education system and with it – the role of the teacher. In order to properly prepare learners for their future, one should think about what that future might hold, what kind of technologies will govern people's lives, what kind of jobs might be created. "The digital era will call for 'digital' teachers who must adapt to education in the future" (Ally 303). Even though many schools do evaluations of the teachers' digital literacy, this often covers only their administrative tasks. When it comes to their computer proficiency, teacher evaluation criteria should accommodate the "planning of technology integration and implementation" as well as its success (Kelly 41).

Along with the efforts to integrate technology into school curriculum, teachers are faced with certain difficulties (Kelly 40). Ertmer identifies two kinds of barriers that occur as teachers work to incorporate technology into their classrooms: external and internal (47). External barriers refer to the availability of computers and software as well as the support teachers get from their organisations (Ertmer 48). These are not controlled by the classroom teachers. Nevertheless, these barriers can be measured and, if necessary, the available resources can be rearranged in order to overcome them (Kelly 40). On the other hand, internal barriers include teacher's beliefs about the new form of teaching, their readiness to use computers and change or adjust their teaching methods and routines (Ertmer 48). These are the biggest threats and the greatest challenges to classroom technology incorporation. They are not easily detected by teachers themselves or by their students or

observers. In order to blend technology into classrooms or to replace traditional classrooms in a technological sense, it is essential that teachers believe it can be done properly and not let their fear of technology failure hinder them from this endeavour (Kelly 41). If the external barriers are not dealt with properly, they can cause frustration among teachers and deepen their negative beliefs in the use of technology. In other words, this situation can enhance internal barriers (Kelly 40).

6.1 Professional Development

Despite the ample availability of computers and other technology in schools, in planning a lesson these are often overlooked or simply ignored (Cuban et al. 821; Inan and Lowther 137). Based on the available empirical research, Inan and Lowther have discovered that the availability of technology does not significantly improve student achievement. This could be the result of lack of necessary skills for proper incorporation of technology into classrooms (137). Conducting a survey in two Californian schools, Cuban et al. stumbled upon this paradox and offered two explanations (821). The 'slow revolution' explanation suggests there is a time lag between any invention and its wider use. This implies that teachers will eventually use the available technology more (Cuban et al. 826). The second explanation refers to the issue of insufficient time. Teachers rarely have time to search for content online to include it into their lessons. With this explanation the authors also demonstrate why the lessons are often teacher-centred (Cuban et al. 828). To overcome those issues, teacher training has become one of the key factors for a successful technology integration. Mastering technological competences not only includes them knowing how to use technology, but more importantly, how to incorporate technology into lessons for pedagogical purposes (Almerich et al. 111-112).

6.1.1 Formal Professional Development

Many teachers say they do not feel educated or prepared enough to use computers or the Internet for their lessons. Despite them having technical skills, there is no guarantee these will be useful or adequate in a classroom. The teacher preparation programs taken by teachers-to-be should teach them both *how* and *why* they should use technology in an effective and meaningful way. Otherwise, the potential for successfully implementing technology and encouraging student learning could deteriorate (Ertmer et al. 95-96). Teacher training for online instruction is unavoidable. It is not enough to familiarize teachers with technology, because this results in confusion about what to do with all the technology and how to use it for pedagogical purposes. To become successful at online teaching, educators should first try online learning. “Many institutions advocate that their online teaching faculty initially enroll in an online course that teaches them how to develop online instruction” (Anderson 182). This way educators can experience online classes from a learner’s perspective and see which challenges they might face.

To keep up with the changes in the educational sector, many teachers engage in various courses or seminars (Macia and Garcia 292). To teach using technology means to learn how to use it by using it. This means that teacher training should be based on the same or similar technology they are supposed to use in their future teaching (Delfino and Persico 351). Realising that, many teacher training institutions have committed to preparing future teachers for technology integration: “delivering a single technology course; offering mini-workshops; integrating technology in all courses; modelling how to use technology” (Sang et al. 103). A number of skills used for teaching in traditional face-to-face classrooms needs to be ‘unlearnt’ and some new methods need to be implemented. In order to achieve quality online teaching, a certain amount of professional development is necessary (Anderson 182).

6.1.2 Informal Professional Development

Professional development can be sorted into three categories: craft, expert and interactive. Evolving professionally as a result of gaining experience from teaching in a classroom (the 'craft' model) or being trained by an expert teacher (the 'expert' model) are, according to Macia and Garcia incomplete models (292). The interactive model allows for the external sources to enter the classroom and, expanding the teacher's knowledge, create new insights and experiences from both teachers and learners. As such, the interactive model is the most complete one, because it includes the teacher's beliefs and knowledge, emerging from teacher collaboration or participation in training activities. It also promotes new practices in teaching and after experimenting with new teaching methods and activities and based on students' response and achievements, adjust or further develop those practices (Macia and Garcia 292). There has been a growing number of initiatives, both formal and informal, for educators to engage with each other and share knowledge, values, pedagogical methods relevant to teaching in a digital environment (Lantz- Andersson et al. 303).

Informal professional development can include a wide range of learning, such as everyday social interaction with peers, participating in knowledge exchange in teacher communities to self-directed learning by researching or enrolling into various courses (Macia and Garcia 292). "There is an increasing awareness of the educational potential of Facebook for teachers' informal professional learning" (Patahuddin and Logan 102). Facebook offers easily accessible and free professional development in the form of collaborative communities. This kind of professional development has the ability to overcome the shortcomings present in the traditional professional development courses. In the traditional professional development courses, the expert is pouring knowledge to passive listeners. In informal professional development efforts, teachers take on a more active role, choosing to improve the exact skill or expand their knowledge on a needed topic. "Within the plethora of Facebook teacher groups are thousands of educators creating hundreds of

discussion posts that address the spectrum of educational issues" (Rutherford 62). Providing many ongoing learning opportunities through discussions and collaboration, Facebook overcomes the brevity of formal professional development courses (Patahuddin and Logan 117). The studies conducted by Patahuddin and Logan (116-117), and Rutherford (68) prove that Facebook can be a useful tool for teachers developing professionally.

6.2 Technology Implementation Factors

The implementation of technology is not an easy process, especially if the structural or financial situation of an organisation is unsatisfactory and might pose a risk (Anderson 137). Factors, such as computer skills, computer confidence and beliefs about usefulness of computers, influence the use of technology in teaching practice. Not all teachers have the same technology competencies and the online teaching model should, therefore, be developed by engaging the teacher that will use that model. Literature suggests there is a significant correlation between teachers' beliefs and technology integration. What is more, the technology integration correlates with teachers' gender, age and also teaching experience (Mavroudi and Tsagari 1-2).

6.2.1 Culture

Culture is one of the key factors that influence technology implementation. Lin and Gorrell suggest the efficacy of technology implementation "may be culturally oriented and may need to be carefully examined and specified" when it is applied (631). Their study of pre-service teachers in Taiwan showed that culture and social values and experiences greatly influence and shape teacher beliefs and efficacy (Lin and Gorrell 631). Chai, Hong and Teo came to a similar conclusion: "culture may play an important mediating factor that

influences how teachers relate their beliefs to ICT use" (125). A study conducted among Chinese and US teachers shows that although teachers in each country have similar beliefs about teaching and learning, these beliefs are different from those in the other country. It is not certain whether the beliefs were shaped by shared assumptions about education or were created by experiences as students (Correa et al. 151). Understanding how culture shapes teachers' beliefs and how those influence the implementation of technology is of key importance for educational reforms (Chai, Hong and Teo 125).

6.2.2 Gender

With the rising importance of technology in education, understanding how gender roles influence its implementation is crucial for efficient learning processes (Huffman et al. 178). "Since the introduction of computers, ICT related activities have been viewed as a 'male domain'" (Sang et al. 104). Nonetheless, the literature researching gender differences in technology implementation shows conflicting findings. A survey by Huffman et al. comparing male and female technology self-efficacy showed higher ratings of male technology self-efficacy. Their research further explains that the gender roles have a greater impact on attitudes about technology than biological gender does (177). A study among Chinese student teachers did not show a significant correlation between gender and technology integration (Sang et al. 108). A survey among Canadian student teachers reported a similar outcome: "gender effects among well-educated college-age students may be becoming a rarity (Shapka and Ferrari 330). Teo also discovered there are no differences between male and female educators to computer attitudes (418). Almerich et al. explain that male teachers generally have a better command of technological resources than female teachers; however, these skills are better outside of pedagogical dimensions (118). With technology becoming an integral part of everyday life, quite a few researchers point out that the female teachers started to feel less anxious around computers. This

indicates that the gender impact should be re-examined (Sang et al. 104). The general perception that females are not as good at using technology as males, might have been a thing of the past. So and Swatman claim this belief to only be partially true now and possibly entirely untrue in the future (485).

6.2.3 Age and Teaching Experience

It is generally believed that younger people are better at using technology than older people. Having greater exposure to technology from early childhood, it is assumed that people born after 1980 are proficient in operating within the digital world (Guo et al. 236). It is therefore assumed that as "teachers' age and teaching experience increase, their computer proficiency decrease" (Inan and Lowther 148). Guo et al. conducted a study researching how age affects digital literacy and discovered there are no significant differences between younger and older teachers' digital literacy (251). Teo came to a similar conclusion: the study showed no significant relationship between age, gender and computer proficiency. On the other hand, the findings showed that how long one has been using a computer positively correlates with positive attitudes toward computers (420). The survey conducted by Almerich et al. has shown that younger teachers better master technological challenges. That same study discovered that the level of a teacher's knowledge positively correlates with their level of technological resources, but not as a part of the teacher's pedagogical competencies (118). So and Swatman explain that because young people are surrounded by technology from the first days of their lives, they are accustomed to it and thus prepared for its uses for educational purposes (486).

6.3 Teacher Competencies for Online Teaching

“First and primarily, an excellent e-teacher is an excellent teacher” (Anderson 290). Apart from having knowledge of their subject and will to deal with learners, they should have a wide set of teaching skills: be able to motivate learning through enthusiasm and engaging activities, understand the learning process of the specific learners in their groups (children or adults), adequately assess learning, etc. A successful online teacher should also possess certain technical skills. It is not necessary for teachers to be experts in using technology; however, to create a functional online environment, one must be able to use the necessary hardware, as well as access the necessary software in order to navigate through the unavoidable technical challenges (Anderson 290). Because in online courses teachers communicate with their students by using solely technological tools, teachers must learn how to use those tools in an effective manner. As opposed to traditional face-to-face instruction, having a good command of technology is crucial in an online environment (B. L. Moore-Adams et al. 334). The third quality a good online teacher should possess is “the type of resilience, innovativeness, and perseverance typical of all pioneers in unfamiliar terrain” (Anderson 290). It is not enough for a teacher to have pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge and technology knowledge as separate domains. In addition to that, they must understand how these domains interact with each other specifically and altogether (B. L. Moore-Adams et al. 334).

Williams conducted a study to determine which competencies an online educator should possess. This study highlights the value of interpersonal and communication competencies (54). These are considered by many as one of the most important skills for distant education (Williams 54; Thach and Murphy 61). Competencies are tightly related to roles. Roles consist of behaviour that is expected from a person occupying a certain position, while competencies are the characteristics that show how a person will behave, think and effectively fulfil a role (Egan and Akdere 89). Thach and Murphy conducted a survey among a range of experts (instructors, administrators, librarians, etc.). The study was divided in

two parts: in the first step, the participants needed to identify the key distance education roles, outputs and competencies. The second step was to gather those and send them back to participants to rate their importance. The highest rated competencies were: 1) engineering skills; 2) technology operation/repair skills; 3) planning skills; 4) content knowledge; 5) modelling of behaviour skills. Nonetheless, “the top five competencies used most frequently by all roles are: 1) Interpersonal Communication Skills; 2. English Proficiency; 3. Collaboration/Teamwork Skills; 4. Writing Skills; 5. Planning Skills” (Thach and Murphy 64-65).

6.4 Teacher Readiness for Online Education

In a review of seven studies that researched how ready educators were for online education, Phan and Dang discovered that teachers have relatively positive attitudes toward online education in all studies except in the newest one they included (7). This study was conducted by Glenda H. E. Gay. Gay’s study focused on online educators and revealed three e-readiness factors: technical, lifestyle and pedagogical readiness. The technology must be matched appropriately with the learning objectives, which is why technical readiness is of key importance for achieving wanted learning outcomes. Lifestyle readiness factors focus on the educator’s “expertise, the organizational culture, administrative instructions, and rules in the online environment” (Gay 205). Pedagogical readiness determines whether an educator possesses the necessary predispositions and skills to implement new technology or whether the educator prefers the traditional face-to-face settings.

7. EMPIRICAL PART

7.1 Purpose

The purpose of this research is to determine whether English teachers in Croatia feel prepared for teaching online and to what extent. The thesis also examines what kind of professional development provided the basis for their online teaching, but also whether teaching remotely was perceived as positive or negative. The research will also show if there are differences between educators in primary, secondary or private language schools, as well as differences between educators teaching in different counties. The thesis will test whether younger teachers are more prepared for teaching online than older teachers; if there are any significant differences in readiness for online teaching between genders or between teachers in different counties or any differences connected to the teacher's professional qualification. It will show how many English teachers have experience teaching online prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The thesis will also reveal what kind and if any professional development was undertaken by English teachers prior to having to switch to online teaching.

7.2 Methodology

7.2.1 Participants

The participants include English teachers from all primary and secondary state schools as well as private language schools in the three northernmost counties of Croatia: Međimurje county, Varaždin county and Koprivnica-Križevci county. An Excel spreadsheet list of schools and their official email addresses was made based on the official county websites and schools' official websites, respectively. Subject-specific schools, for the teaching of music, art or children with special needs were not included in the list. The survey was sent to 86 primary schools, 30 secondary schools and 11 private language schools via email with a request to forward it to their English teachers. The term *English teacher* refers to all personnel teaching English in a formal setting, either in primary, secondary or private language school, regardless of their qualifications for that position (native speaker, CEFR level, bachelor's, master's or PhD).

7.2.2 Survey

The survey was created via Google docs and consists of three parts. The first part refers to the biographical information of the participant, such as age, gender, experience in teaching English, etc. The second part is based on the survey conducted by Gay (209). Participant responses will be measured by a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree): a value of at least 4 indicates readiness. Gay's research focuses on the necessary attributes of an e-ready online instructor in order to determine how ready the survey's participants are individually and as a cohort. Given that this thesis' purpose is to determine e-readiness among north-Croatian teachers, the list of attributes Gay's survey is based on seems suitable to be used. The third part is reserved for any views the participants might

have on teaching online but which were not addressed by the survey questions. The questionnaire was sent out twice, due to the insufficient number of responses. After being sent out for the first time, it got 58 responses, and after the second time it got 42 more responses, bringing it to a round 100.

The analysis of the results below tests the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Factors such as age, gender, professional qualification influence the teacher's readiness for online teaching.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in readiness for online teaching between teachers in different counties.

Hypothesis 3: Few English teachers had experience teaching online prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hypothesis 4: There is little organised professional development to prepare teachers for online teaching.

Hypothesis 5: Teachers' technical readiness (TR) is higher than their pedagogical (PR) or lifestyle readiness (LR).

Hypothesis 6: Teachers technical (TR), pedagogical (PR) and lifestyle readiness (LR) are sufficient.

Hypothesis 7: Teachers do not feel prepared for teaching online.

7.3 Results and interpretation

7.3.1 Biographical description of the participants

The majority of the participants of this survey were female: there were 91 female and only 9 male participants. Almost half of the participants – 47 of them – were between 30 and 39 years old and about a third – 35 participants – were between 40 and 49 years old. 9 participants were between 50 and 59 years old. There were only 4 participants who marked their age as '29 or younger', and only 5 that belonged to the '60 or older' category (see figure 7.1).

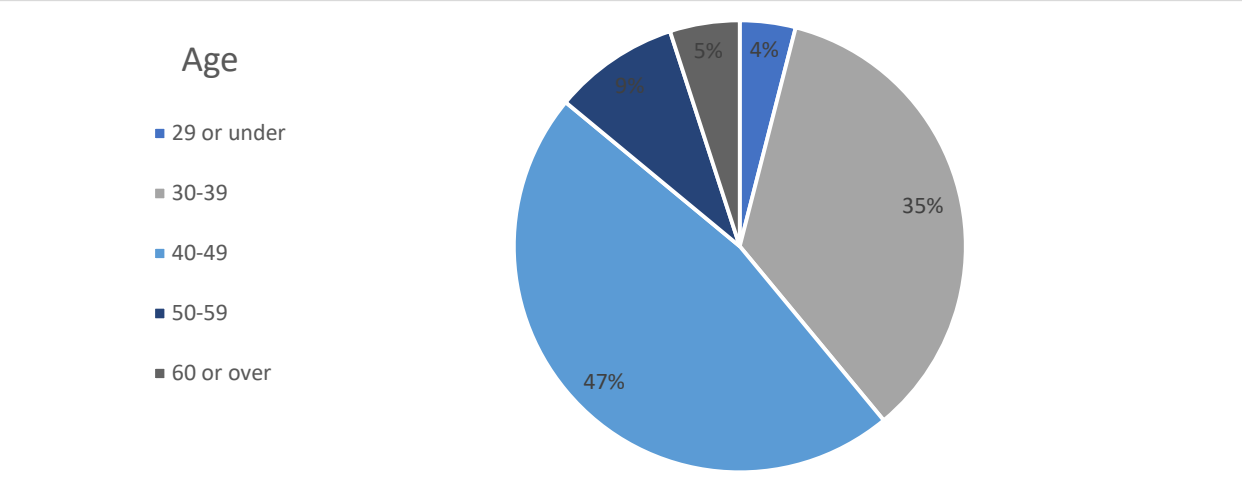

Fig. 7.1 Age of the survey participants

Out of 100 responses, 42 participants teach in Varaždin county, 29 in Međimurje county and 27 in Koprivnica-Križevci county. When asked about the county they teach in, the participants could have marked more than one county and were also offered an option to write down any other counties they might teach in. One of the participants marked they work in Međimurje county as well as Varaždin county and one participant works in Međimurje county and Koprivnica-Križevci county. There were 35 responses about other

counties; however, the analysis showed that none of the other Croatian counties were mentioned apart from the three the research was focused on (see figure 7.2).

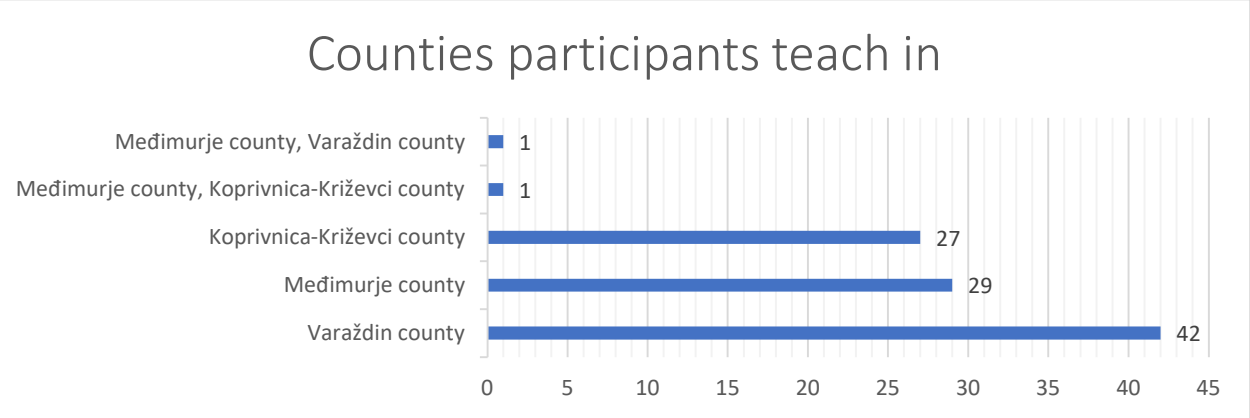

Fig. 7.2 Counties participants teach in

When asked about the professional qualifications that allow them to teach English, 67 participants marked Master's degree in English language and/or literature, 20 participants marked Bachelor's degree in English language and/or literature and only 4 marked they have the State licensure for teaching English. I suppose this was because participants could only choose one answer and perhaps were not completely sure what state licensure means. Out of the other 9 participants, three marked they have a CEFR C2 certificate, two have CEFR C1 and two CEFR B1 certificate. There was only one participant with a doctorate in English language and/or literature and one native English speaker (see figure 7.3).

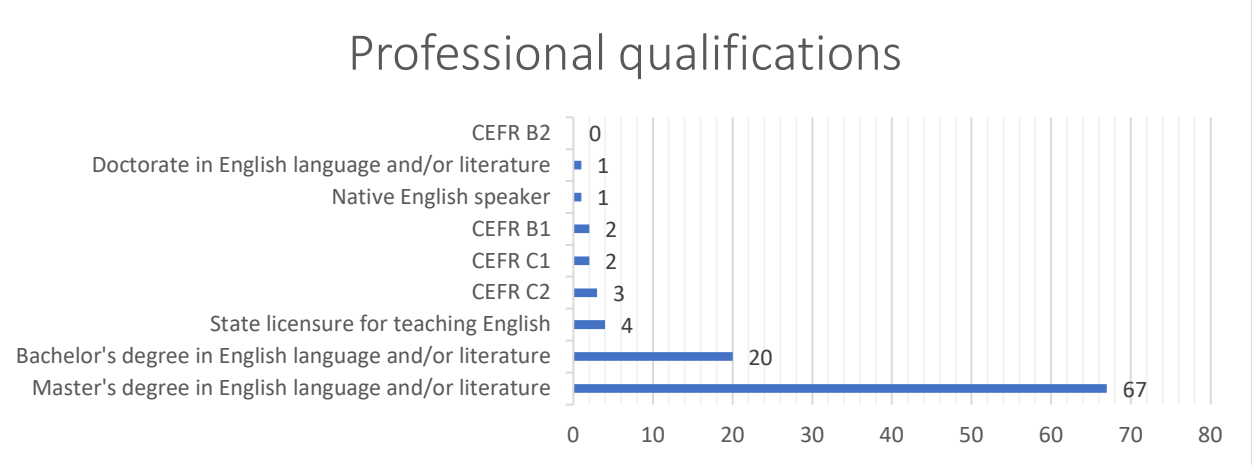

Fig. 7.3 Professional qualifications

In accordance with the number of primary schools, secondary schools and private language schools the questionnaire was sent to, it is not surprising that primary schools had the highest number of votes, and private language schools the lowest. 40 participants marked they work with primary school grades where the learner's age is 1-4, 49 participants marked they work with primary school grades where the learner's age is 5-8. Fifteen participants work in secondary schools with a grammar school curriculum and 34 participants work in secondary schools with a vocational school curriculum. Seven participants marked they work with private language school learners under the age of 7; seven participants work with private language school learners between 7 and 10 years old; six participants work with private language school learners between 11 and 14 years old; seven participants work with private language school learners between 15 and 19 years old; thirteen participants work with private language school adult learners. Only one participant marked the 'other' category and wrote they work in a university. Here, participants could have marked more than one answer and write any additional places of work that were not mentioned in this question; however, apart from the one mentioned above, all answers were simply lists of all the specific places the participants work at (mainly the names of schools), which is irrelevant to this survey (see figure 7.4).

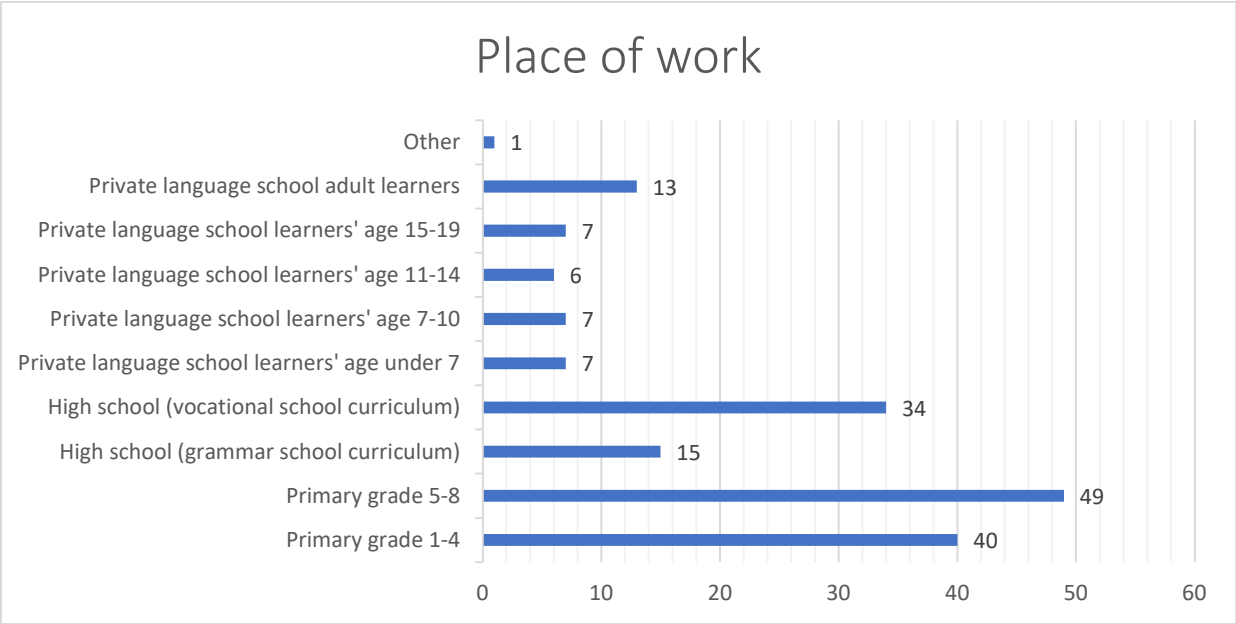

Fig. 7.4 Place of work

Participants were asked about their experience teaching English and their experience teaching online prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020). Out of 100 participants four responded they had been teaching English for under 2 years and four responded they had been teaching English for between 2 and 5 years. 34 participants had been teaching English between 6 and 15 years, 44 between 16 and 25 years, eleven between 26 and 35 years and only three for more than 36 years (see figure 7.5).

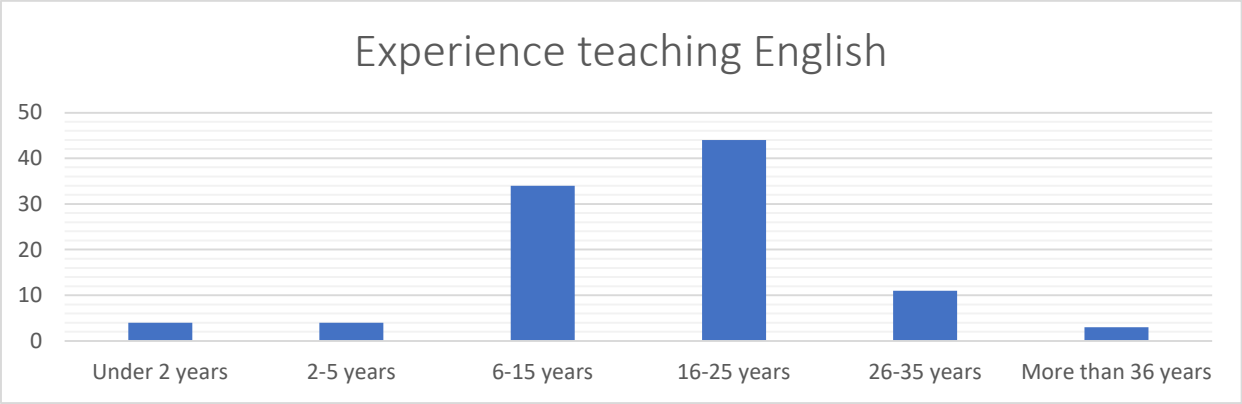

Fig. 7.5 Experience teaching English

Almost two thirds of the participants – 64 of them – had no experience teaching online prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020). Eleven participants responded their online teaching experience to be less than a year long, four participants had been teaching online between 2 and 5 years, thirteen participants between 6 and 15 years, five participants between 16 and 25 years and three participants between 26 and 35 years. There were no responses about having online teaching experience longer than 36 years (see figure 7.6).

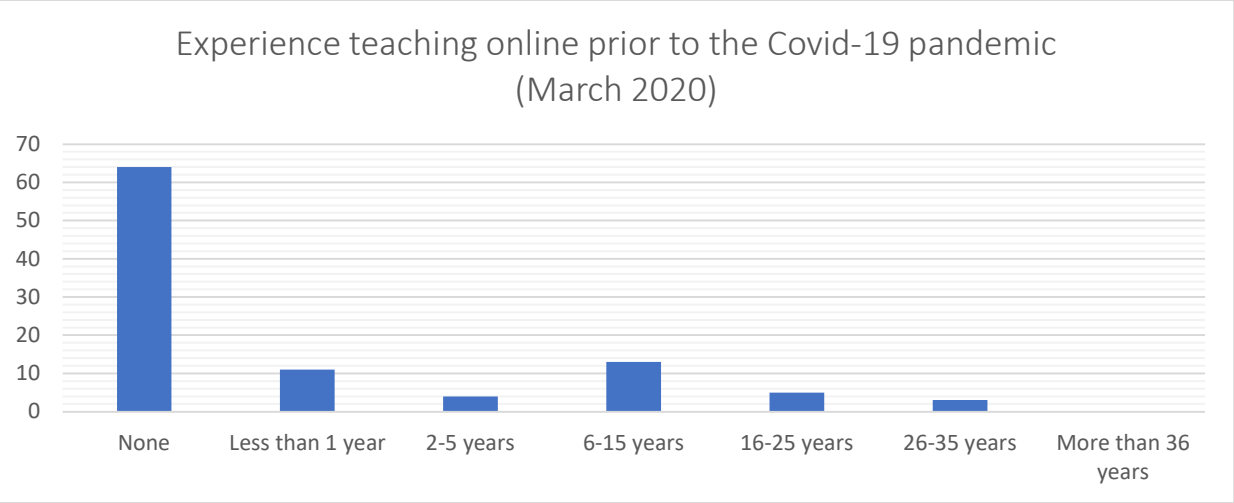

Fig. 7.6 Experience teaching online prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020)

When asked about the professional development they had taken part in, participants could mark more than one option. 66 participants responded that they had been offered formal online programs, courses or workshops by their employer or institution, but only 28 face-to-face programs, courses or workshops. 39 participants responded that they had privately enrolled into online programs, courses or workshops, and fifteen participants responded that they had privately enrolled into face-to-face programs, courses or workshops. 76 participants responded that they have a teacher study network where they exchanged ideas or advice with colleagues. 45 participants joined online discussions on forums and social media as their source of professional development for teaching online and 21 conducted their own research about it. 82 participants responded that their professional development for teaching online came from 'learning by doing'. Even though two participants marked the

option *other*, there were eighteen responses. The two participants' responses were: 'My younger co-worker's knowledge and experience' and 'On my own', which fit the options 'Teacher study network (ideas/advice exchange among colleagues)' and 'learning by doing', respectively. The first participant marked that option, but the second did not, which brings the category 'learning by doing' to 83 responses. Looking at this question from a standpoint of each participant, there were ten participants who marked only one of the options. Fifteen participants marked two options, 23 participants marked three options, eighteen participants marked four options, 22 participants marked five options, three participants marked six options, seven participants marked seven options and two participants marked eight options (see figure 7.7).

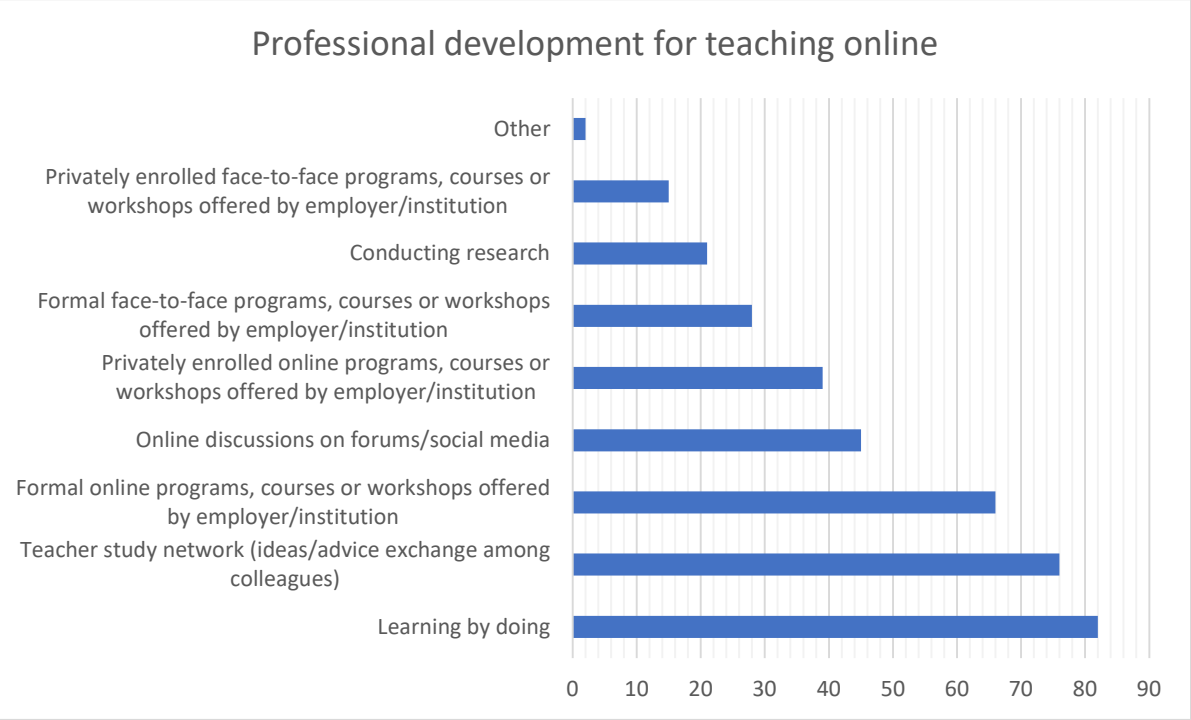

Fig. 7.7 Professional development for teaching online

Participants were asked to rate their general experience in teaching online by using a Likert scale (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree). With most of the statements, there is a somewhat clear agreement among the participants. To the statement 'My school/institution has been

offering plenty of resources to teach from home', 42 participants responded with neither agree nor disagree and 31 with agree. Two thirds of the participants agreed (47 participants) and strongly agreed (23) to having helpful co-workers when teaching from home. 37 participants strongly disagreed and 28 disagreed with the statement 'I did not find teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic stressful'. The statement 'My students were not very stressful while learning remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic' 27 participants marked they neither agree nor disagree, 23 disagreed, 21 strongly disagreed, 20 agreed and eight strongly disagreed.

Time management did not seem to present a problem for almost half of the participants: 40 of them agreed and 7 strongly agreed with the statement 'I could manage the time of my online lessons well', while 28 neither agreed nor disagreed. More than half of the participants disagreed (28) and strongly disagreed (3) with 'The level of knowledge gained through online education is similar to knowledge gained through traditional face-to-face education.' 27 participants neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement (see figure 7.8).

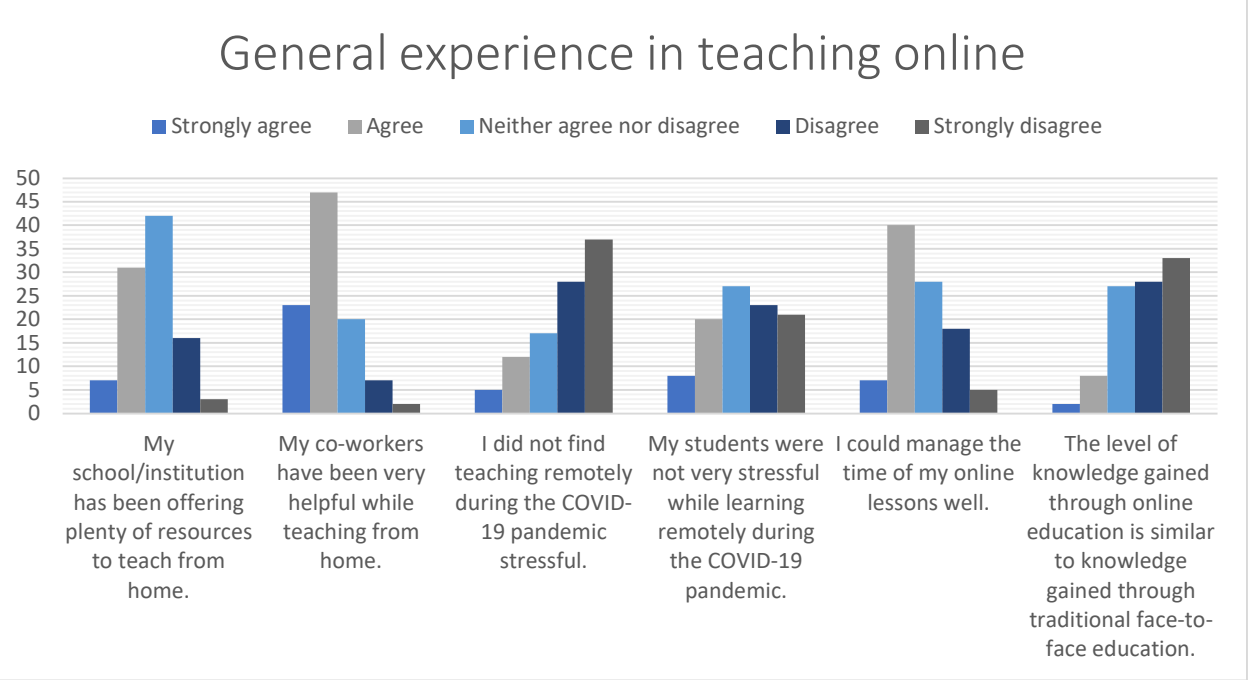

Fig. 7.8 General experience in teaching online

7.3.2 Literature-based questionnaire

The second part of the questionnaire showed the technical readiness (TR) of the participants to be on a high level. For all statements checking the technical readiness (TR), there was clear agreement between participants, with between 80 and 88 responses strongly agreeing or agreeing in all statements except for the fifth one. For the fifth statement '(TR5) I receive emails sent to my online campus email address even though it may not be my primary account' there were 69 responses strongly agreeing or agreeing and 26 responses neither agreeing nor disagreeing. This might be the result of not having a campus email address, but using a private one for both official/professional and private matters (see figure 7.9).

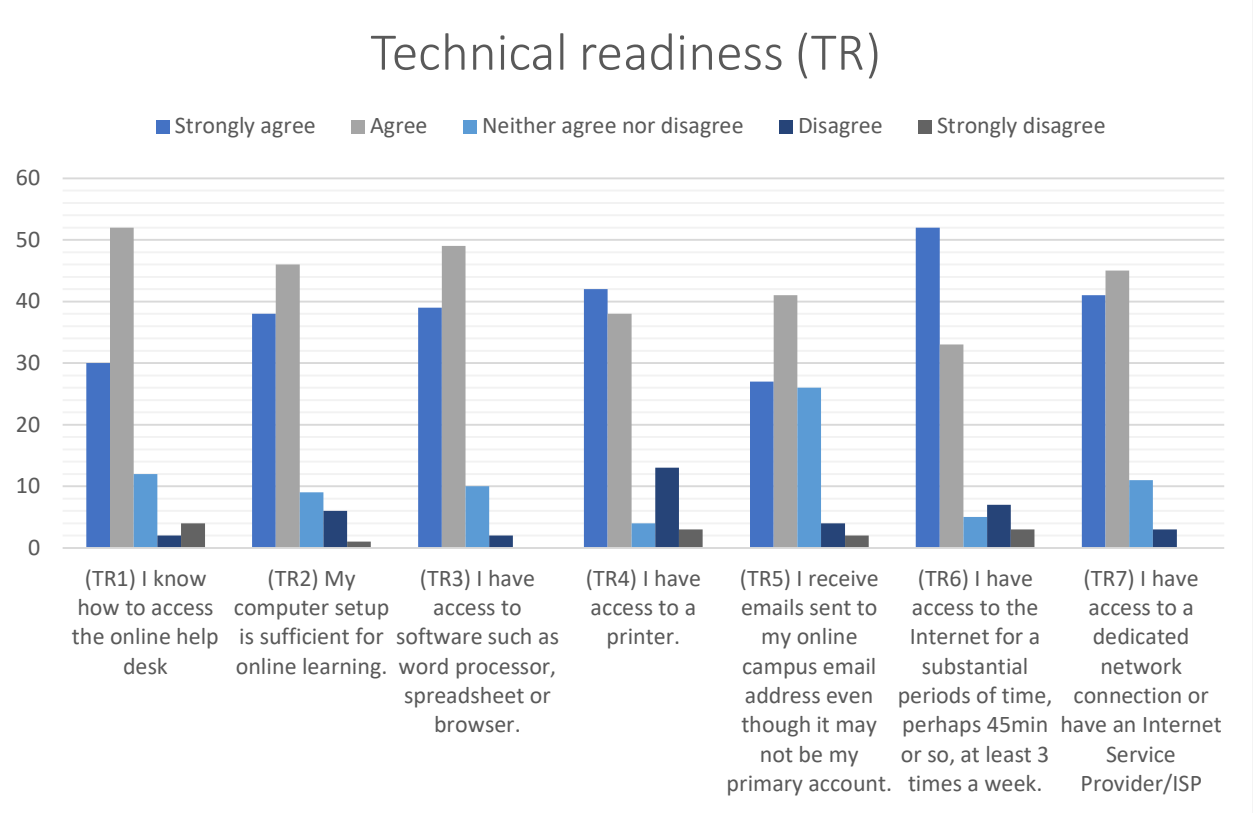

Fig. 7.9 Technical readiness (TR)

The lifestyle readiness seems to be high, but not as high as technical readiness. Out of five statements checking lifestyle readiness, the first three statements had between 64 and 86 responses strongly agreeing and agreeing. The fourth statement '(LR4) I have persons and/or resources nearby who will assist me with any technical problems I might have with my software applications as well as my computer hardware' had 49 responses strongly agreeing and agreeing, and 27 responses neither agreeing nor disagreeing. The fifth statement '(LR5) I value and/or need flexibility. For example, it is not convenient for me to come to campus three times a week to attend a traditional class' had 44 responses neither agreeing nor disagreeing (see figure 7.10).

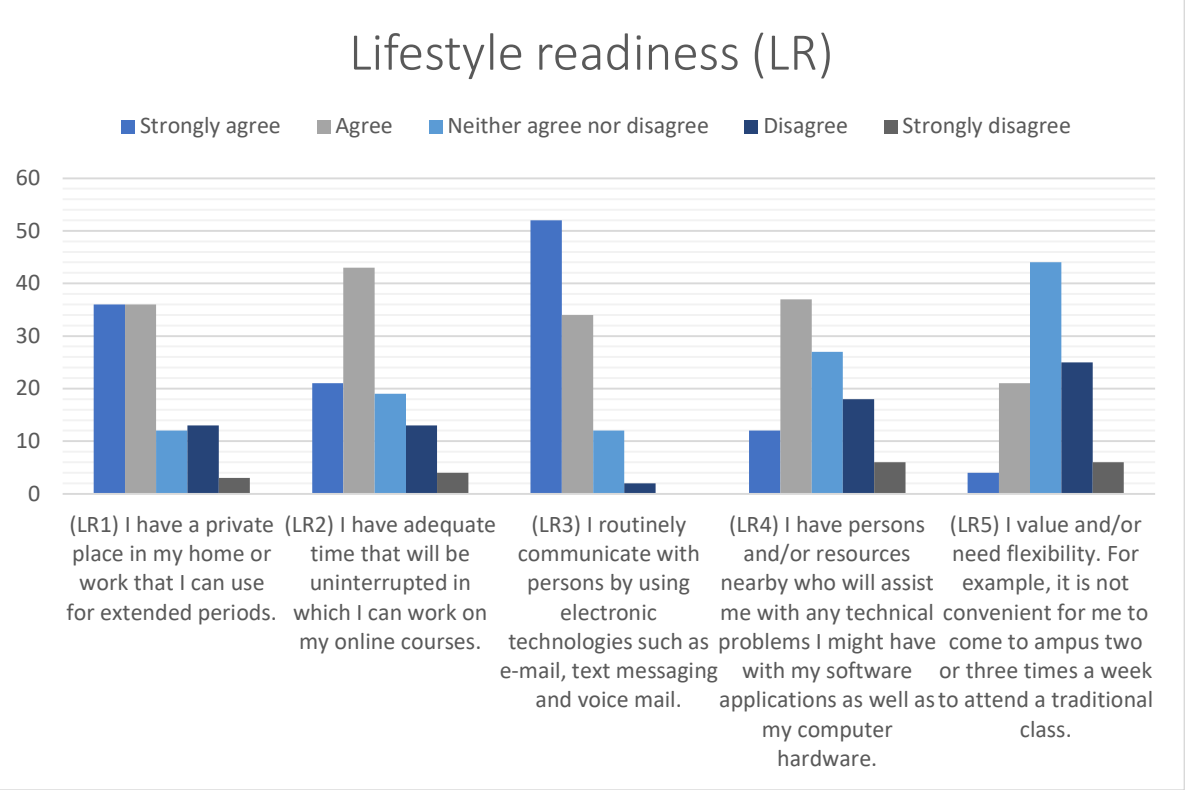

Fig. 7.10. Lifestyle readiness (LR)

The responses to the pedagogical readiness (PR) questions seem to be less uniform than the previous two readiness parts. Statements PR2 and PR6 have a clear peak in answers, with 85 and 75 participants agreeing and strongly agreeing with the statements. Statements PR1 and PR5 have 62 and 60 (strongly) agreeing responses, respectively, as well as 32 and 25 responses neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Statement PR3 has 41 agreeing and strongly agreeing responses, 31 neither agreeing nor disagreeing and 28 disagreeing and strongly disagreeing responses. Statement PR4 has 23 agreeing and strongly agreeing responses, 35 neither agreeing nor disagreeing and 42 disagreeing and strongly disagreeing responses (see figure 7.11).

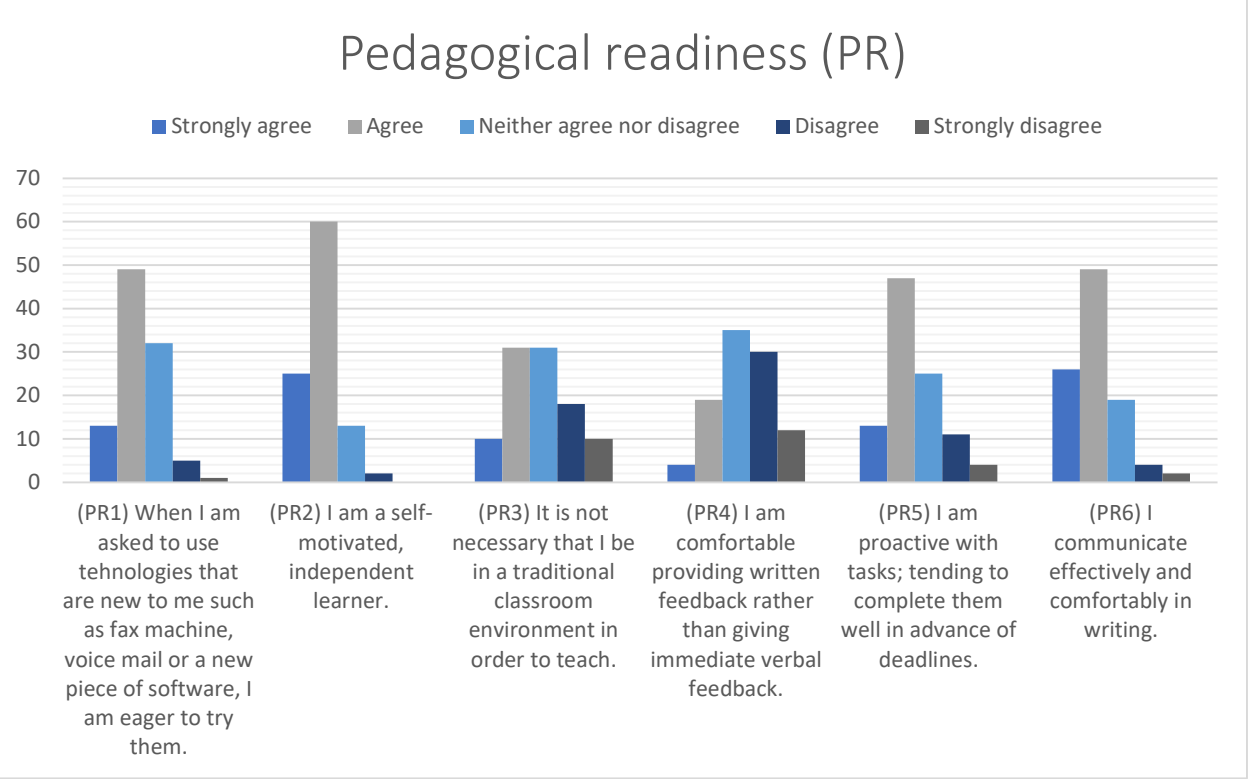

Fig. 7.11 Pedagogical readiness (PR)

In order to be able to compare results with those gathered by Gay (210), the data was coded: Strongly disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neither agree nor disagree=3, Agree=4, Strongly agree=5. The average value of each variable was then calculated (mean value), which allowed for a comparison between the three e-readiness types (see table 1). According to Gay, the minimum mean value derived for each of the readiness scales should be 4 for an online instructor to be considered e-ready. The level of e-teaching readiness for the cohort of Croatian teachers is 3,75. The average mean value of technical readiness (TR) is 4.11; however, one of the values on this scale was below 4: TR5=3.87. The total mean value of lifestyle readiness (LR) is 3.62. Only one variable has a mean value of above 4: LR3=4.36. The average mean value of the pedagogical readiness (PR) is 3.52. Similar to lifestyle readiness, only one variable has a mean value above 4: PR2=4.08. It seems that Croatian teachers have overall highest score in communicating with other people by using electronic

technologies, which is one of the lifestyle variables. Following that are the technical readiness variables, which show that Croatian teachers are e-ready when it comes to accessing software, the Internet and a dedicated network connection.

Variables	*Mean values*
TECHNICAL READINESS (TR)	
(TR1) I know how to access the online help desk.	4.02
(TR2) My computer setup is sufficient for online learning.	4.14
(TR3) I have access to software such as word processor, spreadsheet or browser.	4.25
(TR4) I have access to a printer.	4.03
(TR5) I receive emails sent to my online campus email address even though it may not be my primary account.	3.87
(TR6) I have access to the Internet for substantial periods of time, perhaps 45min or so, at least 3 times a week.	4.24
(TR7) I have access to a dedicated network connection or have an Internet Service Provider/ISP	4.24
AVERAGE	4.11
LIFESTYLE READINESS (LR)	
(LR1) I have a private place in my home or work and that I can use for extended periods.	3.89
(LR2) I have adequate time that will be uninterrupted in which I can work on my online courses.	3.64
(LR3) I routinely communicate with persons by using electronic technologies such as e-mail, text messaging and voice mail.	4.36

(LR4) I have persons and/or resources nearby who will assist me with any technical problems I might have with my software applications as well as my computer hardware.	3.31
(LR5) I value and/or need flexibility. For example, it is not convenient for me to come to campus two to three times a week to attend a traditional class.	2.92
AVERAGE	3.62
PEDAGOGICAL READINESS (PR)	
(PR1) When I am asked to use technologies that are new to me such as a fax machine, voice mail or a new piece of software, I am eager to try them.	3.68
(PR2) I am a self-motivated, independent learner.	4.08
(PR3) It is not necessary that I be in a traditional classroom environment in order to teach.	3.13
(PR4) I am comfortable providing written feedback rather than giving immediate verbal feedback.	2.73
(PR5) I am proactive with tasks; tending to complete them well in advance of deadlines.	3.54
(PR6) I communicate effectively and comfortably in writing.	3.93
AVERAGE	3.52
TOTAL AVERAGE	3.75

Table 7.1. e-readiness questionnaire (based on Gay)

7.3.3 Short answer questions

The third part of the questionnaire were short answer questions. In the first one, the participants graded their own readiness on a scale from 1 (not ready at all) to 5 (completely ready) and commented their choice of the grade. The second short answer question offered participants to share any additional views they might have on online teaching.

Analysing participants' responses in the first short answer question, it appears that most of the participants feel ready. There were only five participants that graded their readiness with 1 and only five that graded their readiness with 2. One participant graded their readiness with a 2.5. 33 participants graded their readiness with 3 and 36 with 4. Surprisingly, eighteen participants graded their readiness as complete, with grade 5 (see figure 7.12). Two participants did not provide a grade for their readiness, but only responded with a comment.

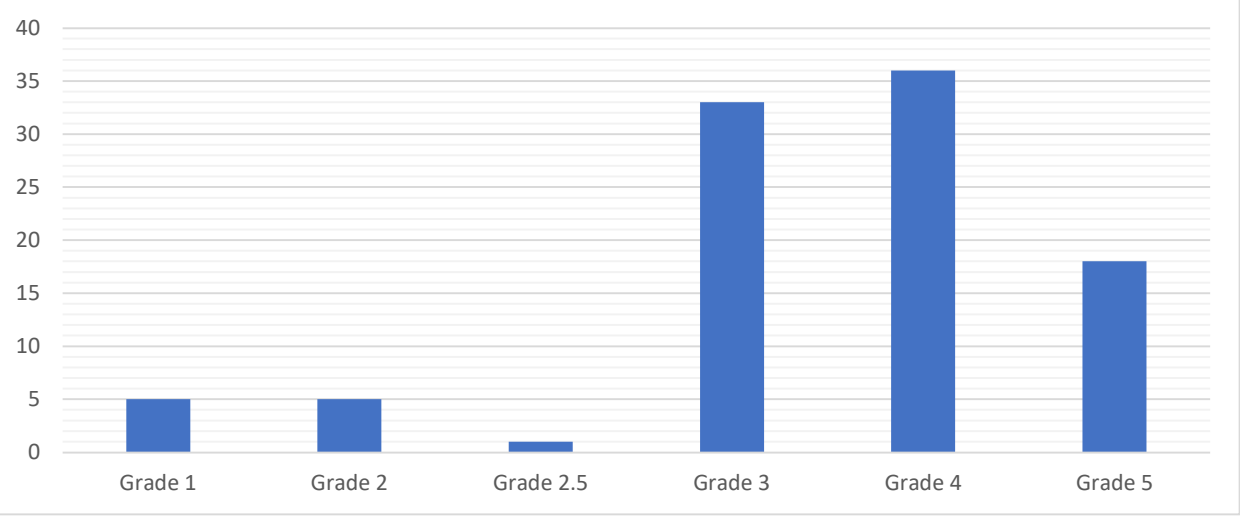

Fig. 7.12 Readiness grades

Not all participants gave an explanation to their grade of readiness to teach online. Out of those who chose to grade their readiness with 1, two provided an explanation: "haven't had a single means of help from anyone"; and "Young learners (1st-4th grade) cannot respond

independently and fully to online interactive teaching. They need social immediate interaction and constant face to face feedback to achieve their maximum". In the second short answer question, four out of these five participants expressed a negative view on online teaching, saying online teaching is a "crime towards children", "Kids cheat and do not experience such thing as real". One of these five participants had a rather neutral view: "From what I've noticed watching pupils learning online, as older and more mature they get, they become more responsible for it".

Out of five participants who graded their readiness with 2, only one provided an explanation for their grade saying they "do not have the appropriate place of work at home". Out of these five, four provided an answer to the second question commenting on both how suddenly online teaching was imposed, how it is "too stressful for both teachers and students", which shows that "the quality of online teaching has proven to be well below that of the usual face-to-face teaching".

Out of 33 participants who graded their readiness with 3, fifteen provided an explanation for their grade. Eight of those fifteen participants explain that they still prefer face-to-face environments for teaching English, because "teaching in school is much more effective due to uninterrupted lectures and feedback", they "feel more comfortable seeing and teaching students face-to-face" and "would rather use online teaching as backup". Three participants commented that their grade shows there is room for improvement, namely: "I could learn more about using online tools", "there are a lot of things I could improve" and "I do need extra courses and trainings". Three participants clarify their grade as being the result of students' lack of readiness to be educated in an online environment due to "their home circumstances" or lack of computer knowledge. Out of 33 participants who graded their readiness with 3, seven did not have any additional comments, either skipping the question or simply writing: "Everything's been said already". In the second question where the participants shared any other views they might have had on online teaching, nineteen out of 33 participants expressed negative views on online teaching, saying it is not for them:

“Online teaching was something we were forced to do, but we all hope it will stay behind us”. Some of these participants expressed concerns about online teaching not being as effective as face-to-face teaching due to it being stressful for both the students and teachers as well as lacking motivation. Moreover, the opinion shared by some participants is that “only few (the best) students can benefit from it”. Nonetheless, there were some participants who thought it is a great alternative to face-to-face teaching: “It is a necessary evil”. There was also one positive comment: “You get used to it, it has its advantages. It’s not as difficult, unnatural or impossible to do as a lot of teachers think/say.”

Out of 36 participants that graded their readiness with 4, twenty provided a comment on why they chose that grade. About half of them wrote they have learnt a lot, but there it always room for improvement. One of the participants was eager to return back to work from her maternity leave. A few participants expressed they had found “what works best in [their] virtual classroom[s]”. In the second question, only two participants did not share additional views they might have had on online teaching. Views expressed by these participants are mostly divided. On one hand, some participants feel negatively about online teaching, believing it is ineffective “It is very stressful for the students, and they haven’t adjusted to it” or causes too much work and stress: “Dear God, don’t let it happen again!”. On the other hand, there are some participants who believe online teaching is useful, but only as a temporary solution or addition to face-to-face lessons: “It can be useful, but not on regular basis”. There were also a few participants who expressed positive views on online teaching, claiming it is “giving you the chance to improve on different levels” and that it is “new and interesting”.

Out of eighteen participants that graded their readiness with 5, eight did not explain their choice of grade. Nine participants explained they have gained plenty of experience through online teaching: “I have done it for a substantial amount of time” and are skilful with technology: “I am a proficient user of technology including many programmes for teaching and assessing online”. One participant explained their grade with: “Students who work have

more flexible scheduling opportunities." This leads to the conclusion that the participant is working with adult learners and is not only appreciating the flexibility but managing to organize it into his/her schedule well. Eight out of eighteen participants did not have or share any views in the second question. Only one views online teaching negatively: "No matter how well you prepare your online lessons and quizzes, students will find a way to cheat and/or avoid doing work. In my experience, only a small percentage of students did actually work during online classes. Others just copied from them. Online teaching is a poor substitute for traditional classrooms." Five participants saw it only as a temporary solution: "Although I can teach and assess children online well, I believe it is not a natural environment for teaching and learning. It may be convenient in a situation such as covid, but not for a long time". Finally, some of the participants expressed positive views about online teaching: "I like working online: time and location flexibility"; "I am satisfied with it".

8. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1: Factors such as age, gender, professional qualification influence the teachers' readiness for online teaching.

According to Gay, the teachers' readiness for online teaching consists of three parts: technical readiness (TR), lifestyle readiness (LR) and pedagogical readiness (PR) (209). For a teacher to be fully ready to teach online, all variables forming each of the readiness scales have to be above 4. Cross-referencing these scales with age, gender and professional qualification reveals that these factors have various influence on teachers' e-readiness. Cross-referencing age groups with the three readiness scales showed that the youngest and the oldest group have highest technical readiness (TR), lifestyle readiness (LR) and pedagogical readiness (PR) scores. Meanwhile, the two age groups in the middle, which are also the biggest in the number of participants, have the lowest scores. Nonetheless, all age groups have the technical readiness (TR) score over 4, and only the '60 or over' age group has the lifestyle readiness (LR) score 4.00, while all other groups have a lower score than 4. It is not surprising for the youngest group to have the highest value on the technical readiness (TR) scale, since these participants more or less grew up using various technology. The second highest score – age group '60 or over' – was slightly surprising. It might be that when these teachers had to learn how to use new forms of technology every so often, that they have got used to adapting to it or it may simply be the case of living with a younger person who can help them with it more often. Cross-referencing gender with the three readiness scales revealed that both males and females are technically ready, but the technical readiness (TR) mean value of males is by .35 higher than females'. Although both lifestyle readiness (LR) and pedagogical readiness (PR) are insufficient in both categories, males have a slightly higher lifestyle readiness (LR) mean value score (by .09), but a lower

pedagogical readiness (PR) score (by .53). Stereotypically speaking, these scores are not surprising. It is generally believed that males are better with technology and females with children/students. That said, the difference in these results is not significant enough for those stereotypes to be confirmed. Finally, cross-referencing the professional qualification with e-readiness scales showed that participants with a Bachelor's degree in English language and/or literature, CEFR B1 or CEFR C1 certificates have insufficient mean value on all three e-readiness scales. Participants with a Master's degree in English language and/or literature, participants with a State licensure for teaching English and native speakers have sufficient technical readiness (TR) scores, but insufficient lifestyle readiness (LR) and pedagogical readiness (PR) scores. Participants with a CEFR C2 certificate or a Doctorate in English language and/or literature have sufficient mean values on technical readiness (TR) and lifestyle readiness (LR) scales, but insufficient on the pedagogical readiness (PR) scale. Certainly, one would expect for participants with higher professional education to have higher e-readiness mean value scores; however, there are differences in scores among all categories of professional qualification. It is possible that the official professional qualification does not portray the true knowledge and skills each of the participants possesses. Cross-referencing the age category, the gender category and the professional qualification category with e-readiness scales shows these three categories do influence the e-readiness scales to a certain extent, which proves this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in readiness for online teaching between teachers in different counties.

To prove or disprove this hypothesis, responses of the second part of the questionnaire had to be coded and analysed according to Gay (209) – for a readiness scale to be sufficient, the score needs to be above 4. By conducting a separate analysis of each separate county, we discovered that teachers from all three counties had sufficient technical readiness (TR), but insufficient lifestyle readiness (LR) and pedagogical readiness (PR). Comparing the technical readiness (TR) score, the Međimurje county has only one variable score slightly under 4,

while both Varaždin county and Koprivnica-Križevci county have two each. Consequently, Međimurje county's technical readiness (TR) mean value is by .12 higher than the technical readiness (TR) mean value of the Varaždin county, and by .19 higher than technical readiness (TR) mean value of Koprivica-Križevci county. Similarly, the lifestyle readiness (LR) mean value of Međimurje county is by .11 higher than that of Varaždin county and by .19 higher than that of Koprivnica-Križevci county. The pedagogical readiness (PR) mean value is similar in Varaždin county (3.56) and Međimurje county (3.55). The pedagogical readiness (PR) mean value in Koprivnica-Križevci county is lower than in the other two counties: 3.41. Although there are certain differences between counties, these do not seem significant enough and our hypothesis is, therefore, proven.

Hypothesis 3: Few English teachers had experience teaching online prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020) the online form of education was not commonly used in schools, especially in state schools. Therefore, assuming online teaching is a form of education that private language schools would have tried to incorporate into their language course offers, it was estimated only few teachers had had any experience teaching online prior to the pandemic. Expectedly, 64 participants expressed they have not had any experience in teaching online prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Eleven participants expressed their experience in teaching online to be less than a year long and four participants to have experience between 2 and 5 years long. Surprisingly, more than one fifth of participants expressed their experience in teaching online to be longer than 6 years. Comparing these results with participants' individual responses in the short answer questions, we could refute four answers in the '6-15 years' long experience category and four answers in the '16-25 years' long experience category. These participants had negative views on online education, have graded their readiness poorly and have exactly the same length of experience in teaching English and experience in teaching online. Excluding those eight responses, 28 participants have had some experience teaching online prior to the

pandemic, eleven of which were less than a year long. The seventeen participants claiming to have longer online teaching experience, make 17% of all respondents. This result is slightly higher than we expected; however, given that there were eleven private language schools included into this survey, it is not surprising. Accordingly, this hypothesis is neither proven nor disproven.

Hypothesis 4: There is little organised professional development to prepare teachers for online teaching.

In March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic started, many teachers were forced to implement online form of education into their everyday work. Due to this regulation being implemented overnight, we expected that not many teachers had any kind of formal professional development, but were instead left to handle it on their own. The nine categories in the professional development question can be divided into two groups: *Formally organised professional development* and *Individually organised professional development*. The *Formally organised professional development* includes the categories 'Formal online programs, courses or workshops offered by employer/institution' and 'Formal face-to-face programs, courses or workshops offered by employer/institution', with 66 and 28 responses, respectively. Upon closer examination of the responses, 41 participants took part in Formal online programs, courses or workshops offered by employer/institution, three in Formal face-to-face programs, courses or workshops offered by employer/institution and 25 in both. This means that, even though they had additional means of development, 69 participants had formally organised professional development. The *Individually organized professional development* includes all other categories from the professional development question. Despite the fact that the highest rated category in this question is 'Learning by doing', with 82 participants marking they have been learning how to teach by teaching online, it seems two thirds of the participants have also had formally organized professional development about online teaching. This disproves the fourth hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5: Teachers' technical readiness (TR) is higher than their pedagogical (PR) or lifestyle readiness (LR).

Gay's findings showed that technical readiness (TR) was higher than pedagogical readiness (PR) or lifestyle readiness (LR) of the teachers participating in that survey (210). Based on those results, we hypothesized that our participants' technical readiness (TR) would also be higher than their pedagogical (PR) or lifestyle readiness (LR). In order to prove or disprove this thesis, the responses needed to be coded. The results show that the average mean value (4.11) of the technical readiness (TR) is higher than both the average mean value (3.62) of the pedagogical readiness (PR) and the average mean value (3.52) of the lifestyle readiness (LR). Nowadays, being skilled with technology is not only important for online education, but for traditional face-to-face education as well. This might be the reason for sufficiently high technical readiness value. On the other hand, the readiness requirements for online and face-to-face education differ greatly, which is why these two e-readiness values are insufficient. This, therefore, proves our hypothesis.

Hypothesis 6: Teachers' technical (TR), pedagogical (PR) and lifestyle readiness (LR) are sufficient.

Due to the ever-changing rules and norms the teachers have to follow in order to satisfy both the student as well as the curriculum and the institution they work at, teachers seem to be a quick-to-adapt group of people. It is therefore assumed that having to teach online for almost two years, Croatian teachers have become used to it. This hypothesis tests if they have indeed integrated the online teaching process to the extent where they are ready on all three scales. According to Gay, in order for the online instructor to be ready for online teaching, the mean value of al variables needs to be higher than 4. The scale that comes closest to this value is the technical readiness (TR) scale with its mean value score of 4.11. This would mean that Croatian teachers are only sufficient in Technical readiness (TR). Both the lifestyle readiness (LR) and pedagogical readiness (PR) have their mean value scores

3.62 and 3.52, respectively. Despite these scores not being very low, the hypothesis is disproven.

Hypothesis 7: Teachers do not feel prepared for teaching online.

Based on the assumption that many teachers had to handle online teaching alone, without help from others, we assumed they do not feel ready for it. The short answer question asking participants to self-assess and grade their readiness to teach online showed a different result. 33 participants graded themselves as neither ready, nor unready (grade 3), 36 participants graded themselves as 'ready' (grade 4), and eighteen participants graded themselves as 'completely ready' (grade 5). Only ten participants self-assessed as not ready or not ready at all. Based on all other results, this is not surprising – teachers' have had various kinds of professional development, either formally or individually organized, and after almost two years of having to conduct online classes, they have gained some useful experience. This hypothesis is therefore disproven.

9. CONCLUSION

The aim of this master's thesis was to establish the degree to which north-Croatian teachers are prepared to teach online. The questionnaire, which consisted of three parts – biographical information, literature-based questions and short answer questions – was sent to primary and secondary state schools and private language schools, and was then distributed to English teachers teaching at those institutions. Based on a quantitative analysis of 100 responses to the survey we tested 7 hypotheses: H1: Factors such as age, gender, professional qualification influence the teachers' readiness for online teaching.; H2: There is no significant difference in readiness for online teaching between teachers in different counties.; H3: Few English teachers had experience teaching online prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.; H4: There is little organised professional development to prepare teachers for online teaching.; H5: Teachers' technical readiness (TR) is higher than their pedagogical (PR) or lifestyle readiness (LR).; H6: Teachers' technical (TR), pedagogical (PR) and lifestyle readiness (LR) are sufficient.; H7: Teachers do not feel prepared for teaching online. Ultimately, the first, second and fifth hypotheses were proven, the third hypothesis was neither proven nor disproven, and the fourth and sixth and seventh were disproven.

The first hypothesis questioned the correlation between age, gender and professional qualification on one hand and three-scale online teaching readiness on the other. The results show that age, gender and professional qualification do, in fact, influence the e-readiness scales. Various roles in teachers' lives, such as age, gender and professional qualifications, shape teachers into the educators they are and affect their readiness to undertake new challenges, such as online teaching. It was, therefore, unsurprising that the first hypothesis was proven. Although the assumption that young people are better prepared for online teaching was confirmed, the survey analysis revealed surprising results:

the second-best e-ready age category was the oldest category. On one hand, having technology embedded into young teachers' lives eases the implementation of it into education, whereas on the other hand, the need to adapt to constant changes made in education, apparently help older generations in implementing technology. Furthermore, the results revealed there are some differences in e-readiness between male and female teachers. Much like the research suggests, our survey results show somewhat conflicting findings. Expectedly, male teachers are more suited to technology, and female teachers are more suited to pedagogy, whereas both have similar scores relating to lifestyle readiness. According to Gay, on whose research we based the second part of our survey, to be ready for teaching online, one must be ready in all three scales (technical, lifestyle and pedagogical readiness). Based on that, both genders have sufficient technical readiness scores, however, their pedagogical and lifestyle scores are not sufficient. The third part of the first hypothesis tested the influence professional qualification has on teachers' e-readiness scales. Unsurprisingly, teachers with higher qualifications (Doctorate of Master's degree) seem to be better prepared for using technology and teachers with lower qualifications (Bachelor's degree and CEFR B1 certificates) appear to be the least prepared for online teaching pedagogy.

The second hypothesis tested the correlation between e-readiness and counties. Given that the three counties, that were included into this survey, are neighbouring counties, covering the northern-most part of Croatia, the hypothesis assumed there are no sufficient differences between their e-readiness scales. Although some differences were detected, they were not significant enough to disprove the hypothesis. Based on Gay's interpretation of the scores, we can conclude that the north-Croatian teachers have the same level of e-readiness. In line with these conclusions, further research should consider expanding the survey. It is possible greater differences would be revealed if more counties were involved into the survey, or if there were counties from south, east or west of the country. The fifth hypothesis, testing the e-readiness scales, is somewhat related to the second one. Despite

the minor differences between counties, the survey showed all three counties to have better technical readiness scores than lifestyle or pedagogical readiness scores – these results reflect Gay's results. What is more, according to Gay, the three counties tested sufficiently ready only on the technical readiness scale and insufficiently ready on the lifestyle and pedagogical readiness scale. Based on Gay's interpretation of the scores, we can conclude that the north-Croatian teachers are not adequately prepared for online teaching. Having sufficient scores on the technical readiness scales and insufficient on the lifestyle and pedagogical readiness scales, it is apparent certain measures need to be taken to increase teacher's e-readiness. Teachers need to be further educated about the pedagogy of online teaching in order to increase their pedagogical readiness scale. Due to the fact that it is less achievable to influence teachers' lifestyle, the institutions they work at can still offer assistance in conducting online lessons, such as a private place for uninterrupted lessons or software and hardware assistance.

Online education was not commonly mentioned as a form of education in Croatia, especially in primary and secondary state schools prior to March 2020, when it more or less became the only way of conducting or participating in lessons. As the COVID-19 pandemic started, essentially all education transferred online overnight, raising the question of prior experience in online teaching. The third hypothesis explored the potential experience in teaching online prior to the pandemic. About a quarter of participants claimed to have had online teaching experience, eleven of which for less than a year. Despite there being 17 participants with longer online teaching experience, this result is not significant enough to disprove the hypothesis, nor small enough to be disregarded. Assuming that online education is a form of education more commonly used in private language schools as a way to expand schools' offers, the results might simply reflect private language schools' business offers. Another explanation of these results are online platforms for freelance teachers seeking additional earnings.

The fourth hypothesis explored how many opportunities for professional development for online teaching the teachers have had. Due to the fact that the shift to online education happened instantaneously, teachers have had little time to prepare for conducting such lessons. The fourth hypothesis, therefore, assumes only few teachers to have had some form of professional development. Although the results showed that 82% of the participants learnt how to teach online by teaching online – namely trained themselves – 69% of the participants also marked they have had formally organized professional development. It seems that the institutions have promptly reacted to the new situation and offered opportunities for professional development. To better comprehend the implications of these results, future studies should focus on the effectiveness and usefulness of these forms of professional development. Further research of the undertaken professional development forms is needed to determine the causes of the lacking e-readiness scores.

The last two hypotheses showed conflicting results. On one hand, the results of the literature-based questionnaire showed teachers are not sufficiently e-ready, and on the other hand, the analysis of the short answer question results showed that teachers feel ready for teaching online. Although the scores of the e-readiness scales are not very low, based on Gay's interpretation, the scores are not high enough. These scores imply there is still room for improvement, which is what many teachers believe when describing their readiness. The literature-based questionnaire might serve as an objective scale for determining weaknesses in one's readiness for teaching online. It is possible that teachers feel ready simply because they do not know how to identify skills or knowledge in need of improvement in order to be better at online teaching. That said, if the questionnaire were to serve as an objective scheme for determining weaknesses that should be corrected, the questionnaire itself needs to be updated as well: there should be more segments to test each of the readiness scales, not only five to seven of them.

Overall, despite the organized professional development and the fact that teachers have learnt a lot in the last few years, it seems teachers need not only improve but rather adapt certain aspects of their teaching styles in order to be sufficiently equipped for online teaching. Although teachers are used to adapting to changes in education, having to conduct online lessons has turned their teaching styles upside-down. As long as teachers are being forced into online teaching, they should also be offered appropriate, efficient, implementable techniques for improving their pedagogical and lifestyle readiness.

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11. APPENDIX

11.1 Questionnaire

Part 1 – Biographical information

Gender

- Female
- Male

Age

- 29 or under
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or over

County you teach in

- ☐ Međimurje county
- ☐ Varaždin county
- ☐ Koprivnica-Križevci county
- ☐ Other (fill in below)

_____

Professional Qualification (mark the one that qualifies you to teach English)

- o Native English speaker
- o CEFR B1
- o CEFR B2
- o CEFR C1
- o CEFR C2
- o Bachelor's degree in English language and/or literature
- o Master's degree in English language and/or literature
- o Doctorate in English language and/or literature
- o State licensure for teaching English

Place of work (mark all that fit your positions)

- ☐ Primary school grade 1-4
- ☐ Primary school grade 5-8
- ☐ High school (grammar school curriculum)
- ☐ High school (vocational school curriculum)
- ☐ Private language school learner's age under 7
- ☐ Private language school learner's age 7-10
- ☐ Private language school learner's age 11-14
- ☐ Private language school learner's age 15-19
- ☐ Private language school adult learners
- ☐ Other (fill in below)

_____

Experience teaching English

- o Under 2 years
- o 2-5 years
- o 6-15 years

- o 16-25 years
- o 26-35 years
- o More than 36 years

Experience teaching online prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020)

- o None
- o Less than 1 year
- o 2-5 years
- o 6-15 years
- o 16-25 years
- o More than 36 years

Professional development for teaching online

- ☐ Formal online programs, courses or workshops offered by employer/institution
- ☐ Formal face-to-face programs, courses or workshops offered by employer/institution
- ☐ Privately enrolled online programs, courses or workshops
- ☐ Privately enrolled face-to-face programs, courses or workshops
- ☐ Teacher study network (ideas/advice exchange among colleagues)
- ☐ Online discussions on forums/social media
- ☐ Conducting research
- ☐ Learning by doing
- ☐ Other (fill in below)

_____

General Experience in teaching online

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My school/institution has been offering plenty of resources to teach from home.	○	○	○	○	○
My co-workers have been very helpful while teaching from home.	○	○	○	○	○
I did not find teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic stressful.	○	○	○	○	○
My students were not very stressful while learning remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.	○	○	○	○	○
I could manage the time of my online lessons well.	○	○	○	○	○
The level of knowledge gained through online education is similar to knowledge gained through traditional face-to-face education.	○	○	○	○	○

Part 2 – Questionnaire based on literature

Technical readiness (TR)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
(TR1) I know how to access the online help desk.	○	○	○	○	○
(TR2) My computer setup is sufficient for online learning.	○	○	○	○	○
(TR3) I have access to software such as word processor, spreadsheet or browser.	○	○	○	○	○
(TR4) I have access to a printer.	○	○	○	○	○
(TR5) I receive emails sent to my online campus email address even though it may not be my primary account.	○	○	○	○	○
(TR6) I have access to the Internet for substantial periods of time, perhaps 45min or so, at least 3 times a week.	○	○	○	○	○
(TR7) I have access to a dedicated network connection or have an Internet Service Provider/ISP	○	○	○	○	○

Lifestyle readiness (LR)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
(LR1) I have a private place in my home or work and that I can use for extended periods.	○	○	○	○	○
(LR2) I have adequate time that will be uninterrupted in which I can work on my online courses.	○	○	○	○	○
(LR3) I routinely communicate with persons by using electronic technologies such as e-mail, text messaging and voice mail.	○	○	○	○	○
(LR4) I have persons and/or resources nearby who will assist me with any technical problems I might have with my software applications as well as my computer hardware.	○	○	○	○	○
(LR5) I value and/or need flexibility. For example, it is not convenient for me to come to campus two to three times a week to attend a traditional class.	○	○	○	○	○

Pedagogical readiness (PR)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
(PR1) When I am asked to use technologies that are new to me such as a fax machine, voice mail or a new piece of software, I am eager to try them.	○	○	○	○	○
(PR2) I am a self-motivated, independent learner.	○	○	○	○	○
(PR3) It is not necessary that I be in a traditional classroom environment in order to teach.	○	○	○	○	○
(PR4) I am comfortable providing written feedback rather than giving immediate verbal feedback.	○	○	○	○	○
(PR5) I am proactive with tasks; tending to complete them well in advance of deadlines.	○	○	○	○	○
(PR6) I communicate effectively and comfortably in writing.	○	○	○	○	○

Part 3 – Short Answer Questions

On a scale from 1-5, how ready do you feel for teaching online (1=not ready at all, 5= completely ready) and why?

_____
_____
_____

Please share any other views you have on online teaching below:

_____
_____
_____

11.2 Coded responses to the second part of the questionnaire

Technical readiness (TR)

Technical readiness (TR) [(TR1) I know how to access the online help desk.]	Technical readiness (TR) [(TR2) My computer setup is sufficient for online learning.]	Technical readiness (TR) [(TR3) I have access to software such as word processor, spreadsheet or browser.]	Technical readiness (TR) [(TR4) I have access to a printer.]	Technical readiness (TR) [(TR5) I receive emails sent to my online campus email address even though it may not be my primary account.]	Technical readiness (TR) [(TR6) I have access to the Internet for substantial periods of time, perhaps 45min or so, at least 3 times a week.]	Technical readiness (TR) [(TR7) I have access to a dedicated network connection or have an Internet Service Provider/ISP]
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	5	5	5	4	5	5
4	3	4	3	3	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	3	4	4
4	3	4	4	5	2	3
4	5	5	2	5	2	4
3	4	3	4	4	4	4
4	2	4	4	4	4	4
1	1	2	2	3	3	3
3	4	4	4	5	5	5
4	5	5	5	5	5	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4	5	5	3	5	5
5	5	5	2	4	5	5
5	4	4	4	4	4	3
4	4	4	4	4	2	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4

2	5	5	5	3	5	5
5	4	3	4	3	3	3
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
3	2	3	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	5	4	2	3	5	5
5	5	4	2	4	2	4
5	5	4	5	3	5	5
4	4	5	5	3	5	3
3	4	5	5	5	4	5
3	4	4	4	3	4	4
4	5	5	1	4	4	4
4	3	5	5	2	5	5
5	5	4	5	5	5	4
4	4	3	4	4	4	4
4	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4	4	5	4	5	5
4	4	4	4	3	4	4
4	4	4	4	3	4	4
4	4	4	2	2	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	2	2	2	5	2
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	1	1	5
1	2	3	1	3	2	2
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
1	3	4	2	1	5	5
4	4	4	4	4	1	5
4	3	3	2	3	4	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	4	5	5
5	5	5	3	5	5	4
1	3	4	4	3	5	4
4	4	3	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	4	5	4
5	5	4	5	3	5	5

4	4	4	5	5	5	5
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
3	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4	4	5	4	5	5
4	4	4	2	4	5	5
4	4	5	3	4	5	4
4	4	5	5	3	3	3
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
5	5	5	4	4	4	4
5	5	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
5	5	5	5	4	5	4
5	4	4	4	3	4	4
4	4	4	2	4	5	4
2	5	4	5	5	5	5
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	5	5	5	4
4	2	4	4	2	5	4
3	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4	4	5	4	5	3
3	3	3	5	3	5	5
4	4	4	5	4	5	4
5	2	4	5	4	3	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
3	3	5	4	3	5	5
5	5	5	4	5	5	5
4	5	5	5	4	2	5
3	5	5	5	5	5	3
4	2	3	4	3	2	2
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	5	1	3	4	4
5	4	4	2	5	5	5

4	5	4	2	4	5	5
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
5	5	5	5	3	5	5
4	4	4	4	3	1	5
4	5	5	5	4	4	4
3	4	5	5	3	5	3
4.02	4.14	4.25	4.03	3.87	4.24	4.24
				TOTAL AVERAGE	4.11	

Lifestyle readiness (LR)

Lifestyle readiness (LR) [(LR1) I have a private place in my home or work and that I can use for extended periods.]	Lifestyle readiness (LR) [(LR2) I have adequate time that will be uninterrupted in which I can work on my online courses.]	Lifestyle readiness (LR) [(LR3) I routinely communicate with persons by using electronic technologies such as e-mail, text messaging and voice mail.]	Lifestyle readiness (LR) [(LR4) I have persons and/or resources nearby who will assist me with any technical problems I might have with my software applications as well as my computer hardware.]	Lifestyle readiness (LR) [(LR5) I value and/or need flexibility. For example, it is not convenient for me to come to campus two to three times a week to attend a traditional class.]
3	4	5	4	3
4	4	4	4	4
4	3	5	3	2
5	5	5	5	2
4	4	4	2	3
4	4	5	3	3
2	2	4	4	5
4	4	4	2	3
3	4	5	3	3

4	3	4	4	4
2	2	3	1	3
5	1	3	1	3
3	3	4	3	3
5	5	5	5	2
5	5	5	4	4
5	5	5	5	3
5	4	5	2	1
3	2	5	2	3
4	3	4	3	3
4	3	4	4	2
5	5	5	4	3
3	3	5	4	3
2	5	5	5	5
4	3	5	4	3
4	4	4	4	4
4	4	5	2	4
4	3	4	3	2
5	5	5	3	2
3	4	5	4	3
5	2	4	4	3
4	4	4	3	1
2	4	5	1	2
5	4	4	2	3
5	5	5	4	4
4	3	5	4	3
4	4	5	4	3
5	5	4	3	2
4	4	3	2	4
2	3	3	2	3
4	4	4	4	2
3	4	5	3	3
4	2	4	2	4
5	4	5	3	4
4	4	4	4	4
4	5	5	4	1
2	2	2	1	2

4	4	4	4	3
5	5	5	2	3
5	3	5	4	2
2	2	3	2	3
4	4	4	3	2
4	4	3	4	2
2	2	5	2	4
3	2	3	3	1
3	3	4	3	3
4	4	4	4	4
4	3	5	4	2
4	5	5	5	3
5	4	4	5	4
2	4	5	4	2
2	4	4	3	4
5	5	5	5	3
2	2	5	4	3
2	2	4	4	2
5	5	4	3	3
5	3	3	3	3
5	5	5	5	4
4	4	5	5	4
4	4	4	3	3
4	4	3	3	3
5	4	5	5	4
4	4	5	5	3
4	4	4	4	4
4	3	4	2	3
5	5	5	1	1
3	3	3	3	3
5	4	5	4	3
5	5	5	3	2
1	1	3	3	2
5	3	5	1	3
5	5	5	5	3
5	4	5	4	2
5	5	5	4	3

5	4	4	4	3
5	4	5	3	1
5	5	4	4	4
5	4	4	3	2
5	4	5	3	2
5	4	5	3	2
4	4	5	4	2
2	2	4	2	3
3	2	4	2	4
1	1	5	2	5
3	4	5	4	2
4	4	5	2	3
4	4	5	4	3
1	1	5	3	5
4	3	3	4	3
5	5	4	4	4
5	3	2	2	2
3.89	3.64	4.36	3.31	2.92
			TOTAL AVERAGE	3.62

Pedagogical readiness (PR)

Pedagogical readiness (PR) [(PR1) When I am asked to use technologies that are new to me such as a fax machine, voice mail or a new piece of software, I am eager to try them.]	Pedagogical readiness (PR) [(PR2) I am a self-motivated, independent learner.]	Pedagogical readiness (PR) [(PR3) It is not necessary that I be in a traditional classroom environment in order to teach.]	Pedagogical readiness (PR) [(PR4) I am comfortable providing written feedback rather than giving immediate verbal feedback.]	Pedagogical readiness (PR) [(PR5) I am proactive with tasks; tending to complete them well in advance of deadlines.]	Pedagogical readiness (PR) [(PR6) I communicate effectively and comfortably in writing.]
4	4	4	3	3	4

3	4	3	3	4	4
4	4	2	2	4	3
5	5	4	2	3	4
3	4	2	4	4	4
3	4	3	1	5	5
4	4	4	3	4	4
4	4	3	2	3	4
4	5	5	3	5	5
3	4	2	2	2	3
3	3	1	1	2	2
3	3	1	1	1	3
4	4	3	2	4	5
3	4	4	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	3	5
4	4	4	2	4	5
3	5	3	2	4	4
3	4	3	3	4	3
4	4	3	3	4	4
4	4	1	1	4	4
4	4	4	3	4	5
5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4	1	2	4	4
4	4	3	4	3	4
4	5	5	3	5	5
4	4	3	2	2	4
4	4	3	2	4	4
4	4	2	3	4	4
4	3	1	1	3	4
4	4	3	2	4	4
4	4	2	1	4	3
3	3	2	2	4	3
4	5	4	2	5	5
4	4	2	4	4	4
4	5	3	3	5	5
5	4	3	2	3	4
4	4	2	4	4	4

2	3	2	3	4	4
3	4	4	3	4	4
4	4	3	2	4	4
2	2	4	2	4	2
4	4	3	2	3	4
3	4	4	3	3	3
5	5	4	2	4	5
2	2	1	1	1	1
3	4	3	3	4	3
3	4	1	1	1	1
4	5	3	3	4	5
3	3	2	2	3	4
3	4	2	3	4	4
4	4	3	3	5	5
5	5	5	3	3	4
2	4	2	3	1	3
4	4	4	3	3	4
3	4	2	2	2	3
5	5	5	3	5	5
3	3	3	3	2	3
5	5	4	1	4	4
5	5	4	2	2	3
3	4	4	4	4	4
4	5	4	5	5	5
4	4	3	2	3	4
4	4	4	4	3	4
3	4	3	3	4	5
3	3	3	3	3	3
5	5	3	4	4	4
4	5	5	4	4	5
4	4	4	4	4	4
4	5	5	5	4	4
4	4	4	4	2	4
5	5	4	2	4	5
4	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	4	3	3	4
4	5	5	3	4	4

3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	2	4
4	4	4	3	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3
5	5	1	1	3	4
5	5	5	3	5	5
2	4	3	2	2	5
3	4	4	5	3	5
3	4	4	4	5	5
1	5	1	1	5	3
4	4	5	4	5	5
3	4	2	3	4	4
5	4	3	2	3	2
3	3	2	2	2	3
4	4	2	2	4	4
4	4	1	2	4	5
3	4	2	3	3	2
3	5	4	4	4	4
4	5	2	3	4	4
4	4	4	4	3	4
4	4	4	2	4	4
4	4	3	1	2	3
3	5	3	2	3	5
4	4	3	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3
3.68	4.08	3.13	2.73	3.54	3.93
			TOTAL AVERAGE		3.52

COHORT AVERAGE 3.75