BRITISH COUNCIL

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

# Variation in the Communicative Orientation of English for Academic Purposes Lessons in Synchronous Online and Face-to-Face Classrooms

by Duncan Ogilvie

British Council's Master's Dissertation Awards 2023
Commendation

University of Leeds

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

# Online Submission of Assessed Work

| | |
|---|---|
| Student Name | Duncan Ogilvie |
| Student ID number | 201504472 |
| Degree programme | MEd TESOL |
| Module code | EDUC 5 |
| Module title | Dissertation |
| Supervisor | Dr. Simon Green |
| Title | Variation in the Communicative Orientation of English for Academic Purposes Lessons in Synchronous Online and Face-to-Face Classrooms |
| Word count | 12991 |

## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor Dr. Simon Green for his always efficient, practical and motivational feedback and input throughout the dissertation preparation and writing process. Many thanks also to all those within the School of Education who provided fascinating and insightful input and feedback during the taught part of the MEd TESOL programme. I also wish to thank the willing research participants and in particular, the teacher who was able to complete the research requirements in full. Finally, I am extremely grateful for the constant support of my wife and wider family without whom I would not have been able to complete such a project.

## Abstract

*English for Academic Purposes (EAP) practitioners, like teachers in other disciplines, have found themselves moving their traditionally communicatively oriented classes into online classrooms because of the Covid-19 global pandemic. Most recently, as restrictions have eased in many but not all global locations, EAP teachers have been faced with divided cohorts of students creating a need to deliver synchronous lessons in both face-to-face and digital contexts. Taking a mixed-methods approach, the current study utilizes the well-established Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation tool to collect quantitative data on participant organization patterns, student modality, material use and classroom activity. This is followed by analysis of qualitative data from semi-structured interviews of teacher's perceptions of reasons for the observed variation between the two delivery modes. It was found that dialogic interaction between teachers and students, student talking time, whiteboard use, and teacher input were significantly greater in a face-to-face setting while student focused tasks were completed more quickly. These differences are explained in terms of time management, instructional proxemics and supplementary teaching tools, each of which have pedagogical implications for how EAP teachers prepare classes for different delivery modes.*

# Contents

## Figures and Tables



## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| BALEAP | British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes |
| CLT | Communicative Language Teaching |
| COLT | Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching |
| EAP | English for Academic Purposes |
| EFL | English as a Foreign Language |
| EGAP | English for General Academic Purposes |
| ELT | English Language Teaching |
| ESAP | English for Specific Academic Purposes |
| IRF | Initiation-Response-Feedback |
| PIM | Professional Interest Meeting |
| PPT | PowerPoint Presentation |
| TEAP | Teaching English for Academic Purposes |
| TEFLQ | Teaching English as a Foreign Language Qualified |

# 1 Introduction

Since the beginning of the current decade, many more teachers than ever before have been able to say that they have taught their subject remotely, using digital technology, in addition to in more traditional face-to-face situations. The tendency of teachers, when asked about how these two teaching modes of delivery compare, is to respond in the negative, noting that their classes are *not* significantly different, but it is rarer to hear positively framed comments that describe the two experiences as being similar (McArthur, 2021). This suggests a recognition that, while the online experience feels different, there is limited awareness of how best to describe what differences exist and how teaching may be adjusted to compensate for, or exploit, the alternative digital classroom. The global Covid-19 pandemic that is responsible for this enforced and unforeseen change of direction has created debate in respect of the effectiveness of online lesson delivery in comparison to face-to-face teaching. News outlets have reported a sense that learning online is inferior as students are described as 'losing out' on education by studying from home (Chik and Benson, 2021). Despite this, there has also been suggestions in the media that international study in future will be remote or blended to reduce costs for students (Chik and Benson, 2021), a point pertinent to the field of Teaching English for Academic Purposes (TEAP).

Indeed, a report into the effect of Covid-19 on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instruction in the UK suggests that going forward, "institutions may need to offer both face-to-face and online programmes, according to market demand" (Bruce and Stakounis, 2021, p.97). This appears to be the case thus far, so it is essential that a better understanding of online and offline provision be sought to determine whether existing negative perceptions of online teaching are valid and in what ways teaching may be adapted to improve the offering. While some in the EAP field are cautious about the extent to which better quality teaching can be delivered in cyberspace (e.g., Alexander, Argent and Spencer, 2019) others, looking from a more general perspective, suggest that better understanding of student and teacher interaction online, would "after thousands of years of dominance, [see] the place of the physical classroom finally being challenged" (Peachy, 2017, p.153). To date, no studies have made a direct observational comparison between teaching EAP online and face-to-face, a gap which this research intends to address. By utilising the current circumstances whereby class cohorts are geographically separated due to travel restrictions, it is possible to make a like for like comparison of synchronous classes taught both online and face-to-face. Taking a mixed methods approach to data collection comprising classroom observation and teacher interviews, this paper will identify variation in the communicative orientation of online and face-to-face EAP classes and seek to explain this differentiation based on teacher perceptions. This is preceded by an overview of the contextual background for the study and a review of recent literature relating to technology use in EAP, studies

on interaction, synchronous online teaching and mode of delivery and followed by a discussion of findings and emerging implications and conclusions.

## 1.1 Background and Context

The speed with which many teachers have transitioned to teaching in synchronous online environments has been impressive. Based on personal experience, there has been a reluctance by some teachers to try teaching online, perhaps due to perceptions of technological limitations or concerns over a lack of knowledge of how to make the best use of online teaching platforms. The necessity to try teaching online borne of the pandemic has revealed possibilities that has likely surprised many teachers who had hitherto evaded opportunities to try synchronous digital teaching. The transition that has occurred suggests that in many ways a similar approach to teaching can be taken online as was taken in the physical classroom. However, investigating this assumption in more detail is not only of interest in an EAP teaching context but also to teaching more generally.

The current study is set in the varied field of EAP, so it is useful to clarify what this comprises and where the current study fits in. EAP can be distinguished from general English Language Teaching (ELT) by its specific goal orientation and the limited time in which these goals are to be achieved (Alexander, Argent and Spencer, 2019; De Chazal, 2014). However, there are also similarities between the teaching of EAP and ELT, most significantly for this study, the common use of a communicative approach to teaching through a variety of methods such as task-based learning and collaboration (De Chazal, 2014). Hyland and Shaw (2016, p.1) define EAP as "language research and instruction that focuses on the communicative needs and practices of individuals working in academic contexts", which explains the relevance of utilising a communicative approach in instruction. The importance of communicative practice is related to preparation for typical assessments that are found on EAP courses such as giving presentations or participating in academic seminar style discussions.

De Chazal (2014) identifies that EAP provision usually occurs in either pre-sessional or in-sessional contexts and goes on to describe the following differences. Typical characteristics of pre-sessional courses are that they are studied full-time, for a fixed period, from short four-week courses to extended yearlong courses with the course length determined by the distance between students' current English language level and the required level for entry to their target course of study. In contrast, in-sessional courses are run concurrently with subject study and as a result the EAP portion is studied part-time. While pre-sessional courses are primarily focused on the improvement of academic literacy and skills in preparation for the undertaking of further subject study in an English language academic environment, in-sessional courses aim to support students in a focused way during their subject study to optimize academic performance. Programmes can be taught directly by

universities or by private institutions such as language schools which work in partnership with universities to provide EAP teaching to their prospective students. The current research occurs at a private EAP provider partnered with two universities in England. The course is organised in a hybrid of the pre-sessional and in-sessional structures described by De Chazal above. Students are enrolled on a foundation year course, the equivalent of two semesters, where they study an EAP module alongside a foundation module in their chosen subject such as law, maths or social sciences. This relates to the part time EAP study that occurs on in-sessional courses but is considered a foundation year prior to the beginning of the students' first year of undergraduate study and is, in this sense, pre-sessional.

A further division of EAP occurs in English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) courses. Hyland (2006; 2016) describes EGAP as focusing on aspects of academic skills and language that are common across disciplines whereas ESAP focuses on the academic skills and language that would be most applicable to the study of a specific discipline. For example, EGAP courses may focus on a language point such as the use of the passive voice in formal writing or a skill such as participating in academic discussions. An ESAP course on the other hand would involve more focused language instruction such as building architectural vocabulary or skills such as structuring a chemistry lab report. In the same way that the pre-sessional and in-sessional labels do not describe the context of the current study precisely, the same applies to the EGAP and ESAP categorisation. While students are separated by subject for their subject specific foundation modules, the EAP module is taught to all students, creating classes comprised of students studying various disciplines. However, there are two broad pathways, business and science meaning that a single EAP class will consist of students on one of these two pathways but specialising in a more specific discipline within each. This means that the content of the EAP lessons in this research context most closely resembles EGAP classes though there is some provision for whether they are being taught to science or non-science pathway students.

The EAP module consists of four sessions per week, per group with three described as lectures and one described as a seminar. However, due the objectives of EAP described above, all four sessions typically involve a communicative approach though the seminars are designed to be the most student-centred and were therefore chosen as the focus for observations. Teachers have autonomy in the way they teach however centrally designed materials are provided, usually in the form of PowerPoint presentations (PPTs). The student body is diverse in subject specialisation, but there are common characteristics that can be described. Students are studying a foundation year before progressing to a first year of undergraduate study at their chosen university, so ages range from approximately 18 to 22 on average. They are from a range of countries with a broad variety of first languages though the

majority are from East Asia, the Middle East and North Africa with a smaller number from South Asia and West Africa. Traditionally, all students would travel to the United Kingdom to attend both the EAP and subject specific modules in person with visa validity being tied to class attendance. This situation was significantly disrupted in 2020 and 2021 when pandemic related travel restrictions led to face-to-face classes being replaced by online classes. However, crucially for the validity of the current study, at the time of data collection in 2022, a mixed situation existed where some students were able to travel to study in person while others had to remain in their home country. This has created divided classes where for example, a business pathway class of 18 students, may have 10 students (group A) in country and 8 students remaining overseas (group B) resulting in group A being taught face-to-face and group B being taught online. This requires the teacher assigned to the business pathway EAP class to teach each lesson twice, to two sets of students who otherwise would have been part of the same class. It is these circumstances that provided the motivation to undertake the current comparative study as it was possible to isolate mode of lesson delivery as a focus for comparison. The teacher, materials, lesson objectives, lesson duration and student profile were the same across the online and face-to-face pairs of lessons allowing for the desired like for like comparison to occur.

# 2 Literature Review

## 2.1 Technology and EAP

There had already been increasing attention in EAP on the role of technology in the two decades prior to the beginning of the global pandemic in 2020. An analysis of presentation topics and conference volumes at the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP) showed that technology first appeared as a topic in 1999. Since then, and until 2019, the proportion of technology related topics, including videoconferencing, at BALEAP Professional Interest Meetings (PIMs) increased to ten percent (Charles, 2022). Charles (2022) goes on to predict considerable growth in interest in this area because of the pandemic enforced online teaching switch in 2020. This gives a sense of the increasing importance of technology in the view of EAP practitioners, which has also been reflected in the proliferation of recent EAP online delivery related research papers of which the current study aims to be a part.

Studies researching the effectiveness of teaching EAP online have emerged in the last three years that concentrate on experiences of teachers in general (e.g., Kohnke and Zou, 2021; Dashtestani, 2020) and on more specific areas such as providing feedback online (e.g., Sun and Yang, 2022; Kimberley et al., 2021). Analysis of qualitative data found that EAP teachers felt unprepared for teaching synchronous digital classes as they were unsure how to maintain a student-centred approach through

videoconferencing software, although teachers also noted that students were more willing to contribute during online classes contrary to their expectations (Kohnke and Zou, 2021). Teacher preparedness, however, often contrasts with student perceptions of the value or effectiveness of online classes with students quickly adapting to videoconferencing software "and by utilizing its multiple features, online delivery sessions can become interactive and dialogic" (Kohnke and Moorhouse, 2022, p.300). As mentioned earlier, an important aim of EAP teaching is to enable students to achieve communicative competence in an academic context (Alexander, Argent and Spencer, 2019) so student-centred practice is a component of physical classroom teaching that teachers consider necessary to replicate in an online environment. In contrast, a larger study of EAP teacher perceptions in Iran found that teachers saw learner centredness as an advantage of online teaching with additional advantages such as student autonomy, accessibility, editable materials and student motivation. Qualitative studies such as these inevitably lead to contrasting findings, possibly influenced by the different contexts in which each is conducted so it is felt that the current study's partly quantitative approach can add a more objective data set to existing research.

The research papers that focused on providing feedback in an online EAP environment drew more generalisable conclusions related to the challenge that a lack of physical proximity between teachers and students can cause. Distance learning requires both a communication and psychological gap to be bridged because of this separation (Moore, 1993). For example, perceptions of both students and teachers on an ESAP course in a joint Chinese-UK university found that online feedback was considered less effective due to the greater metaphoric distance in the student-teacher relationship (Sun and Yang, 2022). However, the research focused on feedback on student's speaking ability so, in addition to rapport, practical issues such as lower levels of engagement in online synchronous classrooms and monitoring challenges reduced the amount of content on which teachers were able to give feedback. Nonetheless, this highlights online challenges around teacher-student rapport, classroom monitoring and student engagement that affect class outcomes, such as, in this case, feedback provision. Kimberley et al. (2021) trialled providing feedback by video to bridge this student-teacher gap. While there was some indication that video feedback was well received by students, caution was urged as difficulty searching a video for specific feedback and sending and opening large files emerged as new problems to be overcome. Overall, studies of EAP delivery online have identified a need to maintain a student-centred or dialogic approach, understand how teachers can be best prepared and a desire to overcome distance in building relationships with students all of which can also be examined in non-EAP contexts.

## 2.2 Synchronous online teaching

In the past decade improved internet connection speeds around the world mean that "online teaching can now offer a more realistic and competitive alternative to the face-to-face classroom by using synchronous communication in real-time, live lessons" (Peachey, 2017, p.143). The global pandemic that began in 2020 has tested this idea at an unexpectedly accelerated rate with education institutions of all types making use of videoconferencing software to continue to provide live classroom teaching. Prior to this period, research on the provision of live online classes in multiple disciplines addressed topics such as task development (Hampel, 2006), interactivity (Murphy et al., 2011) and teacher responses to moving online (Comas-Quinn, 2011). Each of these slightly older papers provide insights relevant to understanding contemporary synchronous online teaching.

In the context of language learning, interaction and participation can be encouraged through appropriate task design that accounts for the multi-modal tools present in synchronous online environments (Hampel, 2006). The suggestion that careful consideration of task design can lead to interactivity in online classrooms is further corroborated by a study of 42 high school teachers in Canada involved in distance learning which indicated that pedagogical approach, rather than the tools of videoconferencing software, was responsible for interactivity (Murphy et al., 2011). However, it was also noted that interactivity was not a significant part of synchronous online teaching (Murphy et al., 2011). This suggests a view, in the temporal and spatial context of this study, that the prevailing attitude towards live online teaching was that it was most useful for providing a lecture. Comas-Quinn (2011) noted that teachers focused more of their attention on understanding synchronous content, over asynchronous content, as they saw more of a similarity in it to their face-to-face teaching role. This implies that the maintenance of teacher's identity may be achieved by replicating, as far as possible, the approach to face-to-face teaching in the digital context but also neglects the opportunities this alternative delivery mode provides. Based on survey data, participant observation and interviews it was found that preparation to move onto digital platforms focused more on knowledge and skills development over pedagogical understanding and change of identity as a teacher. This led to the conclusion that teacher education "is often about learning to teach online rather than learning to become an online teacher" (Comas-Quinn, 2011, p.230). A clearer understanding of the differences in the communicative orientation of classes in digital and physical classrooms would enhance teachers' ability to teach successfully in both modes.

As predicted by Charles (2022), research interest in synchronous online teaching has expanded since 2020. Numerous studies have been conducted referring specifically to the effect of the pandemic in accelerating a move to online teaching. As in the case of the current study, teacher perspectives of teaching online have received much attention including experiential descriptions (Pham et al., 2021),

teacher training (Ng, 2020), teacher emotions (Pham and Phan, 2021) and teacher behaviour (McArthur, 2021). There has been little topic overlap thus far, likely because of the newly emerging situation, however one area which has seen considerable attention in the context of synchronised online teaching is classroom interaction and participation (e.g., Ng, 2020; Juárez-Díaz and Ojeda-Ruiz, 2021; Prastiningrum et al., 2022; Marshall and Kostka, 2020; Donlon et al., 2022; Moorhouse et al., 2022; Reinholz et al., 2020; Cheung, 2021). Interaction studies are covered in more detail in section 2.3 so first, attention shall be given to research looking primarily from the teacher's perspective.

The experience of teaching live lessons online is generally viewed favourably by teachers which, pre-pandemic, may have been unanticipated. A phenomenological approach to understanding teacher emotions in a language teaching context at university level in Vietnam noted that initial frustrations developed into more positive feelings through gradual adaptation to the digital environment (Pham and Phan, 2021). In contrast, the direction of positivity was the opposite, this time in a non-language teaching context, where teachers reported, through e-mail interviews, that student motivation waned after initial excitement (Pham et al., 2021). The wide range of variables between studies such as these mean that it is to be expected that the perceptions of teachers will be unique to the context in which the teaching occurs. Pham et al. (2021) suggest that smaller class sizes, varied activities, inclusion of games and teacher training are key to improving the online teaching experience. Therefore, the variability of any one of these will affect perceptions in the same way they would in a physical context. This has led to calls for further studies that consider the differences between face-to-face and synchronous videoconferencing enabled classes (e.g., Ng, 2020).

A wider ranging inter-contextual study that collected web-based self-reports of 351 instructors' non-verbal behavioural changes when teaching synchronously using Zoom found that four themes emerged. These were increased teacher animation through exaggerating or emphasis, replication of offline classes, reciprocation through giving and receiving feedback to and from students, and self-monitoring, referring to the tendency for teachers to watch themselves on screen (McArthur, 2021). This provides insight to elements that are unique to moving from an offline to an online environment in a short period of time. However, despite the advantage of including instructors from nursery to higher education levels, the reliance on reflective instructor self-reporting of actions may have led to the omission of other relevant information. Although smaller in scale, the observational approach taken in the current study looks to allay this by eliminating the reliance on classroom practitioners' memories of actions taken in their classes.

## 2.3 Classroom Interaction

Moore (1989) identifies three types of interaction: student to content (working individually), student to teacher and student to student. In a language learning context, a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach aims to encourage student to student interaction. However, classroom interaction can also, for example, take the form of initiation-response-feedback (IRF), typically seen in conventional subject classrooms (Zheng and Warschauer, 2015). In this case, interaction is facilitated by the teacher eliciting a response from a student before offering feedback on what the student has produced. There has been longstanding interest in the nature and variation of interaction patterns in online classrooms. Kern (1995, p.470) postulated that:

> computers in language learning settings will be used primarily to facilitate human communication by linking individuals in new and productive ways. Continued evaluation of the nature of these new links and their effects on learners is essential if as a profession we are to make well-informed decisions.

Initially looking mainly at discourse analysis, most studies in the field of second language teaching assessed the effectiveness of the interaction approach (Spada and Lightbown, 2009) rather than the facilitation of communication that Kern refers to. The interaction approach suggests that language learners improve because of exposure to interactive opportunities featuring input and feedback (Gass and Mackey, 2020). The growth in popularity of CLT however led to a greater amount of research that analysed interaction patterns in the classroom, both linguistically and behaviourally (Spada and Lightbown, 2009). It is the latter examples that are of interest in the context of the current study.

Looking first at research into online facilitated interaction in language teaching, it has been shown that synchronous online chat can result in gradually increasing student participation, more so than offline face-to-face discussion (Zheng and Warschauer, 2015). Indeed, Kern (1995) also found that online written discussion led to increased chances for students to contribute when text chat was used as a primary means of communication due to connection speed limitations that made live synchronous verbal exchanges less practical. Both interaction theory and Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory require interaction as a facilitator of language acquisition, so these studies indicate that online text chat has a unique and valuable role to play and should be exploited by teachers. More recently a study of a single Hong Kong English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher's classes for primary EFL students noted that the most effective way of generating student responses in a synchronous Zoom lesson was to allow non-verbal replies. Benefits included that the usually dominant students could not take over but also that all students felt a sense of autonomy in being able to select their own answers. Advantages such as these mean that online synchronous teaching may not only be considered as a

replacement for face-to-face teaching in an emergency but may be investigated further to become a normalized part of primary education (Cheung, 2021). However, while written interaction provides an alternative communicative opportunity, verbal interaction surely remains essential for enhancing speaking skills.

In recent years, research in English language teaching has sought to describe interaction patterns in synchronous online classrooms (Prastiningrum et al., 2022) as well as suggest that improved facilitation of interaction can be achieved by establishing set interaction patterns (Moorhouse et al., 2022) or by applying a flipped learning approach (Marshall and Kostka, 2020). The complete IRF pattern, seen as the desired model in communicative classrooms, seemed to be dominant in an online synchronous environment (Prastiningrum et al., 2022) contrasting assumptions that digital platforms are less interactive than their offline physical counterparts. Elicitation plays a key role, so offering varied means of communication verbally or through text chat are helpful and ensures feedback leads to the continuance of interactivity (Moorhouse et al., 2022). Again however, this suggests that verbal responses alone do not occur enough to complete the full IRF interaction pattern which may lead to more teacher focused, input dominated sessions.

One of the most compelling cases for encouraging verbal interaction in online synchronous environments is through a flipped learning approach. Flipped learning, originated in chemistry teaching by Bergmann and Sams (2012), takes classroom input away from synchronous class time and into asynchronous content watched before classes. Transferable to language teaching, this allows teachers to take on a role of answering questions and assisting students with assignments and tasks and for students to work on problems together during class time. Ideally suited to contemporary times, given student's comfort with accessing digital content (Bergmann and Sams, 2012), and now the proliferation of online synchronous teaching it intrinsically requires interaction. It also addresses the notion of instructional proxemics, the way in which classroom space is utilised and non-verbal communication occurs (McArthur, 2021) which commonly appears as a challenge in research concerned with taking a communicative teaching approach into an online environment (e.g., Marshall and Kostka, 2020; Donlon et al., 2022). The absence of a physical teaching presence in the online world can be overcome through flipped learning whereby "teachers can maintain their presence in robust and visible ways and help students remain engaged and motivated while learning online" (Marshall and Kostka, 2020, p.2). Together, this research has shown various ways of supporting interaction in online language learning classrooms albeit with limited scope.

A small number of studies have also focused on classroom interaction patterns in other subjects which find the same issues of presence, participation and appropriate pedagogy. In Italy, a study of biology

teacher's experiences of implementing synchronous online teaching at the beginning of the pandemic found that student participation initially decreased but was improved by addressing the issue of teacher presence. This was achieved by implementing strategies such as nominating students, retaining breakout room groupings and ensuring expectations were re-established in line with prior face-to-face teaching (Reinholz et al., 2020). In addition to these strategies, reducing the sense of distance online can be achieved by facilitating interaction according to reporting by trainee teachers in various subject areas in Ireland (Donlon et al., 2022). Pedagogically based strategies, rather than the online or offline environment, it seems then, are what initiates and maintains classroom interaction momentum, as also noted in section 2.2. The prevailing attitude towards live online teaching being most useful for providing a lecture, appears to have shifted in the pandemic period when there has been more of an attempt to replicate the interactivity of the physical classroom.

## 2.4 Comparing face-to-face teaching and online teaching

Most comparative studies of face-to-face and online teaching have found there to be no significant difference caused by the mode of delivery on the particular focus of the research. For example, in English language teaching contexts, student's evaluation of teaching (Kelly et al., 2007) and perceptions of the effectiveness of an 'English Café' program (Ligaya et al., 2021) were found to be similar between offline and online cohorts. Similarly, in a non-language teaching context, data from sociology students (Driscoll et al. 2012) and child development undergraduates (Yen et al., 2018) found that there was no significant difference between student satisfaction and course outcomes of digital and traditional offerings. By keeping as many variables as possible the same, including the instructor, materials and assessments to avoid weaknesses found in comparable studies, Driscoll et al. (2012) concluded that "the quality of the learning experience is determined by the pedagogy used, not the medium through which learning takes place" (p.326). Corroborating this, Kelly et al. (2007), aiming to determine whether student evaluations of teachers were biased due to the student's feelings about each mode of delivery found that, while no significant bias occurred, students saw teacher's roles differently. In face-to-face contexts teachers were viewed more as sources of knowledge but were seen to be managers or facilitators online, where knowledge was gleaned more from the course content. While it is encouraging that students consider both modes of delivery to be effective, there are implications for the way in which teachers prepare for and deliver classes. In both cases the authors call for more pedagogical research to better understand differences in processes between teaching online and face-to-face.

Some differences between online and offline modes of delivery have been found in other comparative studies where student perceptions or outcomes have been considered. Lockdowns, caused by Covid-19, have created an opportunity to expand the research of online and face-to-face comparisons, in

some cases occurring by accident. A study to determine the relative effectiveness of separating written and spoken Chinese content for students with no prior background in the language also became a mode of delivery comparison in March 2020 when lockdown in the UK occurred. It was found that student perception of online delivery was inferior to face-to-face classes (Zhao et al., 2020) however, it should be noted that this study occurred at the point of the unexpected, emergency shift to online teaching. This meant that course delivery was likely to be compromised in some ways due to lack of preparation time. The following year, face-to-face and online groups of learners in tertiary education in Romania were questioned to understand student perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of each, including engagement levels and 'learning effort'. Findings showed that while little difference was perceived in the learning effort between the two environments, students indicated a preference to return to face-to-face teaching, most significantly due to a perceived lack of interaction with teachers and peers online (Gherheș et al., 2021). Although further qualitative studies, as suggested by the authors, would undoubtedly enhance understanding of why this is the case, the current study aims to specify what experiential differences there are to supplement understanding and corroborate student perceptions.

Mixed results were also found pre-pandemic where face-to-face delivery was favoured in some circumstances. A study of economics students that attempted to eliminate any influence of a student preference for one modality over another by randomly assigning students to each class type, found that students in face-to-face classes performed better in some types of post-test questions and overall exam averages. However, there was no difference in other aspects of the post-tests, indicating that the assessment approach may have been influential (Arias et al., 2018). Unlike that study, Lu and Lemonde (2012) conducted a comparative study in which students selected their preferred class environment but also compared outcomes in relation to students' general level of academic achievement. It was found that online learning was as effective as face-to-face learning for students with higher academic achievement levels but was significantly less effective for lesser achieving students. The range of online and face-to-face comparative studies have shown the challenge of isolating mode of delivery as the determining factor in any perceived differences and have focused primarily on student perceptions and results. While it is impossible to isolate delivery mode entirely, further quantitative as well as qualitative studies would aid teachers in choosing appropriate pedagogical approaches for online or offline teaching. McArthur (2021) suggests that teachers have not thought to a significant degree about the way in which they communicate online and offline, and only did so when attention was drawn to the proposition by completing his survey. Hence, the current study aims to fill the gap of an absence of research based on observation that compares the like with like experience of synchronous online teaching and the equivalent face-to-face teaching. Furthermore,

unlike many other studies described above, the study looks at the experience from a teaching perspective through, not only teacher perceptions but also classroom observation. To do this, the following research questions are addressed:

RQ1: How does the communicative orientation of EAP lessons vary between face-to-face and synchronous online classrooms?

RQ2: What reasons, as perceived by EAP teachers, are given for any variation between face-to-face and online lesson delivery?

# 3 Methodology

## 3.1 Data Collection

A sequential quantitative to qualitative mixed methods research approach (see Ivankova and Greer, 2015, pp.71-73) to data collection was taken, consisting of two strands. Strand one was to be the non-participant observation of three online classes and three face-face classes in addition to a pilot observation of one of each class type. Strand two was to be the semi-structured interview of the three participating teachers, in addition to a pilot interview with the teacher of the pilot observations. Teachers were selected based on their scheduled classes as it was necessary for participating teachers to be scheduled to teach the same lesson in a face-to-face and online classroom. Only four teacher's schedules met these conditions at the time of the study and were approached to confirm their willingness to participate. Unfortunately, due to a combination of a significant delay in the ethical approval of the study by the participating organisation and positive Covid-19 tests of participating teachers, resulting in the cancelation of face-to-face classes, I was unable to carry out the described plan in full. This resulted in only the pilot observations and interview taking place. Therefore, although the research process was followed, less data than anticipated was collected which has two implications for the remainder of the paper. Firstly, all data described is no longer averaged across a collection of classes but is instead based on one observed class in each delivery mode and secondly, no trends will emerge in the data that may have led to speculative generalisations.

Observation was chosen as an appropriate method for this study as it met the three conditions of observation research in applied linguistics. To establish what is truly happening during classes, in contrast to previous comparable studies which rely on student or teacher perceptions (see literature review), to triangulate data with semi-structured interviews and to systematically consider the complexity of what occurs during classes (Cowie, 2009). It is noted that observation does have its limitations due to the risk that the class may be influenced by the observer's presence (Cowie, 2009). However, by taking an unobtrusive, non-participant approach I felt this risk would be minimised. This

was achieved online by keeping my camera and microphone switched off and face-to-face by sitting silently at the back of the class behind the students.

The quantitative data was collected using the COLT observation instrument (Fröhlich, et al., 1985; Spada and Fröhlich, 1995) which was selected as it "offers one of the most sophisticated observation schemes for interaction analysis in communicative classrooms" (Burns, 1999, p.80). Adapted for use in the present study, its purpose was to determine whether there is any measurable difference in the communicative orientation of face-to-face and synchronous online teaching (RQ1). Based on the findings of the observational first phase, the purpose of phase two is to understand the reasons for any such differences from the perspective of teachers (RQ2). This is achieved through semi-structured interviews reflecting on the reasons for pedagogic choices made in the planning or delivery of lessons in each context.

The descriptive nature of the observation approach is supplemented with teacher interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons for teacher's approaches in the context of the knowledge they have of their own classrooms and students. Semi-structured interviews were selected as the method for this qualitative data collection as they allow questions to be "tailored to each individual interviewee" (Cohen et al, 2018, p.511). An interview schedule was prepared (see Appendix 1) that consisted firstly of open generic questions which sought to invite the teacher to elaborate on the approach they took in each class, any differences and the perceived reasons for these. The second part of the interview schedule consisted of selected quantitative data from the observed lessons that demonstrated differences or similarities between the online and face-to-face classes and invited teachers' comments. This second part describes the sequential quantitative to qualitative style of the mixed methods research approach whereby the quantitative data collection and analysis informed the design of the qualitative strand (Ivankova and Greer, 2015). This technique served to obtain richer data to answer RQ2 on the teacher's understanding of why any differences between delivery modes may have occurred. The interview was conducted by appointment within one week of the completion of observations of both classes and was conducted online to facilitate recording and subsequent transcription.

The COLT observation tool was adapted for the purposes of the current study. Originally a process study instrument, concerned with describing and comparing the activity of CLT classrooms it later developed into a process-product tool aiming to both describe communicative lessons and evaluate resultant learning outcomes. Thus:

> COLT is divided into two parts. Part A describes teaching practices in terms of content, focus, and organization of activity types. When using Part A, the observer can record,

> for example, whether the pedagogical activities are teacher- or learner-centred, whether the focus is on language form or meaning, and whether there are opportunities for students to choose the topics for discussion. Part B describes specific aspects of the language produced by teachers and students, for example, how much (or how little) language students produce, whether their language production is restricted in any way, the kinds of questions teachers ask, and whether and how teachers respond to learners' errors (Lightbown and Spada, 2013, p.97).

As the present study is concerned with comparing the teaching process in communicative online and face-to-face EAP environments, part A of the COLT observation tool is the most suitable for achieving this goal. Part A of the original observation tool describes five *main features* of the class, namely (1) Activity, (2) Participant Organization, (3) Content, (4) Student Modality and (5) Materials. The five aspects allow us to describe (1) what is occurring (2) who is interacting with who (3) what is being talked about (4) what the students are doing and (5) what materials are being used (Fröhlich, et al., 1985). To answer the current study's research questions, and in response to the procedural findings of the pilot phase, adaptations have been made to the original observation tool as with most other studies utilizing the same observation instrument.

The COLT observation framework has been applied in a broad range of contexts and adapted for use through different means. For example, the selective use of Part B categories has formed the basis for analysis of L1 and L2 use in Spanish college classes (Rondon-Pari, 2012) and observation of the effect of volunteering on adult's willingness to communicate in ESL classes (Reid and Trifimovich, 2018). In other studies, focusing on pedagogical interactivity in L2 classrooms, part A of COLT was adapted into an observation grid to create 'instructional segments' (Zuniga and Simard, 2016) and converted into a questionnaire to compare L1 and L2 use in Spanish and English foreign language classrooms (Molway et al., 2022). Although the latter is a departure from COLT's use as an observational tool, it is an example of its application in a recent comparative study featuring description of interaction patterns. Such alterations respond to limitations of the original iteration (Bacon, 1997) as researchers can include, omit or add categories as they see fit.

It is with this in mind and drawing on adaptations used in earlier studies that the COLT instrument for the current project was created (see Appendix 2). Divided into five *main features*; participant organization, content, student modality, materials and classroom activity, each was further sub-divided into *categories* as shown in Table 3.1. Although data on content was collected during the observations it was not included in the final data analysis as the class content was overwhelmingly

skills, rather than language based due to the nature of the course, resulting in minimal relevance to the assessment of communicative orientation of the lessons.

| **Participant Organisation** | **Modality** | **Materials** | **Classroom Activity** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher <-> Student/Class | Listening | PowerPoint | Teacher centred: Dialogic |
| Student <-> Student/Class | Speaking | Written Text | Teacher centred: Traditional |
| Group/Pair work | Reading | Audio | Input |
| Individual work | Writing | Video | Instructions |
| | | App | Clarification |
| | | Other | Task |
| | | | Feedback |
| | | | Technical Issues |
| | | | Discipline |

Table 3.1: Adapted Part A COLT Instrument: Main Features (in bold) and Categories (Content omitted)

### 3.1.1 Participants

As mentioned above, of the four teachers, only the teacher of the lessons for the pilot observations and interview participated, referred to henceforth as Teacher A. Teacher A is a qualified (TEFLQ) teacher with approximately eight years of teaching experience, three years of which have been specialising in EAP. Prior to pandemic related changes all experience was gained in face-to-face classrooms, followed by approximately two years of teaching online until the present date where their teaching is conducted in both delivery modes.

### 3.1.2 Ethics

Ethical approval was obtained from the ethics committee of the organisation hosting the research prior to the commencement of data collection with an agreement that neither participant nor specific location would be identified. Participating teachers were provided with a digital information sheet and consent form (https://forms.gle/nariy91yKZW4J1L6A) which confirmed agreement not only to participate, but also for the interview portion to be recorded (Rolland et al., 2020). Students in the observed classes were not asked for written consent as data was collected live without the need for classroom recording. A brief explanation of my presence was provided at the beginning of each class with students verbally confirming they agreed to the observation.

## 3.2 Data Analysis

### 3.2.1 Quantitative Data

In line with Spada and Fröhlich's (1995) procedures, observation data was quantified by recording classroom 'episodes' and noting the time that was spent in each one. An 'episode' may refer to a lesson stage or classroom activity or it may refer to a smaller part of either of these such as setting up an activity. To illustrate this, Figure 3.1 shows an extract from the pilot face to face observation tool

where time and episode are recorded in the left two columns and the participant organisation categories, listed in Table *3.1*, are shown in subsequent columns.

| Time (mins) | Lesson stage/activity/episode | Participant Organisation | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Class | | Group/pairs | | Individual | |
| | | T<->S/C | S<->S/C | ST | DT | ST | DT |
| 1 | Introduction & overview | X | | | | | |
| 2 | Task instructions – existing knowledge | X | | | | | |
| 2 | Existing knowledge task | | X | X | | | |
| 3 | Exisiting knowledge – answer elicitation and feedback | X | | | | | |

Figure 3.1: Extract of pilot face-to-face observation tool: Participant Organisation

The extract shows that the first, second and fourth episodes were spent in a teacher <-> student/class dynamic adding up to a total of 6 minutes and the third episode, lasting 2 minutes, was group work with each group working on the same task (ST) creating a student <-> student/class dynamic. The percentage of time in each participant organisation pattern can then be calculated based on the total length of the class, or in this extract, 8 minutes. In this example 6 minutes, or 75 per cent, of the class extract was spent in a teacher <-> student pattern. Instances of occurrence of categories can be exclusive, primary, secondary or combined. It is necessary to calculate each of these circumstances separately (Spada and Fröhlich, 1995) to gain a more accurate picture of what is truly occurring in the classroom at any given moment.

| Time (mins) | Lesson stage/activity/episode | Student Modality | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Listening | Speaking | Reading | Writing |
| 1 | Introduction & overview | X | | | |
| 2 | Task instructions – existing knowledge | X | | X | |
| 2 | Existing knowledge task | | X | | |
| 3 | Exisiting knowledge – answer elicitation and feedback | x | X | | |

Figure 3.2: Extract of pilot face-to-face observation tool: Student Modality

Looking at the same section of the pilot face-to-face lesson, but this time the student modality feature, it can be seen in Figure 3.2 that in the first and third episodes students are exclusively listening and speaking respectively. In the second episode they are listening and reading in combination, indicated by two large Xs as the teacher explains the instructions written on the PPT. In the fourth episode

students are primarily speaking, indicated by a large X, as they give their responses, but there is also response from the teacher acknowledging their comments, indicated as a secondary listening aspect with a small x. Using listening as an example, separate calculations are made as follows where, again, the total time of the lesson extract is 8 minutes.

(a) Exclusive focus on listening: 1 minute, or 12.5 per cent

(b) Focus on listening (in combination with Reading): 2 minutes, or 25 per cent

(c) Secondary focus on listening: 3 minutes, or 37.5 per cent

Class extract time spent listening in total: (a) + (b) + (c) = 75 per cent

### 3.2.2 Qualitative Data

Using the interview transcript, the text was first grouped into comments pertaining to face-to-face teaching, online teaching and comparisons between the two. An additional group of comments was collected that related to class and student specific teacher knowledge. This isolated data relevant to the study and provided additional information that may influence the findings. The grouped comments were then coded by converting pieces of information into key word labels before commonly occurring labels were re-grouped into themes (Holliday, 2015). These themes formed the basis for the structure of the later discussion section and were used to further inform the data collected through observation.

# 4 Findings

## 4.1 Class Observations

The class observations sought to address the first objective of the study, to describe the way in which the teaching of EAP classes differ when taught online and face-to-face. Each of the tables below indicate the percentage of total class time spent exclusively (E), primarily (P), secondarily (S) or in combination (C) in each *category* as well as providing the total (T) percentage of time. Negative figures in the difference columns indicate that a category occurred less in the face-to-face class and positive figures indicate that the category occurred more in the face-to-face class. Each *main feature* is considered separately below, with description of key findings in each category explained below each data set. All figures in tables 4.1 to 4.4 are percentages of total class time. Note also that data would have been presented in the same way had all planned observations been carried out using mean percentages across the three post-pilot pairs of classes rather than only the figures from the pilot pair of observations shown below.

### 4.1.1 Participant Organisation

| Participant Organization | | Online | | | | | Face-to-Face | | | | | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | E | P | C | S | T | E | P | C | S | T | |
| Class | T <-> S/C | 81 | 0 | 0 | 9.5 | **90.5** | 77.7 | 0 | 0 | 4.3 | **82** | **-8.5** |
| | S <-> S/C | 0 | 9.5 | 0 | 0 | **9.5** | 9.6 | 4.3 | 0 | 0 | **13.9** | **4.4** |
| Grouping | Group/pair | 9.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **9.5** | 13.8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **13.8** | **4.3** |
| | Individual | 9.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **9.5** | 8.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **8.5** | **-1** |

Table 4.1: Comparison of participant organisation in online and face-to-face classes

Table 4.1 refers only to the organisation of interaction between participants in the classes. The majority of both the online and face-to-face classes were exclusively organised in a teacher to student or student to teacher dynamic suggesting a teacher centred approach overall. However, this pattern occurred 8.5 per cent less in the face-to-face class when including secondary figures. Secondary teacher to student organisation reflected teacher interruption of student focused tasks to provide further clarification of instructions. This accounted for 5.2 per cent more time in the online class when pair work was interrupted. Group or pair work lasted 4.3 per cent longer in the face-to-face class as three separate activities were organised in a student-centred way compared to a single activity in the online class. There was little difference in student time working individually, with students in both classroom types being asked to undertake the same individual activity.

### 4.1.2 Student Modality

| Student Modality | Online | | | | | Face-to-Face | | | | | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | E | P | C | S | T | E | P | C | S | T | |
| Listening | 4.8 | 4.8 | 42.9 | 26.2 | **78.7** | 3.2 | 17 | 59.6 | 6.4 | **86.2** | **7.5** |
| Speaking | 11.9 | 14.3 | 0 | 28.6 | **54.8** | 13.8 | 6.4 | 4.3 | 48.9 | **73.4** | **18.6** |
| Reading | 0 | 21.4 | 33.3 | 14.3 | **69** | 0 | 0 | 51.1 | 4.3 | **55.4** | **-13.6** |
| Writing | 0 | 0 | 9.5 | 0 | **9.5** | 0 | 0 | 8.5 | 0 | **8.5** | **-1** |

Table 4.2: Comparison of student modality in online and face-to-face classes

Excepting writing, which was a minor aspect of the observed lessons, there was significant variation in the amount of time students spent listening, speaking and reading in the online and face-to-face classes as indicated in the difference column in Table 4.2. Overall, students in the face-to-face class spent 7.5 per cent more time listening. Online, listening was more often a secondary focus, 26.2 percent compared to 6.4 per cent offline. This can be explained by the finding in the previous participant organisation section that less group or pair work occurred online, meaning the tasks involved teacher input throughout which was secondary to the students discussing and completing the tasks. This is also consistent with the finding that students spoke almost a fifth (18.6 per cent) more in the face-to-face class, in part due to the additional student focused activities. Additionally, speaking as a secondary modality was significantly higher offline (48.9 per cent) compared to online

(28.6 per cent) as students more often spoke up during teacher led input to acknowledge, respond or clarify.

Over half of the class time involved reading in both delivery contexts, much of which was in combination with listening as the teacher's most common approach was talking through content on a PPT. This was especially the case in the face-to-face class, where 51.1 per cent of reading occurred in combination with listening whereas online, reading was a primary focus for 21.1 per cent and a secondary focus for 14.3 per cent of the lesson. This highlighted a difference in approach to reading tasks between the two delivery modes where the teacher encouraged students to approach tasks together as a discussion in the physical classroom. In contrast, online, although still asked to work in pairs the instructions were to complete the reading task and then compare answers, making reading more of a primary focus (21.4 per cent) than an equal component with speaking as in the face-to-face class. This does not explain the overall reduced amount of reading in the face-to-face class (13.6 per cent less) which can be attributed to less reliance on the PPT (see section 4.1.3) and more willingness by the teacher to talk 'off-script'.

### 4.1.3 Materials

| **Materials** | **Online** | | | | | **Face-to-Face** | | | | | **Difference** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | E | P | C | S | **T** | E | P | C | S | **T** | |
| PPT | 85.7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **85.7** | 47.9 | 0 | 27.7 | 0 | **75.6** | **-10.1** |
| Written Text | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** | **0** |
| Video | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** | **0** |
| Audio | 9.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **9.5** | 0 | 0 | 8.5 | 0 | **8.5** | **-1** |
| App | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** | **0** |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7.1 | **7.1** | 0 | 0 | 36.2 | 0 | **36.2** | **29.1** |

Table 4.3: Comparison of material use in online and face-to-face classes

Only two significant differences are shown in the material use between face-to-face and online classes in Table 4.3, in part, because written texts, video and apps were not used in the observed classes. Firstly, there was a reduced reliance on the PPT in the face-to-face class (10.1 per cent less) which was indicative of the ability to shift students focus elsewhere offline whereas online the student focus was limited to what appeared on their screen. This relates to the most significant finding of this feature, that 29.1 per cent more 'other' use was recorded in the face-to-face environment. 'Other' refers to the chat box function online and to the whiteboard offline. Online, the chat box was used minimally and only to provide additional language examples. In the physical classroom the whiteboard was used frequently and for a range of purposes. These were boarding student responses, clarifying, providing examples, providing additional information and preparing instructions for the subsequent episode.

### 4.1.4 Classroom Activity

| Classroom Activity | | Online | | | | | Face-to-Face | | | | | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | E | P | C | S | **T** | E | P | C | S | **T** | |
| Teacher Centred | Traditional | 9.5 | 26.2 | 0 | 0 | **35.7** | 12.8 | 4.3 | 0 | 0 | **17.1** | -18.6 |
| | Dialogic | 33.3 | 11.9 | 0 | 9.5 | **54.7** | 60.6 | 0 | 0 | 4.3 | **64.9** | 10.2 |
| Student Centred | | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **19** | 18.1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **18.1** | -0.9 |
| Manage-ment | Input | 28.6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **28.6** | 29.8 | 12.8 | 0 | 0 | **42.6** | 14 |
| | Instructions | 9.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **9.5** | 9.6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **9.6** | 0.1 |
| | Clarification | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21.4 | **21.4** | 0 | 0 | 6.4 | 12.8 | **19.2** | -2.2 |
| | Task | 23.8 | 21.4 | 0 | 0 | **45.2** | 24.5 | 8.5 | 0 | 6.4 | **39.4** | -5.8 |
| | Feedback | 4.8 | 11.9 | 0 | 0 | **16.7** | 8.5 | 0 | 6.4 | 0 | **14.9** | -1.8 |
| | Tech. Issues | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11.9 | **11.9** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.1 | **1.1** | -10.8 |
| | Discipline | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** | 0 |

Table 4.4: Comparison of classroom activity in online and face-to-face classes

The first three rows of the classroom activity feature, shown in Table 4.4, provide further information about the nature of the participation patterns described in section 4.1.1. When the classes were teacher centred the interaction was 18.6 per cent less traditional and 10.2 per cent more dialogic in the face-to-face classroom. Traditional refers to one way communication from the teacher to the class such as would be expected during a traditional lecture. This indicates a clear difference in the amount of student response that is possible or more easily facilitated when in a face-to-face context and the increased likelihood of students silently receiving information online. Little difference was found in the overall amount of time allocated to student centred activity, 0.9 per cent less in the face-to-face class, even though, as indicated in section 4.1.2, the number of student-centred activities conducted was greater in the physical classroom. The explanation for this is seen in the *task* row of Table 4.4 where it is shown that 5.8 per cent longer was spent on tasks online. Fewer tasks, but longer time spent online indicates that the completion of tasks online took longer or that the teacher chose to end tasks earlier in the face-to-face classroom.

The lower section of Table 4.4, including tasks, refers to management, or what the teacher was doing or facilitating during lessons. 14 per cent more input occurred when face-to-face, but it is noticeable that when only exclusive focus on input is considered the difference is negligible (29.8 per cent face-to-face and 28.6 per cent online). However, when offline there is an additional 12.8 percent of time when input was the primary concern which occurred with a secondary element of clarification. This shows additional or longer explanation of content when physically present in a classroom. Of the other management categories, slightly less clarification (2.2 per cent) and feedback (1.8 per cent) occurred in the digital classroom but there was a sizable difference in the time spent on dealing with technical issues. 11.9 per cent of class time was lost online when the teacher's screen froze taking

about 5 minutes to be resolved. The physical classroom was not without technical issues when the sound failed on an audio file, but this was resolved in about 30 seconds accounting for 1.1 per cent of the class time.

## 4.2 Teacher Interviews

The second objective of the current study is to gain a greater understanding of how teachers explain differences in teaching EAP classes in digital classrooms and physical classrooms. During the interview, three distinct themes emerged to explain how teaching differs between the two modes of delivery. These have been labelled time management, instructional proxemics and supplementary tools. Due to the curtailment of the data collection, a section has been added to account for the teacher's comments on the content and student make-up of the observed classes that are likely to mitigate findings more so than if there had been multiple observations. Teacher comments are presented non-verbatim only to eliminate features of natural speech that may impede clarity in written form.

### 4.2.1 Time Management

The two concerns that emerged most frequently in relation to time management were a perception that 'things take longer online' and that 'teacher talking time goes up online'. This was a concern of Teacher A at the lesson planning stage, where consideration was given to content being reduced for the online class. However, this was not supported by the observations which showed that the same lesson content was covered in both delivery modes. The perception that more time is required online did though influence the teacher's behaviour, for example by deliberately eliciting less from students due to a concern about time constraints. The reason offered for this perception was the 'divide of not being with a real person' alluding to the sense of distance created by teaching and learning online (see section 4.2.2) which in turn creates a communication lag. The second perception, that teacher talking time is higher online, was explained by occasionally feeling a need to fill silence as students take longer to respond than in face-to-face classes.

### 4.2.2 Instructional Proxemics

The most mentioned factor in describing teaching across the two modes of delivery was the sense of distance that exists only when teaching online. Aside from the obvious physical distance, Teacher A commented on a perceived relationship distance resulting in less student participation and an absence of cues from students to indicate understanding, satisfaction or concerns. They noted that this created uncertainty commenting:

> There's that ambiguity of do they not know, has my connection lagged and they've not heard me, are they not listening, are they on their phone? It's not always as clear

> [online]. Have they finished, are they still processing? Have they got the phone under the table and they're quite happy sitting in a breakout room?

This creates doubt to a greater extent than in face-to-face situations where more verbal and non-verbal cues allow the teacher to better judge when to proceed, a point exemplified by the same teacher:

> when they're finished face to face, they're more vocal about being finished as well. So, they will kind of say right, I'm done and it's very obvious. They sit back and the pen goes down and they've stopped […] talking to the person next to them.

### 4.2.3 Supplementary Tools

The importance of being able to intuitively access tools other than the main PPT was a commonly revisited topic during interview. It was intimated that quickly making a note or drawing a diagram on the whiteboard in a physical classroom was a smoother process than trying to do the same online.

> I like having the multimodal approach in the classroom where they can look at that on the screen and we can scribble notes and diagrams and reminders on the board next to it […]. On Zoom, […] it'd be great if you could have multiple screens so you're sharing the PowerPoint and the board.

The implication is that although a whiteboard, chat box and other features exist in videoconferencing software such as Zoom they cannot be accessed and used as seamlessly. An example of content limitations given by Teacher A was that it is much harder to quickly draw a diagram on an online whiteboard. In addition, limited screen size requires choices to be made over what to display unlike in face-to-face classes where student's faces, the PPT and whiteboard can all be seen concurrently. This possibly discourages teachers from opening additional functions such as the chat box at times during online teaching.

### 4.2.4 Mitigating Factors

Many of the above remarks were qualified by noting that the influence of the participating students may have accounted for some perceived differences. Most notably the observed online class consisted of two students and the face-to-face class seven. In one respect this led to a more favourable comparison as the online students were always present in the main room, as would be the case in a physical classroom, rather than being sent to breakout rooms for tasks. This eliminated the possibility of adjusting tasks to account for additional time to move in and out of breakout rooms. However, Teacher A noted that several student characteristics influenced her approach. Online, one of the two students was dyslexic which led the teacher to "avoid asking her to write too much

spontaneously in the chat box". Furthermore, the teacher commented that the two students had more recently been placed in the same class and were of different genders which may have influenced the amount and way they interacted regardless of the digital context. The teacher perceived the offline group students to be "more vocal" which may also have influenced the way in which tasks were set up. These factors must be considered when interpreting teacher's perceptions in the preceding three sections.

# 5 Discussion

This study has sought to both identify differences in the way EAP classes are taught in synchronous online and physical face-to-face classrooms as well as to find reasons for any differences from teachers' perspectives. The following discussion takes the themes from the qualitative findings to investigate their relationship to the quantitative data as well as findings of previous studies.

## 5.1 Time Management

A clear, though vague, perception that more time is needed online, whether that is, for example, to set up tasks, conduct tasks, give feedback or provide input emerged from the qualitative data collection. Technical factors, such as the delay in starting an activity in breakout rooms caused by software processing the transfer of students from one digital space to another partly explains why this general perception may exist. However, as explained earlier, in the observed online class in the current study, breakout rooms were not utilised due to the small number of students, yet the perception remained. Two aspects of the observation data do not support the perception that classes occur more slowly online. Firstly, the same amount of content was covered in each class in approximately the same amount of time overall. Secondly, taking input as an example, more time was spent providing input in the face-to-face class than the online equivalent, largely due to additional clarification being provided. It is important to note though, that this additional input did not seem to occur because it was deemed necessary in the face-to-face class and not so online, but because the teacher chose to provide it in the physical space. This correlates with the findings of other studies (Murphy at al., 2011; Driscoll et al., 2012) that found that pedagogical choices made by the teacher, rather than the mode of delivery is a more significant determiner of lesson content. Thus, time management of classes online and offline may be influenced by the perception of how long each part is going to take rather than the reality of how long it takes in practice. As McArthur (2021) points out, greater teacher awareness is needed of how to take a different approach to teaching online, which will allow for better informed pedagogical decisions to be made in relation to time management.

Multiple comments were also made about the tendency for increased teacher talking time in online teaching environments with delay in student response cited as a contributory explanation. Teacher talking time was not explicitly measured during observation but can be inferred to an extent by considering the amount of time students spent listening, excluding listening in listening tasks. The amount of time spent in a traditional pattern of teacher to student participation is also an indicator of teacher talking time. That almost a fifth more of the online class was spent in a traditional teacher-student organisational pattern certainly supports the perception that teacher talking time increases online, perhaps encouraged by the desire of the teacher to avoid silence or communication complications by interacting. Further study of this specific point would be informative firstly, to determine whether there is consistently more single direction input online and secondly, to better understand the motivation for that. This contrasts with Prastiningrum et al's (2022) findings in Indonesia that complete IRF patterns are the most frequently found interaction patterns in communicative synchronous online classes. This indicates that the findings of small-scale studies such as these will be influenced by many other factors including the characteristics of the individual teacher. Relying on individual teachers to have the confidence or ability to include complete IRF interactions may be overcome through teacher training in techniques such as more extensive use of the chat box online (Moorhouse et al., 2022) or a pedagogical approach such as flipped learning (Marshall and Kostka, 2020).

## 5.2 Instructional Proxemics

There appears to be a clear connection between the sense of distance teachers feel towards their students in offline and online teaching environments and how this affects their teaching practice. On the one hand, as reported by Teacher A in the current study, there was a sense communication is impeded online identifying "a barrier to getting participation" and a tendency to find "quite a long response time, if there even is a response". This is consistent with both the decreased dialogic interaction and overall student talking time noted in the observation data and with the findings of the recent BALEAP Covid-19 report that noted student participation stood out as a significant challenge in online teaching (Bruce and Stakounis, 2021). However, research has also found that employing different teaching strategies can overcome the perception of online delivery being a cause of impeded communication (Reinholz et al, 2020; Donlon et al., 2022). For example, in the current study the delay in student response online was noted as problematic when nominating students whereas Reinholz et al. (2020) advocate the nominating of students as a strategy to reduce the perceived distance issue. This suggests that the way in which the online space is used, the instructional proxemics, are critical to achieving similarly communicatively oriented classes whether delivered digitally or otherwise.

In addition to classroom space or design, use of paralinguistic communication is a further aspect of instructional proxemics (McArthur, 2021) that was identified in the current study. The lack of non-verbal cues from students (and teachers) created a different atmosphere of communication in face-to-face classes compared to the online equivalent. Noting indicators such as pens down or sitting back once a task is completed, Teacher A identified this as a partial explanation of why tasks took less time when conducted face-to-face. This implies that it is not that instructions or input take longer online but that recognising when activities or tasks can be curtailed is more challenging when it is not possible to see students at all times. Experimenting with encouraging students to use digital cues, such as *thumbs up* or *ok* hand symbols consistently may be a viable replacement for absent physical non-verbal cues.

## 5.3 Supplementary tools

Text chat has been described positively as a means of promoting communication online (e.g., Zheng and Warschauer, 2015; Kern, 1995; Moorhouse et al., 2022) yet one of the most significant differences found through observation in the current study was the greater utilisation of the classroom whiteboard when teaching face-to-face than of the text chat function online. That the text chat function was not utilised to much extent is perhaps a reflection of the individual teacher's preference, but the explanation given for this is likely to apply more widely. If the contention of previous studies, that a synchronous written communication option enhances interaction online, is accepted, it is important to overcome the concerns raised during the teacher interview in the current study. This primarily centres around the difference in how smoothly the teacher can transition to the whiteboard in the physical classroom compared with attempting to do the same with the digital chat box. Multiple functions of whiteboard use were identified during observation such as clarifying and providing additional input, explaining the observation data that found reduced reliance on the PPT by the teacher, but such a variety was not applied to the text chat box. While software design in terms of the accessibility of the chat box may play a role, teacher training on different functions of text chat may encourage greater use, most specifically the function of elicitation. Noted earlier, it was perceived that verbal elicitation was problematic due to delayed responses from students, so using the chat box as an alternative elicitation tool may both address this issue and that of limited dialogic interaction.

Technical changes or enhancements may also be considered to achieve parity between offline and online tools. As indicated during interview "it would be great if you could have multiple screens, so you are sharing the PowerPoint and the board" at the same time. This is a constraint that does not exist in the physical classroom as the whiteboard remains visible throughout a lesson often adjacent to a screen. In an online space, as the chat box scrolls, information is lost and must be manually

searched for during the class and can be less organised especially if there are multiple contributors. Online whiteboards tend to be displayed in place of PPTs or other content with teachers switching between the two as needed. A second or larger screen may overcome this, but it is questionable how realistic this approach would be for both teachers and students. Being restricted to linear text online was a further technical concern raised by Teacher A, being unable to easily draw diagrams, mind maps and flow charts for example. Greater prevalence of touch screens with a stylus in place of a mouse may bridge this gap in functionality between the delivery modes in the future.

## 5.4 Implications

A useful implication of this study relates to teacher preparedness and Comas-Quinn's (2011) contention that viewing online teaching as an alternative mode of delivery rather than a distinct way of teaching can restrict digital communicativeness. Kessler (2018) points out that teacher development in relation to technology has often been ignored, inadequate or outdated. However, the newly gained comparative experiences of teachers in the last two years may have radically changed this. Further awareness raising and a conscious understanding of approaches that are more suited to face-to-face or online teaching are necessary to help retain communicative practices regardless of which delivery mode is being utilised. Indeed, replication of the communicative orientation of the face-to-face classroom online is the goal, not replication of all the features of an offline class that a teacher is used to. For example, if an IRF interaction pattern is what a teacher is accustomed to in the physical classroom then perhaps, to maintain the same level of interactivity when teaching that class online, an approach such as flipped learning may have to be applied. In this way the teacher sets up the conditions for interaction to be intrinsic in the online classroom with the aim of overcoming perceptions that students are less likely to respond to teacher-initiated dialogue.

The study also makes a methodological contribution by recognising an opportunity to make like for like comparisons in respect of the newly emerging situation, especially in the context of EAP, of split cohorts of students studying online as well as face-to-face. Furthermore, COLT has been identified as an applicable tool for adaptation that is well suited to the study of EAP classes due to their traditionally communicative nature. The study provides evidence of differences in teaching EAP in both delivery modes that teachers had previously perceived, leading to practical steps that can be taken to achieve communicative orientation online as well as offline. These are teacher education to better encourage interaction through pedagogical choices as well as multi-functional use of online tools such as the chat box, encouraging use of digital cues to replace physical paralinguistic communication and considering technical enhancements to enable the intuitive use of supplementary tools online.

## 5.5 Limitations

The scale of the current study limits findings to possible indicators of patterns of differences between the communicative orientation of face-to-face and online classrooms. Had the study been conducted in full, changes to the COLT observation tool could have been made in response to the pilot observations and interview to incorporate qualitative themes more directly, such as measuring teacher and student talk time. However, the originally planned study remained limited by the small sample size of observations and teacher interviews with the variable of having different students likely to remain an influence to some extent. Future larger scale studies of direct comparisons between online and offline classes where other variables are restricted would lead to a greater understanding of the true difference mode of delivery makes, by being able to identify trends regardless of the students taking part.

It has also been mentioned that the design of this study is process oriented leading to descriptive findings only. Process-product studies in the context of EAP that aim to determine the effectiveness of teaching the discipline in different physical and digital contexts could lead to a range of practical implications. Descriptive studies remain important as a tool of raising teachers' awareness of the suitability of pedagogical approaches in the different environments, but outcome-based research would better inform decision making over appropriacy of delivery mode where there is a choice. The COLT observation tool proved be a practical and appropriate tool for this study and could be applied to similar studies, either process or process-product oriented, in a range of contexts. If an agreed upon or more consistent adapted COLT observation scheme could be produced and applied in multiple contexts, then far more generalisable trends are likely to emerge.

# 6 Conclusion

This study set out to investigate differences in the communicative orientation of directly comparable EAP classes using a mixed methods approach to data collection which included the use of an adapted COLT observation scheme. In answer to research question one, several variations in the communicative orientation of online and face-to-face classes were identified through paired class observations. Briefly summarised, these were almost a fifth more student talking time in the face-to-face classroom, despite around six per cent less time spent in student focused tasks, explained by a decreased use of traditional teacher to student/class participation patterns. A ten percent reduction in focus on the main teaching tool, the PPT, in the face-to-face class was accompanied by a nearly thirty percent greater use of the whiteboard compared to the chat box in the online classroom. Finally, in relation to classroom activity fourteen percent more input occurred in the face-to-face class facilitated through a dialogic teacher-student interaction pattern allowing for expansion and

clarification of ideas. Research question two sought to understand these differences from the teacher's perspective identifying three main explanations. These were decision making in relation to time management, the effect of distance on instructional proxemics and the functionality of the supplementary tools available in each mode of delivery.

Three main conclusions were drawn from the combined findings of the quantitative observation data and the teacher's qualitative explanations of how these differences were perceived. Firstly, in relation to time management there seemed to be a contrast in the teacher's perception that longer time was needed online to achieve the same classroom activity goals when teaching face-to-face. It was suggested that this perception may be influenced more by the pedagogical approach and a need to make adaptations to pedagogy that better suited an online environment. Secondly, overcoming the sense of distance felt online is key to replicating the communicative orientation of offline classes. Integrated use of digital equivalents of paralinguistic communication and employing strategies such as more targeted nomination when eliciting are suggested ways of achieving this. Thirdly, the teacher interview revealed that although many supplementary tools exist for use in online teaching, practical limitations restrict the fluidity with which they can be used. Further exposure and teacher training in the use of these would undoubtedly help but it is also suggested that future technological design changes such as screen size and touchscreen use could allow greater parity between the ease of use of a classroom whiteboard and its online equivalent.

Further research in any one of these areas in online environments would contribute to a better understanding of the effectiveness of each to achieving communicative orientation in the digital classroom. In addition to further studies focusing on synchronous online teaching there is a need for further larger scale comparative observation studies of offline and online environments in a broader range of contexts. This would help eliminate inevitable variables such as different student groups in comparison classes and allow for the emergence of more reliable indications of trends. The continued focus on communicative orientation in such studies would be of benefit for the field of EAP provision as institutions look to evolve in respect of recently enforced changes to course delivery.

These circumstances, created by the Covid-19 pandemic have shown that online delivery of EAP provision is a feasible alternative to what had traditionally been offered face-to-face. This could be important to a significant number of international students who may welcome a distance option to overcome financial, visa and practical issues of travel and accommodation in the future. While many students may continue to choose face-to-face study to acclimatise to their new environment a substantial number too may seek an alternative. This may lead, in the future, to universities and other providers of EAP courses, offering online and face-to-face courses that run concurrently, as has been

the case this year and last. This study has shown that there are experiential differences between the two modes of delivery but has also suggested that pedagogical adjustments can lead to comparable communicative approaches in both. In 2008, the TESOL Technology Standards Framework stated that "the principles of teaching in an online environment are not fundamentally different from those employed in teaching in a face-to-face or hybrid setting" (p.7). The current study along with others referenced in this paper suggest that, in fact, more attention should be given to approaches that underpin teaching online. It will be interesting to follow how the teaching of EAP courses develops in the coming years and whether we will see dedicated online teachers and face-to-face teachers or teachers that switch regularly between both arenas. Regardless of which of these materialises, students should expect communicatively oriented EAP provision to continue however they choose to study.

# 7 References


Alexander, O. Argent, S. and Spencer, J. 2019. *EAP essentials: a teacher's guide to principles and practice*. Reading: Garnet Publishing.

Arias, J. J., Swinton, J. and Anderson, K. 2018. Online Vs. Face-to-Face: A Comparison of Student Outcomes with Random Assignment. *e-Journal of Business Education & Scholarship of Teaching.* **12**(2), pp.1–23.

Bacon, S. M. 1997. Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) Observation Scheme. *The Modern Language Journal*, **81**(2), pp. 261–62. https://doi.org/10.2307/328799

Bergmann, J. and Sams, A. 2012. *Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day*. Eugene, Oregon: International Society for Technology in Education.

Bruce, E. and Stakounis, H. 2021. *The impact of Covid-19 on the UK EAP sector during the initial six months of the pandemic.* BALEAP-funded report.

Burns, A. 1999. *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Charles, M. 2022. EAP research in BALEAP 1975–2019: Past issues and future directions. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 55, 101060–. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2021.101060

Cheung, A. 2021. Synchronous online teaching, a blessing or a curse? Insights from EFL primary students' interaction during online English lessons. *System.* **100**, 102566. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102566

Chik, A. and Benson, P. 2021. Commentary: Digital language and learning in the time of coronavirus. *Linguistics and Education*, **62**, 100873– https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2020.100873

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. 2018. *Research methods in education*. London: Routledge.

Comas-Quinn, A. 2011. Learning to Teach Online or Learning to Become an Online Teacher: An Exploration of Teachers' Experiences in a Blended Learning Course. *ReCALL*, **23**(3), pp.218–232.

Cowie, N. 2009. Observation. In: Heigham, J. and Croker, R. A. eds. Qualitative research in applied linguistics: a practical introduction. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.165-181.

Dashtestani, R. 2020. Online English for Academic Purposes Instruction in the Context of Iran: Exploring the Instructor Element. *Teaching English with Technology*, **20**(5), pp.23-37.

De Chazal, E. 2014. *English for academic purposes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Donlon, E., Conroy Johnson, M., Doyle, A., McDonald, E. and Sexton, P. J. 2022. Presence accounted for? Student-teachers establishing and experiencing presence in synchronous online teaching environments. *Irish Educational Studies*, **41**(1), pp.41–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2021.2022520

Driscoll, A., Jicha, K., Hunt, A. N., Tichavsky, L. and Thompson, G. (2012). Can Online Courses Deliver In-class Results? A Comparison of Student Performance and Satisfaction in an Online versus a Face-to-face Introductory Sociology Course. *Teaching Sociology.* **40**(4), pp.312–331. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092055X12446624

Fröhlich, M. Spada, N. and Allen, P. 1985. Differences in the Communicative Orientation of L2 Classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly*. **19**(1), pp. 27–57. https://doi.org/10.2307/3586771

Gass, S. M. and Mackey, A. 2020. Input, Interaction and Output in L2 Acquisition. In: VanPatten, B., Keating, G. D. and Wulff, S. Eds. *Theories in Second Language Acquisition: an Introduction*. New York: Routledge, pp.192-222.

Gherheș, V., Stoian, C. E., Fărcașiu, M. A. and Stanici, M. 2021. E-learning vs. Face-to-face learning: Analyzing students' preferences and behaviors. *Sustainability*. **13**(8), 4381. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13084381

Hampel, R. 2006. Rethinking task design for the digital age: A framework for language teaching and learning in a synchronous online environment. *ReCALL.* **18**(1), pp.105–121. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344006000711

Holliday, A. 2015. Qualitative Research and Analysis. In: Paltridge, B. and Phakiti, A. Eds. *Research methods in applied linguistics: a practical resource*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp.49-62.

Hyland, K. 2006. *English for academic purposes: an advanced resource book*. London: Routledge.

Hyland, K. 2016. General and Specific EAP. In: Hyland, K. and Shaw, P. Eds. *The Routledge handbook of English for academic purposes*. London: Routledge, pp.17-29.

Hyland, K. and Shaw, P. 2016. Introduction. In: Hyland, K. and Shaw, P. Eds. *The Routledge handbook of English for academic purposes*. London: Routledge, pp.1-13.

Ivankova, N. V. and Greer J. L. 2015. Mixed Methods Research and Analysis. In: Paltridge, B. and Phakiti, A. Eds. *Research methods in applied linguistics: a practical resource*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp.49-62.

Juárez-Díaz, C. and Ojeda-Ruiz, L. 2021. Active Participation in the Student-to-Teacher Interaction in Online Synchronous Sessions in Higher Education. *Revista Caribeña de Investigación Educativa.* **5**(2), pp.52–67. https://doi.org/10.32541/recie.2021.v5i2.pp52-67

Kelly, H. F., Ponton, M. K. and Rovai, A. P. 2007. A comparison of student evaluations of teaching between online and face-to-face courses. *The Internet and Higher Education.* **10**(2), pp.89–101. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2007.02.001

Kern, R. G. 1995. Restructuring Classroom Interaction with Networked Computers: Effects on Quantity and Characteristics of Language Production. *The Modern Language Journal*, **79**(4), pp.457–476. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1995.tb05445.x

Kessler, G. 2018. Technology and the future of language teaching. *Foreign Language Annals,* **51**(1), pp.205-218.

Kimberley, J., Matthews, C., Smith, V. and Leech, J. 2021. Video feedback in English for Academic Purposes: building connections with international students while learning online. *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education*, (22). https://doi.org/10.47408/jldhe.vi22.707

Kohnke, L., & Moorhouse, B. 2022. Facilitating Synchronous Online Language Learning through Zoom. *RELC Journal*, **53**(1), pp.296-301. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220937235

Kohnke, L. and Zou, D. 2021. Reflecting on Existing English for Academic Purposes Practices: Lessons for the Post-COVID Classroom. *Sustainability,* **13**(20), 11520. https://doi.org/10.3390/su132011520

Ligaya, M. A. D., Lee, H. J., Hyun, J., Ham, J-H., Tolentino, R. S., Farrell, T. E. and Gunther, C. G. 2021. Comparing The Effects of Face-to-Face and Online English Lounges On Students' Speaking Ability and Attitude Toward Foreign Teachers. *2021 Second International Conference on Innovative Technology Convergence (CITC)*, pp.16–21. https://doi.org/10.1109/CITC54365.2021.00011

Lightbown, P. and Spada, N. M. 2013. *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lu, F. and Lemonde, M. 2012. A comparison of online versus face-to-face teaching delivery in statistics instruction for undergraduate health science students. Advances in Health Sciences Education: Theory and *Practice.* **18**(5), pp.963–973. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10459-012-9435-3

Marshall, H. W. and Kostka, I. 2020. Fostering teaching presence through the synchronous online flipped learning approach. *TESL-EJ,* **24**(2), pp.1–14.

McArthur, J. A. 2021. From classroom to Zoom room: Exploring instructor modifications of visual nonverbal behaviors in synchronous online classrooms. *Communication Teacher.* **36**(3), pp.204–215. https://doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2021.1981959

Molway, L., Arcos, M. and Macaro, E. 2022. Language teachers' reported first and second language use: A comparative contextualized study of England and Spain. *Language Teaching Research.* **26**(4), pp.642–670. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820913978

Moore, M. G. 1989. Editorial: Three types of interaction. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, **3**(2), pp.1–7. https://doi.org/10.1080/08923648909526659

Moore, M.G. 1993. Theory of Transactional Distance. In: Keegan, D. Ed. *Theoretical principles of distance education*. London: Routledge, pp. 22-38.

Moorhouse, B. L., Walsh, S., Li, Y. and Wong, L. L. C. 2022. Assisting and Mediating Interaction during Synchronous Online Language Lessons: Teachers' Professional Practices. *TESOL Quarterly*. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3144

Murphy, E., Rodríguez-Manzanares, M. A. and Barbour, M. 2011. Asynchronous and synchronous online teaching: Perspectives of Canadian high school distance education teachers. *British Journal of Educational Technology.* **42**(4), pp.583–591. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8535.2010.01112.x

Ng, C. H. 2020. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) through Synchronous Online Teaching in English Language Preservice Teacher Education. *International Journal of TESOL Studies.* **2**(2), pp.62–73.

Peachey, N. 2017. Synchronous Online Teaching. In: Carrier, M., Damerow, R. M. and Bailey, K. M. eds. *Digital Language Learning and Teaching: Research, Theory, and Practice*. New York: Routledge, pp. 143-155.

Pham, A. T. V., Kieu, N. V. and Vu, T. T. T. 2021. Synchronous Online Teaching amid the Covid-19: An After Action Review from Teachers. *2021 International Conference on Advanced Enterprise Information System (AEIS)*, pp.19–24. https://doi.org/10.1109/AEIS53850.2021.00011

Pham, L. T. T. and Phan, A. N. Q. 2021. "Let's accept it": Vietnamese university language teachers' emotion in online synchronous teaching in response to COVID-19. *The Educational and Developmental Psychologist, pp.*1–10. https://doi.org/10.1080/20590776.2021.2000321

Prastiningrum, H., Azwandi, A. and Hati, G. M. 2022. Interactional Patterns in Synchronous Online Teaching Mode at the Third Semester of English Education Study Program of University of

Bengkulu. *Journal of English Education and Teaching.* **6**(1), pp.103–114. https://doi.org/10.33369/jeet.6.1.%p

Reid, K. T. and Trofimovich, P. 2018. Exploring the influence of community volunteerism on adult L2 learners' willingness to communicate. *System*. **74**, pp.73–86. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.02.002

Reinholz, D. L., Stone-Johnstone, A., White, I., Sianez, L. M. and Shah, N. 2020. A pandemic crash course: Learning to teach equitably in synchronous online classes. *CBE Life Sciences Education.* **19**(4), pp.1–13. https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.20-06-0126

Rolland, L., Dewaele, J. and Costa, B. 2020. Planning and Conducting Ethical Interviews. In: McKinley, J. and Rose, H. *The Routledge handbook of research methods in applied linguistics*. London: Routledge, pp.279-289.

Rondon-Pari, G. 2012. Analysis of L1 and L2 Use in Spanish College Courses Using the COLT Observation Scheme. *Journal of College Teaching and Learning*. **9**(3), 189–199. https://doi.org/10.19030/tlc.v9i3.7084

Spada, N. and Fröhlich, M. 1995. *COLT Communicative Orientation of Language Observation Scheme: Coding Conventions and Applications*. Sydney: NCELTR.

Spada, N. and Lightbown, P. 2009. Interaction Research in Second/Foreign Language Classrooms. In: Mackey, A. and Polio, C. *Multiple Perspectives on Interaction: Second Language Research in Honor of Susan M. Gass*. Hove: Psychology, pp.157-175.

Sun, Q. and Yang, Z. 2022. "We lose a lot of value": feedback on English for academic purposes speaking skills in online teaching in a UK-China joint-venture university. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, **47**(4), pp.622–635. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2021.1940838

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL). 2008. *TESOL Technology Standards Framework*. [Online]. [Accessed 21 August 2022]. Available from: https://www.tesol.org/docs/default-source/books/bk_technologystandards_framework_721.pdf?sfvrsn=4bd0bee6_2

Yen, S., Lo, Y., Lee, A. and Enriquez, J. 2018. Learning online, offline, and in-between: comparing student academic outcomes and course satisfaction in face-to-face, online, and blended teaching modalities. *Education and Information Technologies.* **23**(5), pp.2141–2153. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-018-9707-5

Zhao, L. X., Blankinship, B., Duan, Z., Huang, H., Sun, J. and Bak. T. H. 2020. Comparing Face-to-face and Online Teaching of Written and Spoken Chinese to Adult Learners: An Edinburgh-Sheffield Case Study. *International Journal of Chinese Language Teaching.* **1**(1), pp.83-100. https://doi.org/10.46451/ijclt.2020.06.05

Zheng, B. & Warschauer, M. 2015. Participation, interaction, and academic achievement in an online discussion environment. *Computers and Education*, **84**, pp.78–89. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2015.01.008

Zuniga, M. and Simard, D. 2016. Observing the Interactive Qualities of L2 Instructional Practices in ESL and FSL Classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching.* **6**(1), pp.135–158. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2016.6.1.7

# 8 Appendices

## 8.1 Appendix 1: Sample interview schedule

(Participant details removed)

This is Duncan Ogilvie talking to ……XXXXXXXX…..... at ……XXXXXXX……. on ……20/7/22...

Part 1

1. **Tell me about the observed classes you taught this week**

[**prompts:** Feelings about how classes went. Differences between classes. Why?]

2. **Could you go through the different stages of the lessons and say what you were doing?**

[**prompts:** Feelings about how stages went. Differences between stages in different classes. Why?]

3. **Tell me about any differences when you plan face-to-face and online lessons**

[**prompts**: reasons for differences]

4. **Tell me about any differences you found teaching the online and face-to-face classes**

[**prompts**: reasons for differences]

Part 2

5. **What are your comments on the following data (provide data from the observations – differences in interaction patterns, content, materials and classroom activity)?**

Participant organization

T-S organization was marginally less in F2F class (and S-S) marginally more but the T-S pattern was almost 30% more dialogic (than traditional).

Student Modality

Students were speaking in almost 20% more of the face-to-face class

Materials

The whiteboard in the face-to-face class was used almost 30% more than the chat box in the online class

Classroom activity

6% less time was spent on tasks (student time not including instructions) in the face-to-face class

## 8.2 Appendix 2: Adapted COLT Observation Template

**Lesson type (online/F2F):** **Lesson Topic:** **Date:**
**Lesson code:** **Lesson length:** **Observer:**
**Number of Students:**

| Time (mins) | Lesson stage /activity/episode | Participant Organisation | | | | | | | Content | | | Student Modality | | | | Materials | | | | | | Classroom Activity | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Class | | Group/pairs | | Individual | | Other | Lang. | Skills/strategies | Other | Listening | Speaking | Reading | Writing | PPT | Written Text | Video | Audio | App | Other | Student Centered | Teacher centred | | Management | | | | | | |
| | | T<->S/C | S<->S/C | ST | DT | ST | DT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Trad. | Dialogic | Input | Instr. | Clar. | Task | Feedback | Tech. Iss. | Discipline |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |