System 104 (2022) 102684

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

System

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/system

Transitioning to emergency online teaching: The experience of Spanish language learners in a US university

Ana Ruiz-Alonso-Bartol [a], Diane Querrien [b], Shelley Dykstra [a], Paloma Fernández-Mira [a], Claudia Sánchez-Gutiérrez [a,*]

[a] University of California, Davis, 1 Shields Ave - Sproul Hall, Davis, CA, 95616, USA
[b] Concordia University, Montreal, 1455 Maisonneuve W. Boulevard, LB-601, Montreal, QC, H3G 1M8, Canada

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Emergency online teaching
Online education
Language education
Spanish
Second language teaching
COVID-19

ABSTRACT

This study documents students' experiences during the Emergency Online Transition of Spring 2020 in a Spanish language program at a large public university in the United States. Data from students' mid-term and end-of-term questionnaires, as well as teachers' journals, were collected in the Spring, and follow-up teacher interviews were carried out in Fall 2020. Results indicate that students' overall stress levels diminished from beginning to end of the academic term but that individual experiences were extremely varied. While some students enjoyed the increased autonomy and self-paced learning opportunities of the online format, others felt distressed in this less directed modality and emphasized the negative effect of reduced social interactions on their levels of engagement. Only few students mentioned technological difficulties as a central challenge in their learning process, but many believed that they had learned less than in traditional face-to-face courses. Instructors' views differed in this respect, as they considered that the reduced group-size of synchronous Zoom sessions allowed them to hear more of each student, which they saw as evidence of increased student talk as compared to the usual whole-class face-to-face sessions. This more intimate virtual set-up also increased a sense of proximity between teachers and students.

1. Introduction

In Fall 2016, 6,359,121 students in the United States were taking at least one online course, representing 31.6% of the total higher education student body (Seaman et al., 2018). In 2018, the percentage surpassed 35% according to the US Department of Education (2019). Such growth in online education interest is particularly relevant considering that overall post-secondary enrollments decreased at over 1% yearly from 2012 to 2016, as described in Seaman et al. (2018), which suggests that online teaching will be central in the future of U.S. higher education. This trend was precipitated in Spring 2020, when students and teachers at most U.S. universities had to transition to fully online education with little (if any) training and experience, in an environment of global confusion. This study aims to offer insights into Spanish language students' perceptions of their learning process in these unexpected conditions, while also proposing avenues for reflection on the factors that may positively, or negatively, impact the implementation of future online language programs based on the lessons learned from the Emergency Online Transition (EOT).

* Corresponding author.
E-mail addresses: anaruiz@ucdavis.edu (A. Ruiz-Alonso-Bartol), diane.querrien@concordia.ca (D. Querrien), smdykstra@ucdavis.edu (S. Dykstra), pfernandezmira@ucdavis.edu (P. Fernández-Mira), chsanchez@ucdavis.edu (C. Sánchez-Gutiérrez).

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102684
Received 30 March 2021; Received in revised form 22 September 2021; Accepted 22 October 2021
Available online 28 October 2021

2. Background

2.1. Effectiveness of online language education

Results from the literature paint an overall positive picture of online education, as these courses do not seem to hinder student learning when compared with F2F modalities (Cavanaugh & Jacquemin, 2015; Despain, 2003; Enkin & Mejías-Bikandi, 2017). In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education (2009) published a meta-analysis of 50 studies contrasting the effectiveness of fully online versus F2F courses and found no statistical difference in learning outcomes for students in both groups. This was confirmed by several studies focused on language learning, such as Blake et al. (2008) and Moneypenny and Aldrich (2016), which studied course modality's impact on oral skills and found no significant differences. Another study examining oral skills (Pardo-Ballester, 2018) favored hybrid learning for first semester students, and found no significant differences for third semester students. Similar results were also found in Chenoweth and Murday (2003) on measures of grammatical knowledge, as well as oral and written comprehension and production, with 20 beginner French students, 12 enrolled in a F2F course and eight enrolled online. Online learners outperformed F2F learners in written production and consistently obtained similar results in all other skills.

While direct comparisons of learning outcomes do not reveal noteworthy differences, Goertler and Gacs (2018) found that typical statistical analyses comparing average outcomes between F2F and online learners may be hiding underlying between-participant variation. Concretely, in their study of beginner and intermediate German students, standard deviations of quizzes and exam results were much higher in the fully online group than the F2F one. For instance, in the final exams of the first semester students, the average results were not significantly different statistically, with 86.12% for F2F learners and 79.17% for online students, but standard deviations were of 5.17 and 26.72 respectively. This shows that online education, while not having an overall negative impact on most learners, may be useful for some but also detrimental for others.

Given these unequal effects of online courses on student outcomes, more qualitative research approaches (Burston, 2003; Warshauer, 2000) shed light on the complex intertwinings of students' and teachers' beliefs, attitudes and challenges that play a key role in the online experience. Strambi and Bouvet (2003) carried out semi-directed interviews with four students enrolled in a new online beginner French course, combining asynchronous assignments with one individual meeting per week with the instructor. If students appreciated this combination, the authors wondered how this would be scalable to larger classes:

> One of the challenges posed by distance learning and teaching is trying to strike a balance between flexibility, especially with regard to assessment deadlines and course content, and a need for structure and close monitoring of the learning process by the instructor (Strambi & Bouvet, 2003, p. 96).

The authors also pointed out that learners' satisfaction was deeply related to their instructor's dedication and positive attitude, a point similarly raised by other authors (Blake, 2012; Levy et al., 2009; Stickler & Hampel, 2015) who propose that the effectiveness of a new technology or an online course depends greatly on the skills of the teacher and their ability to foster a comfortable learning environment.

2.2. Considerations for E-learning in second language (L2) education

While an effective online course needs a trained teacher, it also requires that students be prepared for the task at hand. Even in online courses that include a synchronous component, learners complete significant amounts of work asynchronously, thus relying more on their own organizational skills than in F2F contexts.

For instance, Blake (2012) carried out an exploratory study on the relationship between students' personality traits from the Big Five Inventory (John et al., 2008) and their grades in a hybrid beginner Spanish course. The author found that learners who tested higher in conscientiousness thrived better in a less directed learning environment, such as online courses, than learners who tested lower. This data concurs with other authors' findings that students' self-motivation, autonomy and time-management skills are key factors in their having a positive online experience (Discenza, Howard & Schenk, 2002; Hsu & Shiue, 2005; Roper, 2007).

Blake (2012) also points out that students who scored lower on the measure of verbal intelligence in the Shipley Institute of Living Scale (Zachary, 1986) tended to prefer asynchronous activities, thus overall feeling more at ease in online courses, due to the limited person-to-person interaction. While this may be comforting for some students, instructors tend to identify it as a major issue with online teaching (Loewen & Wolff, 2016; Rubio, 2015; Stickler & Shi, 2013). The limited number of real-time interactions with peers has also raised concerns about the difficulties of developing a sense of community (Hampel & Stickler, 2015), resulting in an overall feeling of disengagement (Martin & Bolliger, 2018; Paulsen & McCormick, 2020). To address this issue, several authors propose options to increase connectedness and community-building in online language courses through an enhanced virtual presence based on constant authentic communication with students (McBrien et al., 2009; Rovai, 2002; Senior, 2006).

These findings concur with the idea that both teachers and students need some degree of *e-learning readiness*. Smith et al. (2003) established two main predictors of online learning success: the ability to self-manage work and the level of comfort with educational technologies. Hung et al. (2010) proposed a more complex Online Learning Readiness Scale, composed of five dimensions: self-directed learning, motivation, computer self-efficacy, learner self-efficacy, and online communication abilities. Alternatively, Peng et al. (2006) stated that only learners' technical skills and efficient Internet really support success in online teaching environments. That said, the inherent need for technologies and Internet access in remote learning is problematic considering it may result in potential inequalities. Indeed, the Federal Communications Commission (2020) pointed out that, in 2018, almost 15% of Americans did not have access to maximum speed Internet connection (i.e., 250/25 Mbps) and this number increased to 48.4% in rural areas. Regardless of the specific

ranking attributed to each of these readiness skills, the fact is that learners who want to engage in online education need to set appropriate expectations for what it will entail (Harris et al., 2011) and develop necessary online communication and technological skills (Bovermann et al., 2018; Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2019; Yu & Richardson, 2015).

2.3. Emergency Online Transition

Before the pandemic, some institutions offered exclusively online options for certain course requirements, but at many institutions taking online courses was an educational option among others. Thus, being involved in online education for many students warranted a certain amount of motivation and preparation. In Spring 2020, neither motivation nor preparedness could be taken into account, as distance education became an imperative for everyone and the shared urgency prevented any type of training previous to the EOT. As a result, millions of students were forced into a learning modality that they had not chosen and for which many had no preparation or experience, while their instructors had to adapt to a new way of teaching in record time. This is why Hodges, Moore, Trust and Bond (2020) proposed to treat this crisis-prompted online teaching situation as a different phenomenon from planned online teaching, as it does not aim "to re-create a robust educational ecosystem but rather to provide temporary access to instruction and instructional supports in a manner that is quick to set up and is reliably available during an emergency or crisis" (p. 13).

In the L2 teaching/learning community, Gacs et al. (2020) offered different guidelines for teaching in both planned and crisis-prompted online scenarios. Providing pedagogical recommendations for specific EOT challenges, Lomicka (2020) focused on potential strategies to sustain virtual language communities in a crisis context, while Guillén et al. (2020) showed how three types of activities (i.e., mobile-assisted learning, partnered tandems, service-learning) could support student learning. In turn, Ross and DiSalvo (2020) presented the case of the Harvard Language Center and introduced recommendations and lessons learned to guide other units transitioning to online learning in crisis situations. The authors suggested relying primarily on technologies that instructors have used before, such as preexistent learning management systems (LMS), instead of multiplying the new technological skills that instructors need to develop in a short time. Another recommendation was to promote smaller group chats and shorter Zoom sessions instead of trying to replicate the F2F structure with multiple extended synchronous encounters.

In terms of empirical research, the literature is still sparse and has focused mostly on teachers' experiences. For instance, Moser et al. (2021) designed a national survey that was completed by 377 language teachers (K-12 and post-secondary levels) and included questions related to their attitudes towards planned online teaching and their challenges and experiences during the EOT. Most teachers adopted similar adjustments to their courses, regardless of previous online teaching experience, which indicates that previous experience in planned online courses was not sufficient to adequately adapt to unexpected crisis-prompted experiences. Additionally, all teachers shared concerns about their students' well-being, equity, and learning outcomes, while also recognizing that they had generally lowered their expectations and required workload. Including data from teachers across the globe, MacIntyre et al. (2020) confirmed that language teachers experienced high levels of stress during the EOT and further explored their coping strategies, showing how avoidant strategies correlated with negative psychological outcomes (e.g., anxiety, sadness).

While Huang (2021) offered a small-scale case study of four ESL learners' perceptions of learning during the EOT in Canada, to the best of our knowledge, the only large-scale survey that has looked into U.S. students' experiences during the EOT is Top Hat (2020). This higher education learning platform surveyed 3089 students from North American universities in April 2020, the early days of the stay-at-home orders, and found that 78% of them considered online courses as less engaging than regular F2F ones and 75% missed F2F peer-to-peer interactions. 50% of students also revealed that they were spending less time on their coursework and 52% stated feeling anxious and concerned about finishing the academic term. Nonetheless, 70% rated their college's response as good or excellent and 66% rated their professors in those same positive terms.

Given the early data collection in Top Hat (2020), little is known about the evolution of students' feelings and perceptions as the academic term advanced and they gained more experience managing the demands of this unique crisis-prompted experience. Furthermore, no large-scale survey has looked yet into students' experiences during the EOT in the specific context of foreign language learning in U.S. higher education institutions. Finally, all the studies cited previously based their findings on Likert-scale and Yes/No questions, with limited qualitative analyses of the underlying factors that may have influenced participants' responses.

The present study aims to address these gaps by (1) providing evidence from both quantitative and qualitative data collected in one large Spanish language program in the United States, (2) including data from two specific instructors to inform and contrast the primary student data, and (3) offering a longitudinal overview through a weeks-long data collection plan, and follow-up interviews with the two instructors, months after the EOT.

Concretely, this study aims to answer the following questions regarding the students involved in the Spanish language program described below:

RQ1: What were students' overall perceptions of their learning experience, and adaptation process, in the context of the EOT?

RQ2: What specific challenges were identified over the course of the quarter?

3. Methods

3.1. Context of the study

This study was conducted at a four-year public university in the United States, operating on an 11-week quarter system. The observed L2 beginner Spanish program comprises three consecutive courses: SPA 1, 2, and 3, aiming to develop learners' basic proficiency in Spanish up to a CEFR A2, or ACTFL Intermediate-Mid, level. The instructors are teaching assistants (TAs) enrolled in a

doctoral program, and receive on-going pedagogical training from the series director, a professor in the department.

In Fall 2019, prior to the pandemic, the program underwent a significant curriculum change with the introduction of *Contraseña 2.0* (Lord & Rossomondo, 2019) a digital textbook and platform that was used in combination with *Canvas* (LMS). *Contraseña*'s implementation led to a shift from a traditional structural syllabus to a project-based pedagogy using the flipped classroom model articulated with five F2F classes per week. Students had at-home exercises, videos, and readings due on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, on which the F2F lessons for those days were based. On Tuesdays' and Thursdays' F2F sessions, students engaged in 'workshops', which contained activities not related to *Contraseña's* content and required no at-home preparation. These workshops were aimed at introducing learners to authentic and semi-authentic materials in the target language through scaffolded exercises. Concretely, Tuesday's written workshops were based on the reading and comprehension of a graded reader, while Thursday's oral workshops included watching part of a Spanish-speaking television series on Netflix, with English or Spanish subtitles, and discussing different aspects of the show.

Given the increase of digital tools and the abovementioned adaptation to the flipped classroom model, the main modification during the EOT was a decrease in "in-person" sessions, from five 50-min-long F2F classes to two 30-min-long Zoom sessions per week. Another difference was that pre-EOT F2F sessions took place with all the students present and class-time was divided between grammar and vocab reviews, oral interactions and oral/written comprehension activities, while the short synchronous online Zoom sessions occurred in groups of four to six students and specifically aimed to provide opportunities for intensive oral practice. Consequently, before attending the Zoom sessions students were expected to have thoroughly reviewed the grammar and vocabulary asynchronously, through *Contraseña* videos and guided practice in the form of quizzes and online auto-corrected exercises that they could complete as many times as they wanted at their own pace. This online autonomous work was essential in order to ensure that synchronous sessions could focus on oral communicative practice with the teacher and classmates, through the completion of information gap activities, description of visuals or reaction to others' input.

In addition to those changes in the program, the university administration pushed for more flexible teaching practices by giving all students the option to choose a voluntary Pass/Fail grade scheme or asking instructors to not have final exams but rather establish continuous evaluations, through low stakes quizzes and multiple creative assessments.

3.2. Participants

Participants in this study came from two pools: (1) all the students enrolled in any section of SPA 1, 2 or 3 offered in the Spring 2020 who signed a consent form to participate in the study, and (2) the students and instructors in two specific sections of those courses.

Students in pool 1 only completed the End-of-quarter questionnaire (EQQ), described in section 3.3. Their demographics were collected as authorized by the IRB protocol and are presented in Table 1. At the end of data collection, once the list of participant names was shared with the instructors so that students could receive appropriate extra credit, all identifiable information was deleted from the database and responses could not be linked to specific students.

Originally, the two Mid-quarter questionnaires (MQQs), also described in section 3.3., were given to students in pool 2 only as a way for their instructors to collect ongoing feedback and improve instruction through anonymous Google forms. However, since those two teachers were also researchers in this study and the MQQs provided valuable student insights, the IRB was amended and we were authorized to include MQQ responses in the study.

The teachers of the students in pool 2, María and Carolina (i.e., their pseudonyms), kept weekly teaching journals and completed a follow-up interview in Fall 2020. Both had over five years of teaching experience with adults and had already taught either online or hybrid language courses before. They had been teaching in this specific language program for 2 years at the time of data collection and were active participants in the courses' pedagogical modifications during the EOT.

3.3. Data collection

Data was mainly collected in Spring 2020, but instructors' follow-up interviews were conducted in Fall 2020. Throughout the Spring, the two TAs wrote weekly journal entries, their students completed two mid-quarter questionnaires (MQQs) in weeks 3 and 7, and these students, as well as those in the remaining sections of SPA 1–3, were asked to participate in the EQQ during the last week, in exchange for extra credit. Course outlines were also collected in March to complement participants' data. Fig. 1 below illustrates data

Table 1
Demographic breakdown of End-of-Quarter (EQQ)'s participants (N = 210).

Course Distribution	SPA 1	N = 31 students
	SPA 2	N = 76 students
	SPA 3	N = 103 students
Gender	73.3% Female 26.7% Male	
Age	20.66 years old (average)	
Prior Spanish Language Learning Experience	3.59 years (average)	
Prior Online/Hybrid Background	48.1% at least one online course 51.9% no online experience	

collection over time.

3.3.1. Mid-quarter and end-of-quarter questionnaires

MQQs were assignments in Maria and Carolina's classes, and informed the teachers of students' perceptions over time in order to improve or adapt the structure, pace, and class dynamics. The same questionnaire was administered twice during the term (see appendix 1), in weeks 3 and 7 (i.e., MQQ 1 and 2), and asked about students' general EOT experiences, specifically the synchronous Zoom sessions. As was mentioned before, these questionnaires were not originally designed to be part of a research project and were completed anonymously on Google Forms. In a second step, the IRB allowed us to use the data from MQQs for this article.

The EQQ (see appendix 2) was administered in week 11, the last of the term, and was divided into three sections: (1) a linguistic and educational background questionnaire, (2) two Likert-scale questions assessing learners' stress levels at the beginning and end of the quarter, and (3) two open-ended questions about their experiences transitioning online during the EOT.

3.3.2. Teachers' journals

Journal entries were written at the end of each week during Spring 2020. Carolina's journal was six pages long and María's seven. Each entry offers a reflection on the most significant events and issues of the week, and instructors also addressed problem resolution over time. In order to avoid any external influence on the journals' content, no precise instructions were given about specific aspects that needed to be addressed.

3.3.3. Teacher interviews

A semi-structured interview was carried out with the two instructors in November 2020, thus providing a retrospective view of the issues that were previously mentioned in their teaching journals (see appendix 3). The interview guide was structured into three sections determined by the trends examined in Spring 2020 data: (1) Respondent's background and previous learner experience, (2) their perceptions of the EOT, (3) their experience throughout the Spring term. The interviews were conducted by a researcher external to the language program. Carolina's recording is 61 min long and Maria's lasts 62 min. Both were transcribed by the same person and transcripts were processed and analyzed using NVivo software (QSRInternational Pty Ltd, 2020). Inter-relations between sources of data are illustrated in Fig. 2, exposing data triangulation.

3.4. Data analysis

In this study, analytical choices were based on research goals, but also on the form and interaction of the different sources of data. The primary data sources were student questionnaires, which were analyzed following Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2014) by generating categories through the four-step process described in Fig. 3. After preparation and serialization, the first coding step consisted of structuring the thematic codes that emerged from the data (Code level 1), after which the qualitative codes were structured (level 2) and themes were interrelated. Coded data was then extracted and subjected to a third empirical reading to define the categories for analysis. A final empirical reading was conducted to validate accuracy. Differential trial coding on 20% of each dataset was carried out at each coding step, involving two researchers for each one. Inter-agreement scores were then computed in NVivo. They ranged between 96% and 98% and discrepancies of codes with inter-agreement scores below 90% were discussed to adjust the codes or agree on coding strategies.

Teacher journals, teacher interviews, as well as course materials, added a triangulatory scope to inform the interpretation of the primary data and were analyzed following a phenomenological approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). One researcher identified

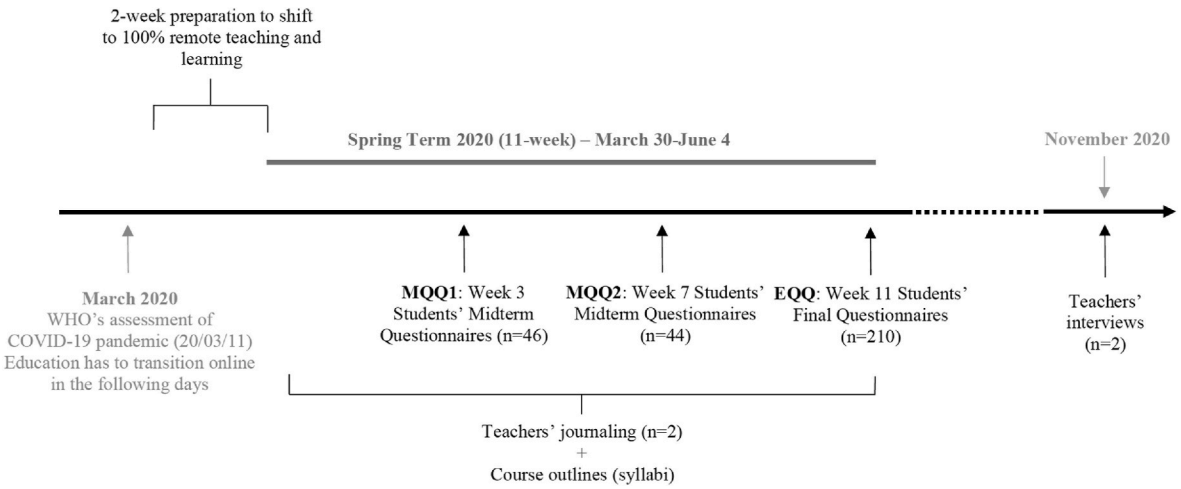

Fig. 1. Data collection.

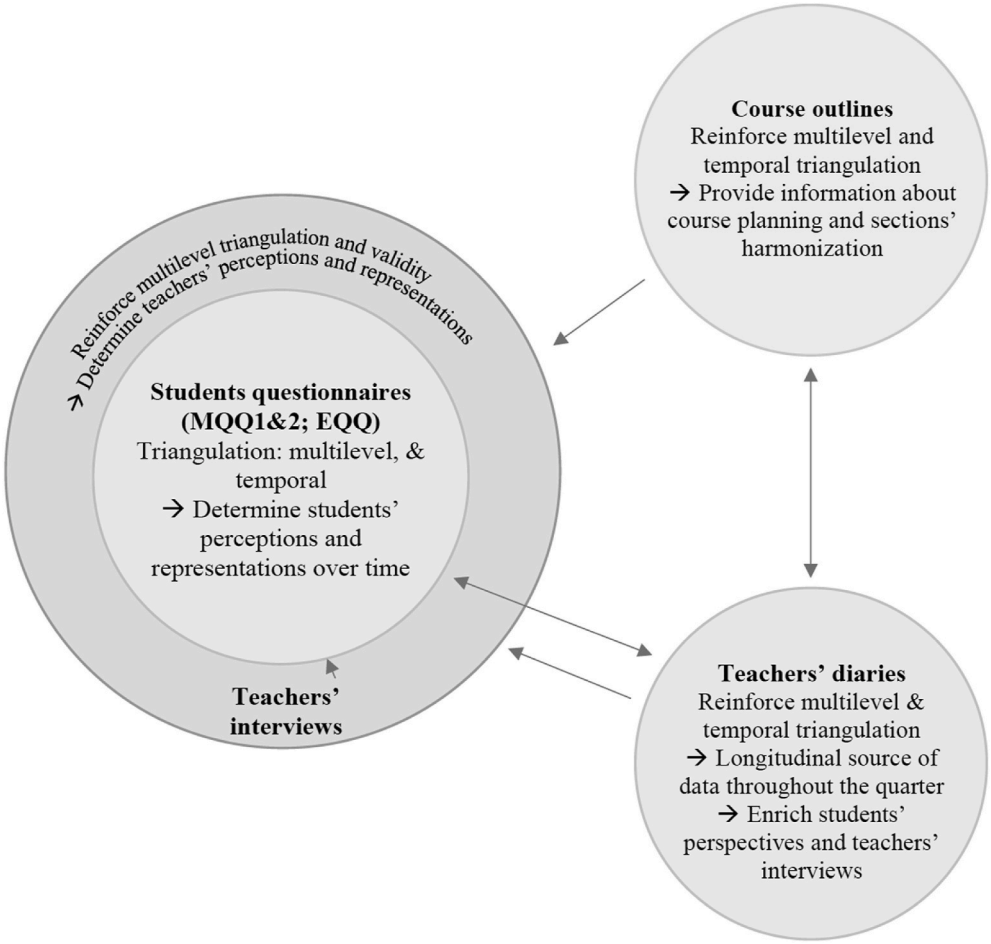

Fig. 2. Data triangulation.

statements and units of meaning that echoed interpretations from the students' questionnaires, and another researcher conducted an empirical verification to confirm accuracy of description in light of the other data sources and research questions. Finally, the two quantitative questions in the EQQ were analyzed using a mixed-effects model that is fully described in the *Results* section.

4. Results

Results are presented in two main steps: (1) a quantitative analysis of the evolution of stress-levels from beginning to end of the term, and (2) a qualitative analysis of the questionnaires, interviews and journal entries.

4.1. Evolution of stress levels

In order to assess the overall stress levels of the students enrolled in the three courses and how those levels fluctuated from the beginning to the end of the quarter, one mixed-effects model was ran with the following variables:

- random factor: *participant ID*
- fixed factors:
- *time*, with two levels: beginning vs. end of quarter;
- *course level*, with three levels: SPA 1, 2 and 3.

Results, as evidenced in Table 2, showed a significant effect of *time*, with stress levels being significantly lower at the end of the quarter ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.1$) than at the beginning ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.25$), $p < .001$. Neither the effect of *course level* nor the interaction between *time* and *level* reached significance, all *ps* $> .05$.

Fig. 4 presents the evolution of the mean levels of stress for students in each of the course levels, showing a clear decrease for all of them and no significant difference in the rate of such decrease between course levels.

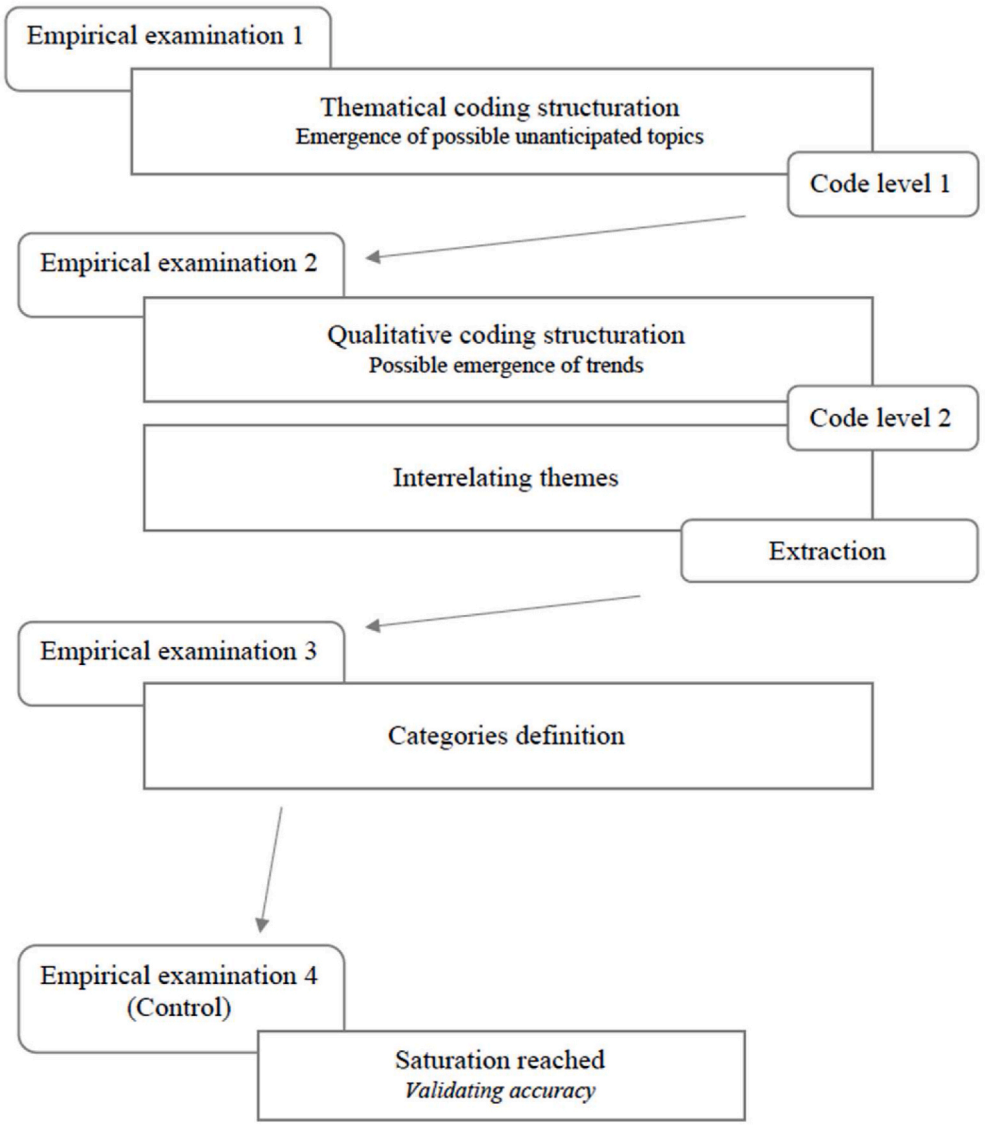

Fig. 3. Steps of qualitative data analysis.

While this data shows that students' overall experience did not end up being as stressful as they first expected, more information is necessary to better understand the underlying factors that influenced learners' perceptions. In the following sections, the results of qualitative analyses are presented to shed more light onto the phenomena that made this general decrease in stress possible, or (sometimes) more difficult.

4.2. Learning modality

Even though 47.50% of comments from the EQQ showed a definite preference for F2F classes, the remaining 52.50% expressed opinions ranging from fully to partially positive views of online teaching. This finding suggests that most participants had mixed, but

Table 2
Fixed effects of course level, time and their interaction.

	Numerator *df*	Denominator *df*	*F*	*p*
Intercept	1	414	1614.58	.000
course level	2	414	1.03	.36
time	1	414	63.86	.000
course level * time	2	414	1.09	.34

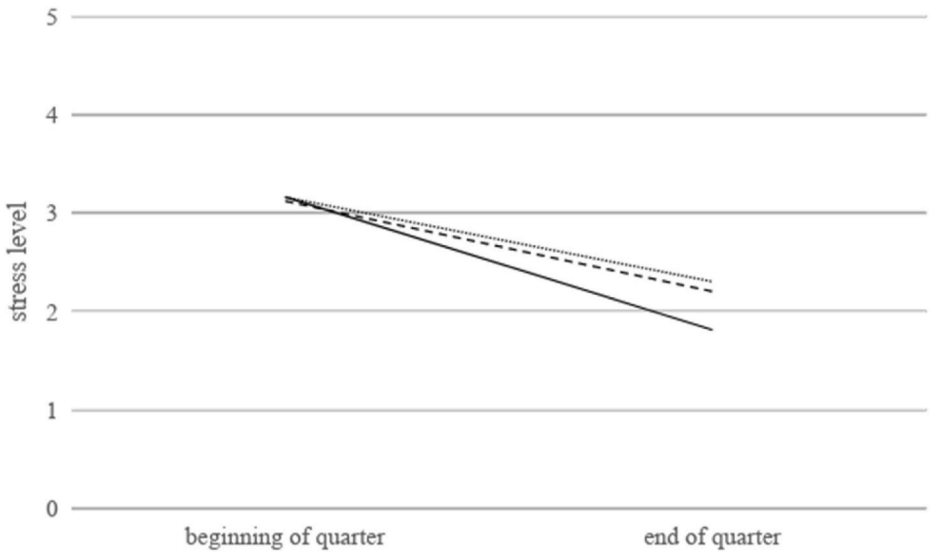

Fig. 4. Evolution of students' mean levels of stress.

not overly bad, feelings about online teaching. For a great number of students, these mixed impressions were summarized in variations of the following:

> online learning can have some advantages such as learning at a pace which is comfortable for the student, but I believe it is best utilized in conjunction with face-to-face instruction. Face-to-face instruction is invaluable as it affords students the ability to interact with other people and speak the language. [EQQ-102]

As is evidenced in the comment above, positive aspects of online teaching generally focused on the flexibility that it afforded students, which allowed them to "work at [their] own pace while still having the support of [their] teacher" [EQQ-141] and to have "more freedom" about their learning and time management [EQQ-66]. Negative aspects, on the other hand, emphasized the limited opportunities for speaking interaction, especially with peers, as evidenced in these comments:

> [we] don't have as much time to practice our oral skills [EQQ-37]

> [It helps to] have to physically write and interact with classmates in Spanish [EQQ-175].

In sum, the EQQ revealed a general satisfaction with how the EOT had unraveled, yet also showed dichotomous feelings for different elements, which are detailed below.

4.3. Sense of community

The majority of EQQ references to connectedness (51,37%) conveyed that there were less opportunities to interact orally, resulting in a significant decrease in peer-to-peer connections, solidarity and sense of belonging due to the adjustments to class frequency, duration and group size. As one student noted, in-person classes allowed them "to talk to students in Spanish and practice Spanish in interactive ways with peers" and to "turn to them whenever and ask a question" [EQQ-157]. The loneliness experienced in online learning, exacerbated by the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic and by occasional technological glitches, contributed for some students to an overall feeling that remote learning was less enjoyable, which resulted in reduced levels of engagement. For instance, some participants shared that there was "no time to thoroughly engage with classmates" [EQQ-115], or that it was more engaging and fun to "actually converse in Spanish" in F2F groups [EQQ-152].

However, this dissatisfaction was partly compensated by the switch to a small-group setting for the synchronous meetings in the online modality, which was celebrated as a key element of this EOT for providing "a very comfortable environment where we all had opportunities to speak and [having to speak] wasn't daunting" [EQQ-189]. This intimate environment implemented for the EOT generally eased students' anxiety about participating in this new virtual space, as the abovementioned quote illustrates. Within a few weeks, most students reported a successful adaptation, aided especially by the instructors' patience and their restructuring of the interactions. Moreover, the smaller student-teacher ratio also allowed for a closer relationship between these two parties, as exemplified by references to more "individualized" [EQQ-41] or "one-on-one" [EQQ-124] time with instructors. In sum, the reduced interactions with peers created a feeling of social disconnection in some learners, but the increased time spent in smaller groups, with the instructor being inevitably at the center of all interactions, resulted in a sense of closeness with the teacher. These opposed feelings are well summarized in comments such as:

> While communicating with my professor was easy, I felt that I couldn't make real interactions with my fellow classmates, unfortunately. [EQQ-55].

> I feel pretty connected to [my professor] […] I don't feel that kind of connection with any of my classmates. [MQQ2-10]

Finally, even though the new small-group setting and focused interactive activities was overall considered a good way to ensure some (even if insufficient) oral practice, certain learners also felt that "having to be called on sometimes puts people on the spot" [MQQ1-27]. However, even students who felt such unease recognized that teachers were very understanding, encouraging, and approachable.

4.4. Emotional response

Regarding students' affective experiences during this EOT, mixed trends were also observed. For most students, some level of anxiety was revealed in comments about reduced synchronous time, lack of relationships, awkwardness of interactions, and added responsibilities. In general, the lack of familiarity with online learning resulted in higher stress levels at the beginning of the quarter. Yet these issues were largely resolved once students became comfortable with the new format, recognized its flexibility, and felt supported by their instructors. Interestingly, not many participants alluded specifically to the COVID pandemic as a source of stress that affected their learning. That said, they did report being aware of its impact on the EOT, but they were mostly grateful to enjoy a stable and interactive pedagogical structure in that context. With respect to technological anxiety, the majority of their initial concerns did not manifest in a significant way, since most students reported not encountering major problems. For instance, despite initial concerns, one student contrasted them with how "fairly easy to figure out and navigate" the technological aspects of the course were [EQQ-12].

In general, students only faced occasional glitches and those who did encounter technological issues mainly referred to excessive screen time, poor internet connection, or the use of multiple platforms (i.e., *Contraseña* and *Canvas*). The latter made it hard for some students to keep track of assignments, but most learners were already familiar with the required platforms, or experienced a fast learning curve if still unfamiliar. Participants, however, did point out that they experienced a significant responsibility shift, from teachers to students, when it came to staying on top of assignments. Again, in general, this was recognized as a positive opportunity that entailed flexibility to manage their own time and effort. Yet, some students missed the "space and options for [them] to make sure [they were] on track" [EQQ-173], and disliked having to do that individually and through different platforms.

4.5. Time management

Regarding the shift of responsibility from teachers to students, longitudinal data showed that this burden became heavier with time. Both teacher interviews reflected it and, for instance, Carolina's journal mentioned that many of the reminders and handouts that were provided in person during F2F classes were now falling on students' own organizational skills, which were sometimes lacking. This translated into insufficient preparedness for the synchronous sessions, and affected instructors' management of time during synchronous sessions. This deficient preparation on the part of some students did not go unnoticed by their peers, as Maria's journal described:

> one student even wrote on the MQQs: 'I wish students would be more prepared during the sessions so that the teacher doesn't waste time explaining things again that she already said'.

These situations made both instructors anxious about the reduced time available for speaking interactions, which some students perceived as rushed at times. Unfortunately, both teachers resorted to cutting down the number of conversation activities in order to address underprepared students' questions, and to using partly English to quicken instructions. Another strategy adopted by both was the creation of a collaborative document shared beforehand and during sessions. In her journal, María described it as a "chalkboard", "review sheet", tool to help "address students' lack of preparation", and "agenda" to "ease anxiety".

4.6. Perception of students' performance

Both instructors reflected on how the new setting allowed them to hear students speak more often than in larger F2F classes, enabling them to better gauge learners' proficiency levels. However, this individualized setting made them lean towards more explicit feedback than they would normally use in F2F classes. Early on, instructors' weekly journals and interviews reflected this realization that they were prioritizing accuracy over fluency in their comments. However, this realization prompted both instructors to change course. Maria's interview illustrates how this self-correction happened once she realized how she was overwhelming students with her constant corrections:

> my explicit feedback was increasing because I had never had this one-on-one time with students […] I tried to make some adjustments in making sure that I was cutting back on the corrections, focusing more on fluency.

In general, students felt that their overall linguistic performance had improved less during the EOT than it had in their previous F2F language classes. These concerns were overall stated in general terms and, when asked about the specific contents or skills that presented a challenge during EOT, very few students were able to pinpoint them, other than the aforementioned worry about decreased oral interaction. Only a handful of learners mentioned difficulties in learning grammar through videos and asynchronous activities, a practice that they dismissively characterized as "self-teaching".

All in all, the synchronous sessions on Zoom and the adaptations that instructors made within them throughout the quarter were instrumental in students' adaptation to the remote learning environment. Throughout the different data sets, students almost unanimously praised how instructors navigated these new dynamics. Learners treasured the skillful ways in which teachers provided a

helpful "level of structure and organization" [EQQ-147], meaningful opportunities that "force all students to practice" [MQQ1-24], while still making sure that all could be "comfortable with their level of knowledge" [MQQ2-5] despite the challenges imposed by the EOT.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to look into Spanish language students' perceptions of their learning process and of the challenges they found over the time of an academic quarter in the context of the EOT. Results revealed overall satisfactory perceptions of online learning, especially towards the end of the quarter, when students were familiarized with the educational model and course structure. Even in the stressful situation of the EOT, learners generally shared positive impressions of online learning, which were mainly driven by the perceived increase in flexibility and the continued support of their instructors. This finding does not necessarily concur with the more negative perceptions of the EOT reflected in Top Hat (2020), where 78% of respondents had considered their crisis-prompted learning experience as less positive than that of previous F2F classes. The difference may simply be due to the fact that their data was collected at the beginning of the pandemic, whereas our main source of information (i.e., the EQQ) was gathered at the end of an academic term that was carried out fully online from beginning to end. This hypothesis is supported by the MQQs' responses which revealed how learners' opinions and feelings progressed to more positive attitudes as the quarter advanced.

Despite this overall positive assessment of students' experiences during the EOT in the language program under scrutiny, many also feared that they had learned less than in typical F2F courses. With the objective of informally gauging the accuracy of students' subjective impression, we inquired about grade distributions in Fall 2019 (i.e., pre-pandemic, F2F) and Spring 2020 (i.e, EOT, online), and the program director shared that not only did the amount of A+ grades increase during the EOT, but so did the number of F grades. Even though this information is not sufficient to draw definitive conclusions on course outcomes, it seems to coincide with Goertler and Gacs' (2018) conclusion that online learning can be a positive experience for some students but also a detrimental one for others. This unequal experience with online learning was clearly reflected in students' comments, with some expressing very positive views, especially when it came to mentions of the increased flexibility and autonomy of online learning, and others sharing a very real sense of struggle and disorientation through comments related to a decreased sense of community and difficulties in organizing their time asynchronously.

Indeed, several aspects arose as key drivers that made online learning more challenging for some students. Consistent with past findings, learners who perceived added student responsibilities through a positive lens, namely, the opportunity to be in control of their own learning pace, were generally satisfied with their remote learning experience (Discenza, Howard & Schenk, 2001; Gilbert-Dulaney, 2001; Hsu & Shiue, 2005; Roper, 2007). Alternatively, those who saw this same increase in responsibilities through a negative lens, as expressed in their struggles with autonomy, lack of time-management skills and limited self-motivation, were more negatively impacted by the EOT. This result is in line with Blake's (2012) finding that students with higher levels of conscientiousness tended to have more positive experiences in online learning environments. It also concurs with other literature in the field which emphasizes the influence of students' self-motivation and self-efficacy on their levels of comfort in online learning environments (Hung et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2003). In this study, learners who reported feeling more at ease organizing their own time and learning process were generally satisfied with the EOT experience, even if online learning may not have been their pre-pandemic learning modality of choice originally.

The results from this research echo another finding in Blake's (2012) study, in that a majority of students felt more disconnected from their peers, due to the reduced number of synchronous encounters, but many others viewed this change positively, especially due to the intimacy of these small-group discussions. Indeed, while some missed being in a class surrounded by more than 20 other students, others found the more intimate setting of the 30-min group sessions to be soothing and more inviting to active participation. Despite the fact that opinions about the degree of connectedness varied among students, the new interactional dynamics did clearly lead to less peer-to-peer communication, which could hinder the development of oral skills (Loewen & Wolff, 2016; Rubio, 2015) and may have contributed to a sense of disengagement in some learners, a feeling that should ideally not be experienced by any students in a language class (Martin & Bolliger, 2018; Paulsen & McCormick, 2020). This indicates that the efforts and strategies put in place during the EOT to foster peer-to-peer interaction were insufficient and should be remedied in future planned online courses. Fortunately, several colleagues have already proposed realistic and efficient ways to help build a sense of community in online courses, even in those that were created under the stressful EOT situation (Guillén et al., 2020; Lomicka, 2020; McBrien et al., 2009; Rovai, 2002; Senior, 2006).

Interestingly, although the perception of being disconnected from their peers was expressed repeatedly throughout the quarter, both in the MQQs and EQQ, students did feel more connected to their teachers. This feeling was mutual, as instructors also conveyed in their journals a sense of enhanced proximity with their individual students. In fact, instructors reported being able to hear more utterances per session from each student, which gave them a better idea of learners' proficiency. It may be that learners had the impression of speaking less because they were speaking less *to their classmates*, hence the belief that they were having less authentic, meaningful oral practice when, in reality, the smaller class-size was forcing each of them to produce more L2 utterances. When it comes to oral practice, thus, these results reveal a clear mismatch between learners' impression that they had fewer opportunities to talk with that of instructors, who felt that they were hearing more of each student and could give more personalized feedback. Part of this discrepancy may be due to unshared expectations about the objectives of those small-group sessions. While the instructors and program director who designed the EOT courses thought of those sessions as unique opportunities for intensive conversation in a non-intimidating setting, students may have seen them as imperfect replacements of the 50-min F2F classes that they used to attend five-days a week and which did not only focus on conversation practice.

All in all, this study provides new insights into the elements that may have facilitated or hindered student learning during the EOT. As was mentioned in Hodges et al. (2020), crisis-prompted EOT is not necessarily comparable to planned online education. Therefore some of the student characteristics that would have been key in the latter context either could not be developed due to lack of time to prepare the EOT, or were not as relevant altogether given the very distinct context of the pandemic. Specifically, literature on online education in higher education settings emphasizes that the factors predicting learner success fall into two broad dimensions: multi-dimensional interaction (communication skills and social skills) and technological skills (Bovermann et al., 2018; Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2019; Yu & Richardson, 2015). However, few students mentioned technology as a challenge or limitation in their enjoying the course. Part of it may be due to their previous experience with the platforms in use, but even students in SPA 1, who had not used *Contraseña* before, did not seem excessively worried about technological problems. It is possible that this overall sense of ease with technologies is related to students being part of the *digital natives* generation (Prensky, 2001a, 2001b). When students experienced initial difficulties with *Canvas* or *Contraseña*, this feeling tended to fade during the quarter, aided by the supportive atmosphere nurtured by the instructors. Even the Internet outages or audio glitches that sometimes made the connection to Zoom meetings difficult were considered as inevitable events that had no relation with the quality of the course. The main issues mentioned in relation to technology were some learners' confusion in having to complete homework on two different platforms, which also improved significantly over time, as instructors developed strategies to guide asynchronous work and to help students be better organized and more autonomous. This is not to say that technological skills are not necessary for online learning but, in this case, using those technologies was not a choice but rather a given, and students appeared more open to develop the necessary skills quickly and less reluctant to do so than in circumstances where other options were available.

In addition to providing information about the experiences of students during the Spring 2020, these findings helped uncover some aspects of the target program that impacted the EOT, both in terms of what was already in place before the EOT (i.e., proactive elements) and what was incorporated immediately, or in subsequent academic terms for the remainder of the pandemic, in reaction to students' concerns and suggestions as expressed in the MQQs (i.e, reactive elements). Those elements are listed hereunder in hopes that they may be useful for other programs in the future.

5.1. Proactive elements

1. *Culture of adaptability.* The program's recent methodological switches had been conducted with some level of involvement by the TAs. Therefore, regardless of individual online experience, most instructors were used to incorporating essential pedagogical and multimodal adaptations.
   2. *Spirit of collaboration.* Throughout said switches, instructors had created collegiate support networks that were further expanded during the EOT.
3. *Familiarity with tools.* Instructors had already been using both *Canvas* and *Contraseña* for almost six months.
4. *Ongoing reflexivity.* TAs were part of a doctoral program that fostered methodological training and pedagogical innovation, and most were used to incorporating students' informal survey feedback throughout their instruction.

5.2. Reactive elements

1. *Addressing students' lack of autonomy.* Instructors quickly realized students' insufficient autonomy regarding asynchronous work and lack of preparation for the synchronous sessions. Therefore, throughout the quarter they addressed this issue by clarifying expectations through frequent written announcements and oral reminders, and by supporting learners' autonomy via the creation of a Google Doc that students could access and study ahead of time to prepare for the synchronous sessions. For subsequent terms, the program coordinator created a welcome video explaining the nature of a flipped classroom and the increased responsibility of the learner in order to help students understand in what ways this model can help them learn better.
2. *Streamlining administrative communication.* Teachers had to find ways to reiterate and unify logistical information about assignments, given that the reduced synchronous time and multiple platforms confused students, especially at first. For example, in the next term, a syllabus quiz was added to ensure that students understood course expectations. Additionally, a full course unit was removed to allow more time for administrative talk throughout the academic term, and to devote the whole first week of classes to train students in the use of the different online platforms used. Finally, the course design was modified to replace one of the conversation Zoom sessions with a more traditional synchronous Zoom lecture, on Tuesdays, which lasted 50 min and offered more time to solve students' questions and organizational matters.
3. *Providing avenues for community building.* Instructors recognized the need to foster a sense of belonging and community despite the limited synchronous time available, but no clear and generalizable solutions were found during the quarter. One solution that was implemented in following terms included discussion boards to allow for more interaction. Because the primary goal was to foster peer-to-peer relationships, students could participate in Spanish and/or English and example topics included their favorite song, outfit or recipe, what they were watching on Netflix or learning to do during the pandemic, among others.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed at documenting the experiences lived during the EOT by students and instructors in a Spanish language program at a large U.S. university. The analysis combined a quantitative and qualitative analysis of students' EQQs with an in-depth exploration of longitudinal data from learners and instructors. Results indicated that the experience was not as stressful as students initially feared.

The structure of the courses as well as teachers' support were key in achieving this overall positive attitude towards the EOT. Challenges were mostly related to autonomous learning and a missed sense of community due to a reduction in time spent together as a class.

Even though this study may be informative, an obvious limitation is that data was collected at one single institution and findings are thus context-embedded, which prevents their generalizability. Another limitation comes from the reduced number of teachers who participated in the study. However, their views were only meant to provide another perspective on students' reported experiences, which were the focus of the study. More research is needed that puts teachers' voices at the center. Regarding students' voices, they were not asked about other concurrent online courses they were taking at the time of the EOT, which could have affected their experiences with their online Spanish course. Finally, it is necessary to point here that the sense of emergency that characterized that academic term also affected this study. IRB approval had to be expedited and a very quick organization of the data collection plan was set in place, instead of the typical months-long preparation that normally precedes the beginning of a non-emergency research project. As a result, students could only be asked about their stress-levels both at the beginning and end of the quarter in the EQQ. Thus, the quantitative analysis did not technically follow a pre-test/post-test model and the data gathered need to be considered as retrospective in nature.

Appendix 1. Mid-quarter Questionnaire (MQQ1 and 2)

1. Please share your experiences with online Spanish learning.

Some things to consider when responding are: 1) What advantages or disadvantages have you observed with online learning in comparison with your past experiences with language learning in face to face classes? 2) How comfortable have you felt with the technology used in this course? 3) Which problems have you encountered in the current online format? Have you found adequate solutions for those? 4) What have you liked about the online learning format?

2. How do you feel in the conversation Zoom sessions? Are you shy? Anxious? Awkward? Excited? Eager to talk? How is the relationship with the instructor and your classmates?
3. Out of all the activities that you've done so far in this Spanish course, which one is your favorite? Why? Examples: iSpraak (SPA 2 only), audio (SPA 3 only), Zoom sessions, taller de lectura, Contraseña videos, Contraseña activities, peer review (SPA 3 only), discussions forums on Canvas, the google sheets, …
4. Out of all the activities that you've done so far in this Spanish course, which one is your LEAST favorite? Why?

Is there anything your instructor can do to help you learn more effectively in this Spanish course? Any other comments?

Appendix 2. End of Quarter Questionnaire (EQQ)

a. What is your age?
b. What is your gender?
   i. Female
   ii. Male
   iii. Other
   iv. Prefer not to disclose
c. Had you ever been enrolled in online classes before this quarter?
d. In which Spanish course are you currently enrolled?
   i. SPA 1
   ii. SPA 2
   iii. SPA 3
e. How long have you studied Spanish so far (including High-School)?
   i. This is my first quarter studying Spanish
   ii. This is my second quarter studying Spanish
   iii. This is my third quarter studying Spanish
   iv. I took one year of Spanish in High School
   v. I took more than one year of Spanish before college
f. Have you ever used language learning apps, such as Duolingo, to improve your Spanish?
   i. Yes
   ii. No
g. On a scale from 1 to 10, how comfortable do you feel using Zoom?
h. On a scale from 1 to 10, how comfortable do you feel using Contraseña?
i. On a scale from 1 to 10, how comfortable do you feel using Canvas?
j. On a scale of 1 (not at all stressed) to 10 (extremely stressed), how stressed did you feel at the beginning of the quarter knowing that you were going to take your Spanish class online?

k. On a scale of 1 (not at all stressed) to 10 (extremely stressed), how stressed did you feel at the end of the quarter after having completed your Spanish course online?

l. What specific concerns did you have before beginning your online course? How were they resolved (or not) throughout the quarter? Some possible topics you could include in your response are technology, relationship with your instructor or with your classmates, the amount of work, time spent in front of the screen. Feel free to comment on anything else not included above that was concerning and relevant for your online learning.

Compare your experience learning Spanish in a Face-to-Face format with your experience in this online version of the course. How did the different formats affect your learning? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

Appendix 3. Semi-structured Interview Guide

Section 1 – Respondent's introduction and previous learner experience

1.1. Can you please introduce yourself and describe your role at [University name] and in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese?
Stimulus questions in case the respondent doesn't develop:

1.1.1. Where do you come from?
1.1.2. What's your field of study?
1.1.3. For how long have you been a TA in this Department? How many courses have you taught so far? What level(s)?
1.1.4. Other than Spanish, have you ever taught something else? At [University name] or elsewhere?
1.1.5. Have you taught face-to-face, online, hybrid? How many times in each format?

1.2. As a student yourself, have you ever attended a class or a seminar online or in a hybrid model, meaning a mix between face-to-face and online? What memories do you keep from this experience?
Stimulus questions (if the answer is "yes"):

1.2.1. Was it a language class or another subject?
1.2.2. Do you keep good or bad memories of it? Why?
1.2.3. What did you like? And what didn't you like? Why?
1.2.4. Do you remember experiencing a particular kind of stress or anxiety when learning online? Can you explain why?
1.2.5. Did you experience boredom or other feelings related to the use of online and digital tools? Can you explain which ones and why?

1.3. Speaking about your experience as a learner yourself, what memories do you keep from your Second Language learning experiences?
Stimulus questions:

1.3.1. In which context(s) did you learn your second language(s)? School, college, travel, etc.? Which languages did you learn?
1.3.2. Was the context different from the one you're teaching in today?
1.3.3. Did you like learning languages or not? Some in particular? Why?
1.3.4. What did you particularly like when you were learning a second or foreign language?
1.3.5. Have you ever experienced a feeling of stress or anxiety when you were a language learner? Why?
1.3.6. Is there a negative experience that you had as a learner and that, you think, affected your views on second language teaching and learning?
1.3.7. On the other hand, do you think that you replicate – as a teacher – practices of your instructors that you particularly liked as a learner? Which ones?

Section 2 – Online transition and perceptions of it

2.1. Prior to the COVID-19 Emergency Online transition, how comfortable were you with digital tools used in Education?
Stimulus questions in case the respondent doesn't develop:

2.1.1. What were you using (canvas, Google Drive, Zoom, kahoot, apps, etc.)?
2.1.2. How comfortable with these tools were you?
2.1.3. Have you participated in professional development activities (eg. CEE online teaching certificate)?
2.2. At the moment of the full-online transition, how were you feeling regarding technology and digital tools you'd have to use?

Stimulus questions in case the respondent doesn't develop:

2.2.1. Were you excited about this new challenge? Can you explain why?
2.2.2. Were you feeling overwhelmed or anxious? Can you explain why?

2.2.3. Did you seek resources to support you in this transition (eg. workshops, online information, etc.)? Do you think it helped you?

2.3. Did you notice an evolution in your state of mind throughout the Spring semester regarding the use of technology?

Stimulus questions in case the respondent doesn't develop:

2.3.1. Do you feel like you're more comfortable with this aspect of teaching?
2.3.2. Do you feel like you were particularly challenged? Did you encounter difficulties related to technology?
2.3.3. Do you have a feeling of progression or evolution in your own learning curve regarding technology and Spanish teaching?

2.4. If you think about the students' experience during that semester and the dynamic of your group(s), can you give your insight of how things went?

Stimulus questions in case the respondent doesn't develop:

2.4.1. Did students express or show signs of discomfort regarding technology use?
2.4.2. How were students responding to the use of technology? Would they use it easily?
2.4.3. Can you recall any particular event that was challenging technology-wise? Can you explain? How did you handle the situation?
2.4.4. Do you have anything to add regarding technology in this emergency online teaching situation?

Section 3 – Teaching and learning experience through the online semester

3.1. Speaking more broadly about your students during this semester, how did their learning experience go from your point of view?

Stimulus questions in case the respondent doesn't develop:

3.1.1. Did your students express that they found it easy or difficult to learn Spanish in this context?
3.1.2. Did they express any specific concerns regarding Spanish learning online? Can you explain?
3.1.3. Do you think it evolved through the semester?

3.2. Regarding more tangible variables: What were you able to observe in terms of regularity and involvement (homework, asynchronous activities, synchronous interactions)?

Stimulus questions in case the respondent doesn't develop:

3.2.1. Were they doing their homework and asynchronous activities?
3.2.2. Were they participating in synchronous meetings? Did they turn their cameras on? Were they active in the break-out rooms? Were some students more active than others? Why do you think that was the case?
3.2.3. Did students express anything regarding the difference between face-to-face and online learning from the perspective of human contact or the level of interaction?
3.2.4. Did students express any concerns regarding time management?

3.3. What's your perception of your students' performance in Spanish during the Spring semester?

Stimulus questions in case the respondent doesn't develop:

3.3.1. Do you think it was similar to face-to-face? More or less efficient?
3.3.2. Did they progress well in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation? Was it different from face-to-face? How and why?

3.4. Speaking about your own practices as a teacher, how different was it from face-to-face?

Stimulus questions in case the respondent doesn't develop:

3.4.1. Were you able to give enough feedback? Why?
3.4.2. Were you able to answer your students' questions? Why?
3.4.3. How do you think you can make your practice of Spanish teaching online better? What would you change?

3.5. Would you like to add something more?

Author statement

Ana Ruiz-Alonso-Bartol: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Writing-Original Draft, Writing-Review & Editing.

Diane Querrien: Methodology, Resources, Validation, Visualization, Writing-Original Draft, Writing-Review Editing, Supervision.

Shelley Dykstra: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Writing-Original Draft, Writing-Review & Editing.

Paloma Fernández-Mira: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Writing-Original Draft, Writing-Review & Editing.

Claudia Sánchez-Gutiérrez: Conceptualization, Methodology, Resources, Fornal Analysis, Writing-Original Draft, Writing-Review & Editing, Supervision, Project Administration.

References

Blake, R. (2012). Best practices in online learning: Is it for everyone? In F. Rubio, & J. Thoms (Eds.), *AAUSC 2012 volume – issues in language program direction: Hybrid language teaching and learning: Exploring theoretical, pedagogical and curricular issues.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Blake, R., Wilson, N. L., Cetto, M., & Pardo-Ballester, C. (2008). Measuring oral proficiency in distance, face-to-face, and blended classrooms. *Language, Learning and Technology, 12*(3), 114–127. Retrieved from http://llt.msu.edu/vol12num3/blakeetal/.

Bovermann, K., Weidlich, J., & Bastiaens, T. (2018). Online learning readiness and attitudes towards gaming in gamified online learning – a mixed method case study. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 15*, 27. https://educationaltechnologyjournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s41239-018-0107-0.

Burston, J. (2003). Proving IT works. *CALICO Journal, 20*(2), 219–226. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/24149496.

Cavanaugh, J. K., & Jacquemin, S. J. (2015). A large sample comparison of grade based student learning outcomes in online vs. face-to-face courses. *Online Learning, 19*(2). Retrieved from https://olj.onlinelearningconsortium.org/index.php/olj/article/view/454.

Chenoweth, N. A., & Murday, K. (2003). Measuring student learning in an online French course. *Calico Journal, 20*(2), 285–314. https://doi.org/10.1558/cj.v20i2.219-226

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2014). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Despain, J. S. (2003). Achievement and attrition rate differences between traditional and Internet-based beginning Spanish courses. *Foreign Language Annals, 36*(2), 243–257. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2003.tb01474.x

Discenza, R., Howard, C., & K Schenk, K. (2001). *The design and management of effective distance learning programs.* Hershey: IGI Global.

Enkin, E., & Mejías-Bikandi, E. (2017). The effectiveness of online teaching in an advanced Spanish language course. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 27*(1), 176–197. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12112

Federal Communications Commission. (2020). 2020 broadband deployment report. https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-20-50A1.pdf.

Gacs, A., Goertler, S., & Spasova, S. (2020). Planned online language education versus crisis-prompted online language teaching : Lessons for the future. *Foreign Language Annals, 53*(2), 380–392. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12460

Gilbert-Dulaney, S. (2001). *How to Be a successful online student.* New York: Mc-Graw-Hill.

Goertler, S., & Gacs, A. (2018). Assessment in online German: Assessment methods and results. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German, 51*(2), 156–174. https://doi.org/10.1111/tger.12071

Guillén, G., Sawin, T., & Avineri, N. (2020). Zooming out of the crisis: Language and human collaboration. *Foreign Language Annals, 53*(2), 320–328. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12459

Harris, S. M., Larrier, Y. I., & Castano-Bishop, M. (2011). Development of the student expectations of online learning survey (SEOLS): A pilot study. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 14*(4). Retrieved from https://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/winter144/harris_larrier_bishop144.html.

Hat, T. (2020). *Adrift in a pandemic: Survey of 3,089 students finds uncertainty about returning to college.* Retrieved from https://tophat.com/press-releases/adrift-in-a-pandemic-survey/.

Hodges, C., Moore, S., Lockee, B., Trust, T., & Bond, M. (2020). The difference between emergency remote teaching and online learning. *Educause Review, 27*, 1–12. Retrieved from https://er.educause.edu/articles/2020/3/the-difference-between-emergency-remote-teaching-and-online-learning.

Hsu, Y.-C., & Shiue, Y.-M. (2005). The effect of self-directed learning readiness on achievement comparing face-to-face and two-way distance learning instruction. *International Journal of Instructional Media, 32*(2), 143–156. Retrieved from https://www.learntechlib.org/p/64263/.

Huang, M. (2021). A case study of ESL students' remote speaking class learning experiences in a Canada university during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 3*(5), 32–44. https://doi.org/10.32996/jeltal

Hung, M. L., Chou, C., Chen, C. H., & Own, Z. Y. (2010). Learner readiness for online learning: Scale development and student perceptions. *Computers & Education, 55*(3), 1080–1090. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2010.05.004

John, O., Naumann, L. P., & Soto, C. J. (2008). Paradigm shift to the integrative Big Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and conceptual issues. In O. P. John, R. W. Robins, & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (3rd ed., pp. 114–158). New York: Guilford Press.

Levy, M., Wang, Y., & Chen, N. S. (2009). Developing the skills and techniques for online language teaching: A focus on the process. *International Journal of Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 3*(1), 17–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501220802655417

Loewen, S., & Wolff, D. (2016). Peer interaction in F2F and CMC contexts. In M. Sato, & S. Ballinger (Eds.), *Peer interaction and second language learning: Pedagogical potential and research agenda* (pp. 163–184). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Lomicka, L. (2020). Creating and sustaining virtual language communities. *Foreign Language Annals, 53*(2), 306–313. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12456

Lord, G., & Rossomondo, A. (2019). *Contraseña: Your password to foundational Spanish 3.0.* Lingrolearning.

MacIntyre, P. D., Gregersen, T., & Mercer, S. (2020). Language teachers' coping strategies during the Covid-19 conversion to online teaching: Correlations with stress, wellbeing and negative emotions. *System, 94*, 102352. https://doi.org/10.1016/2Fj.system.2020.102352

Martin, F., & Bolliger, D. U. (2018). Engagement matters: Student perceptions on the importance of engagement strategies in the online learning environment. *Online Learning, 22*(1), 205–222. https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v22i1.1092

McBrien, J. L., Jones, P., & Cheng, R. (2009). Virtual spaces: Employing a synchronous online classroom to facilitate student engagement in online learning. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, 10*(3), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v10i3.605

Moneypenny, D. B., & Aldrich, R. S. (2016). Online and face-to-face language learning: A comparative analysis of oral proficiency in introductory Spanish. *Journal of Educators Online, 13*(2), 105–133. https://doi.org/10.9743/JEO.2016.2.2

Moser, K. M., Wei, T., & Brenner, D. (2021). Remote teaching during COVID-19: Implications from a national survey of language educators. *System, 97*, 102431. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102431

Pardo-Ballester, C. (2018). La evaluación de la destreza oral: Una comparación entre cursos "híbridos a distancia" y "presenciales ALAO". *Hispania, 101*(4), 620–640. Retrieved July 12, 2021, from https://www.jstor.org/stable/26781134.

Paulsen, J., & McCormick, A. C. (2020). Reassessing disparities in online learner student engagement in higher education. *Educational Researcher, 49*(1), 20–29. https://doi.org/10.3102/2F0013189X19898690

Peng, H., Tsai, C. C., & Wu, Y. T. (2006). University students' self-efficacy and their attitudes toward the internet: The role of students' perceptions of the internet. *Educational Studies, 32*(1), 73–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/03055690500416025

Prensky, M. (2001a). Digital natives, digital immigrants Part 1. *On the Horizon, 9*(5), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1108/10748120110424816

Prensky, M. (2001b). Digital natives, digital immigrants Part 2: Do they really think differently? *On the Horizon, 9*(6), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1108/10748120110424843

QSR International Pty Ltd. (2020). NVivo (released in March 2020) https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home.

Roper, A. (2007). How students develop online learning skills. *Educause Quarterly, 30*(1), 62–65. Retrieved from: https://er.educause.edu/articles/2007/1/how-students-develop-online-learning-skills.

Ross, A. F., & DiSalvo, M. L. (2020). Negotiating displacement, regaining community: The Harvard Language Center's response to the COVID-19 crisis. *Foreign Language Annals, 53*(2), 371–379. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12463

Rovai, A. P. (2002). Building sense of community at a distance. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, 3*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v3i1.79

Rubio, F. (2015). Assessment of oral proficiency in online language courses: Beyond reinventing the wheel. *The Modern Language Journal, 99*(2), 405–408. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12234_4

Seaman, J., Allen, I., & Seaman, J. (2018). *Grade increase: Tracking distance education in the United States*. Pearson. Retrieved from http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/highered.html.

Senior, R. (2006). Class-centered teaching: Creating learning communities to enhance collaborative learning. *English Language Teaching Journal, 63*(4), 393–396. Retrieved from: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/plc.pdf.

Smith, P., Murphy, K., & Mahoney, S. (2003). Towards identifying factors underlying readiness for online learning: An exploratory study. *Distance Education, 24*(1), 57–67. https://doi.org/10.1080/01587910303043

Transforming teaching: New skills for online language learning spaces. In Stickler, U., & Hampel, R. (Eds.), *Developing online language teaching: Research-based pedagogies and reflective practices*, (pp. 63–77). (2015) (pp. 63–77). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Stickler, U., & Shi, L. (2013). Supporting Chinese speaking skills online. *System, 41*(1), 50–69. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2012.12.001

Strambi, A., & Bouvet, E. (2003). Flexibility and interaction at a distance: A mixed-model environment for language learning. *Language, Learning and Technology, 7*(3), 81–102. DOI: 10125/25215.

US Department of Education. (2009). *Evaluation of evidence-based practices in online learning: A meta-analysis and review of online learning studies*. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf.

US Department of Education. (2019). *Digest of education statistics 2019*. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2021/2021009.pdf.

Vlachopoulos, D., & Makri, A. (2019). Online communication and interaction in distance higher education: A framework study of good practice. *International Review of Education, 65*, 605–632. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-019-09792-3

Warshauer, M. (2000). On-line learning in second language classrooms: An ethnographic study. In M. Warshauer, & R. Kern (Eds.), *Network-based language teaching: Concepts and practice* (pp. 41–58). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yu, T., & Richardson, J. C. (2015). An exploratory factor Analysis and reliability analysis of the student online learning readiness (SOLR) instrument. *Online Learning Journal, 19*(5). https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v19i5.593. Retrieved from.

Zachary, R. (1986). *Shipley Institute of living scale: A revised manual*. Western Psychological Services.