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LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEIVED
EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING READINESS
MA Thesis

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Abstract

Emergency remote teaching (ERT) became a necessity to ensure continued education during the COVID lockdowns that began in 2019. Research on this topic currently has a focus on the past or the pandemic lockdowns, less research has been done on teachers' readiness for future ERT. Language is critical to ensure communication skills in students. This paper seeks to explore language teachers' perceived emergency remote teaching readiness. This was done through semi-structured exploratory interviews with fourteen language teachers from several different countries. Themes that were identified across these interviews were awareness of their teaching environment, the support they are provided, personal factors, past experiences, the nature of the emergency, and challenges faced during language ERT.

Keywords: *emergency remote teaching, EFL, ESL, language teaching, readiness, education*

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1. Introduction

Online classes acted as a solution to pandemic regulations and societal health risks during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. Classes have since started to return to in-person education around the world. Research regarding online education recently has focused on what occurred during the pandemic, and less research is being conducted on maintaining online class readiness for future situations. This is particularly true with language learning, it is a unique field of education, as student interaction is one of the main objectives in its pedagogy as discussed in Harmer's (2007) book on teaching English. The language learning market is crucial for personal, political, and economic communication.

Understanding the readiness of language teachers for another emergency situation, such as COVID, has important financial, educational, and societal ties. Educational institutes functioning online during the emergency lockdowns ensured the continuation of education for many learners. A UNESCO report on the subject estimates 1.5 billion learners were affected (UNESCO 2022). Research regarding remote education in the current teaching climate has a focus on COVID-19 (Tonbuluğlu & Akbel, 2023). However, the world will continue to face challenges. The disastrous situation in Ukraine is an example. In a study on the impact of the war, it was found that a majority of higher education institutions in the country have used online or hybrid education (Antoniuk, 2023). There cannot be a belief that emergency remote teaching (ERT) will only occur during pandemic lockdowns. Unforeseen situations could leave teachers without other options for teaching environments. The study of ERT, classified by the terminology, started after Hodges et al. 's paper (2020) created the term during the beginning of the COVID pandemic. A literature review of widely available papers on ERT found only approximately 200 papers widely available (Tonbuluğlu & Akbel, 2023). Language teaching was not mentioned once as a noticeable theme or focus in the review.

Currently, a common research focus in relation to emergency remote teaching is on the pandemic (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022; Ferri et al., 2020; Rai & Rajeshwari, 2021; Tonbuluğlu & Akbel, 2023; Toquero & Talidong, 2020). There is less research on the current situation for teachers and their ERT readiness. This will leave the language teaching field unprepared for the next emergency (Pozas et al., 2022; Scherer et al., 2021). Language teachers are particularly affected as their classes require more interaction (Compton, 2009; Hampel & Stickler, 2005; Rai & Rajeshwari, 2021).

Language learning is a critical subject for allowing communication worldwide. Studies demonstrate reduced teacher enthusiasm and mental health stemming from difficulties with distance education (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022; Pozas et al., 2022). Ensuring teachers are well prepared for future emergency remote teaching situations will reduce the negative impact on the teachers. The benefits of teacher readiness were indicated by studies on pandemic ERT (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022; Pozas et al., 2022). A high level of readiness among teachers leads to reduced anxiety around unknown factors that the future may introduce. Viewing an ERT system as a constant required by learning institutions could promote better development of and training with these systems (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022). Exploring these systems with an understanding of teachers' current readiness can expose the gaps.

2. Theoretical Framework

To gather information about teacher's perceptions of their emergency remote teaching readiness (ERTR), a set of factors affecting it needed to be established. These factors have been gathered from relevant research in the field of education, remote teaching readiness, and language teaching. They are divided into personal ones and teaching environment factors. Personal factors are concerned with the teacher's own skills, motivation, and attitude. The teaching environment, in relation to a teacher's perception of their readiness, covers the interaction with other entities in the education process including the ERT system.

2.1 Emergency Remote Teaching

Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) is a separate situation from distance education. Distance education is defined as the learner having distance from the learning material, in time or space (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Remote education solely refers to a distance in space between the learner, and the teacher and learning resources. The key difference between distance education and ERT is highlighted by Bozkurt and Sharma (2020). ERT was not the intended plan and is an obligation. A key point in the paper is that separating the terminology will be important for distance education's reputation. It is a separate growing field where distant learning was the plan, and it is considered in the curriculum development. ERT during the COVID-19 pandemic led to negative views of online or distance education (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020).

The creation of the term comes from Hodges et al.'s paper (2020):

“Emergency remote teaching (ERT) [...] involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction or education that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face or as blended or hybrid courses and that will return to that format once the crisis or emergency has abated.” (p. 6)

Researchers point out that preparation is required for future ERT situations as it is vital for mitigating educational disruptions (Compton, 2009; Hodges et al., 2020; Howard et al., 2021; Pozas et al., 2022). A lack of current research on ERT has been noted and further work is recommended by researchers in the field of online education and ERT (Pozas et al., 2022; Scherer et al., 2021). This is a long-standing issue. Compton's (2009) research review on online teaching stated there were little to no resources for teaching languages online. Readiness for ERT situations is vital as the COVID-19 pandemic is decreasing in severity, but future situations are bound to occur. Nature itself may be a cause of an ERT situation as pointed out by Hodges et al. (2020), they gave examples of hurricanes and wildfires. Preparation for the next emergency is therefore critical, and studying teachers' readiness will shed light on how prepared educational intuitions may be.

Readiness is a broad term but can be narrowed down specifically for online teaching. Martin et al. (2019) stated “We define faculty readiness to teach online as a state of faculty preparation for online teaching” (p. 100). Other definitions use more specific terminology. Alqabbani et al. (2021) stated “readiness, which can be measured in terms of having a proper e-learning infrastructure in place and being trained to use learning management systems” (p. 5). These factors of systems, training and the teacher's own skills involve numerous facets. For example, improving the instructor's attitude towards these ERT systems was pointed out as a way to improve the e-learning experience (Alqabbani et al., 2021).

Scherer et al. studied the readiness of 1,144 educators across 64 countries in their paper on teacher readiness for online learning. The conclusion was that readiness fluctuated vastly across visible groups, and increasing readiness among teachers requires an individual approach, though several factors did affect many teachers (Scherer et al., 2021). Howard et al. (2021) also focused on individual teachers and their institutions to determine readiness. The authors stated that teachers and their institutions need to be considered together to help understand the teacher's situation. Readiness has been found to have an impact on teacher's emotional state during ERT by Pozas et al. (2022). Therefore, readiness in these situations is not only important for the institution but also the teachers.

2.2 Personal Readiness

Personal readiness in this paper will refer to the factors identified as important to teachers' readiness that stem from the teacher themselves. These are the teacher's technical skills, motivation, past experiences, and attitude.

An instructor's technical skills were deemed an important factor for success in online teaching (Palero & Mutya, 2022). Their ability to not only utilize but promote the technology effectively was found to be important (Volver & Lord, 2000). Results of other studies show that a lack of technical skills is a major issue in delivery of quality education for some teachers (Ferri et al., 2020). Technical skills can also affect a teacher's perceptions of ability. Martin et al. (2019) found that faculty reported little to no prior online training which led to low perceptions of their ability to teach online. Martin et al. (2019) recommended teachers with less than five years of online teaching experience undergo high quality training. Technical skills are not just technological competence, the ability to facilitate socializing and building a community are also important skills that teachers require (Compton, 2009). A set of levels to distinguish skill proficiency and types in online teaching were developed by Hampler and Stickler (2005). The first level would simply be the ability to use computer accessories and basic programs. This increases to the fifth level facilitating communicative competence. Finally, the seventh level is achieved once a teacher has developed their own style of online teaching by recognizing their strengths and fully utilizing the resources available to them (Hampel & Stickler, 2005). Technical skills not only determine what the teacher can accomplish but these skills have been linked to motivation (Pozas et al., 2022). They found teachers who were less technologically competent may experience lower motivation (Pozas et al., 2022). Although technical skills do affect other areas, they are not solely an adequate measure to test readiness. Alqabbani et al. (2021) found technical readiness did not equate to personal readiness. The study reported high perceived effectiveness due to prior training, but also high levels of anxiety. Teachers' expertise levels with technology can affect their motivation (Pozas et al., 2022), capabilities (Hampel & Stickler, 2005), and the quality of education they deliver (Ferri et al., 2020). The importance of these skills then must be considered when determining overall readiness for an ERT situation.

The desire to put technical skills to use and engage in ERT is also significant, and it falls under motivation. High levels of motivation in teachers are linked to higher engagement in and satisfaction with their work (Levesque et al., 2004). The strength or type of motivation a teacher

experiences is valuable to understand, as it can affect their ability to teach. The Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST) was developed by Fernet et al. (2008) to create a way to measure teachers' motivation to complete certain tasks. It ranks motivation from intrinsic to external to amotivation on a scale. It bases this scale off the self-determination theory created by Deci and Ryan (1985). Intrinsic motivation is ranked as the highest level of motivation and involves being motivated due to the pleasure of completing a task. External motivation comes from a stimulus or reason originating from a person's environment such as a deadline, or peer pressure. Finally, amotivation is the lack of motivation or uncertainty over why a task is being performed. Intrinsic motivation around ERT can have further benefits besides simply increasing desire to participate. Self-directed improvement of teaching skills relevant to ERT was associated with improved motivation, enthusiasm, and confidence by language teachers (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022). Teachers in the study reported high levels of motivation to improve their skills. Provision of opportunities to self-improve is a recommendation of the study, as results show teachers may possess high levels of motivation to adapt in the face of ERT (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022). Utilizing teachers' motivation can improve an educational institution's readiness for an ERT situation.

Attitude has been deemed an essential area of research for studying instructors' ability to teach online (Martin et al., 2019). The theory of planned behavior (TPB) by Ajzen (1991) states that an attitude toward a behavior "refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question" (p. 188). The theory finds that the more favorable an attitude is towards a behavior the more likely the person is to engage in said behavior. As well, attitudes and personal considerations were found to be a more reliable indicator of behavior than social pressure. Attitudes were categorized as favorable, positive towards a behavior, or unfavorable, negative towards a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Evaluating teachers' attitudes towards conducting ERT allows an insight into how likely a teacher will engage in ERT. Also, the teacher's attitude towards training for ERT and using the systems provided can improve readiness. Scherer et al.'s (2020) findings in their paper on the theory of planned behavior (TPB) showed that technology acceptance attitudes could predict technology use. Therefore, discovering if a teacher's attitude towards ERT is positive or negative will give insight into whether the teacher is likely to engage in ERT and use the remote teaching technology available to them.

2.3 Teaching Environment Readiness

In Adov and Mäeots' (2021) article on teachers' use of technology during the pandemic, a common obstacle was infrastructure use, this was true across levels of willingness to use technology. Readiness goes beyond a teacher's abilities and skills. It incorporates the systems that are available and the support they receive (Adov & Mäeots, 2021). ERT has quickly humbled many institutions that recognized themselves as technologically advanced. The science teachers sampled by Adov and Mäeots came from Estonia, a country named as a global leader in digitalization and home to many major tech companies (Paraskevopoulos, 2021).

The systems for teachers to use in ERT such as video conferencing, online whiteboards, messaging systems, and emails can enhance the teachers work experience (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022). Can and Silman-Karanfil (2022) found language teachers felt it allowed them to experience genuine teaching again, as their sessions incorporated more interaction, which is integral to language teaching (Compton, 2009; Hampel & Stickler, 2005; Harmer, 2007; Rai & Rajeshwari, 2021). Therefore, the system readiness for an ERT situation also has an impact on the teachers. Ferri et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of all aspects of the system being ready. They noted that plans should be made with the available devices and internet speed in mind. The system should also incorporate backups to ensure complete readiness for an ERT situation, as systems can fail (Bao, 2020).

Teaching is an intensely complicated activity and the list of external factors affecting a teacher's readiness changes for everyone. Their perception of these factors includes the support they experience. Azjen (1991) found "The more resources and opportunities individuals believe they possess, and the fewer obstacles or impediments they anticipate, the greater should be their perceived control over the behavior" (p. 196). The obstacles can also be a lack of support for an ERT situation. Institutional support is a pivotal area of research to determine a teacher's actual readiness and their perceived readiness (Howard et al, 2021). The authors found that teachers with medium perceived readiness felt they had less overall support and believe it affected their perceived readiness. Bao's (2020) case study on online teaching experiences, found support from technology teams at teachers' schools was an issue when they needed to conduct ERT as a response to COVID.

The support can derive from the institution they are a part of or other individuals also in the teacher's teaching environment. Collaboration with colleagues was linked to positive

emotions as teachers learned to adapt during their time conducting ERT in the midst of the pandemic (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022). Teachers should be cognizant of the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders in the system. This will allow them to access resources and correct gaps in the system (Compton, 2009). A strong ERT system and technical skills may not guarantee readiness as Scherer et al. (2021) found institutional support may not make up for low self-confidence. Ferri et al. (2020) recommended institutions have educational material plans in place with a focus on suitable interactive educational resources such as videos and games.

An interesting further extension of possible support is mentioned by Bozkurt and Sharma (2020) in their paper on the changing educational landscape due to COVID-19. They list therapists and sociologists as possible support for teachers and students. This further exemplifies that the support for teachers varies greatly among individuals and the resources or connections available to them. A needs assessment is one recommended strategy for support entities to improve teachers' readiness (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022).

The aim of this paper is to gain insight into the perceptions of language teachers' readiness for emergency remote teaching (ERT). This paper is searching for answers to the following research questions in semi-structured interviews with language teachers:

1. What have the teachers learned about factors affecting their readiness for emergency remote teaching situations?
2. How do teachers perceive the emergency remote teaching system they use, and the support they receive in an emergency remote teaching situation?
3. How do teachers perceive their readiness for emergency remote teaching situations?
4. What could improve the effect of these factors on their emergency remote teaching readiness?

3. Method

This paper will collect information on these topics by conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews with language teachers. The language teachers chosen are from globally diverse working locations. Presently, they are teaching at different levels within the education system. The participants are teaching in public and private institutions. Private tutoring experiences are also considered.

3.1 Sample

To gather the necessary data on teachers' perceived emergency remote teaching readiness, interviews were conducted with fourteen language teachers. A non-probabilistic judgmental sampling method was chosen (Etikan & Bala, 2017; Taherdoost, 2016). Judgmental sampling is a common sampling method used in exploratory research, as specific groups of participants are chosen based on criteria set out by the researcher. It is ideal for exploratory research (Taherdoost, 2016). Therefore, due to limited resources, time constraints, and available contacts in the field of study, judgmental sampling allowed for the specific targets of the research to be contacted and interviewed. To match the sample criteria participants needed to be actively teaching in the language teaching field at any level. Participants were contacts of the researcher and their teaching network. They were contacted through email and social media.

Table 1. Sample Demographics

Demographic areas	Participant information and number
Current teaching method	In person (9) Distance (curriculum designed for online) (3) Mixed: Alternating online and in person (2) Hybrid: Simultaneously online and in person (2)
Language taught	English (12) Spanish (1) Ukrainian (1)
Level taught	University (3) High School (1) Grade School (2) After school classes children (4) After school classes teenagers (3) After school classes adults (1) Private tutor (1) Language classes for immigrants (1)

Table 2. Individual Teacher Demographics

Teacher	Age	Country/ area of students	Class type	Country/ area of residence	Education level	Years of teaching experience	Gender
T1	31	Canada	University	Canada	Ma	1+	F
T2	28	Taiwan	Pvt class	Taiwan	Ba	6.5	F
T3	48	Taiwan	Pvt class	Taiwan	Ba	23	M
T4	63	China	Uni Online EAP	Canada	Ma	30	F
T5	30	Taiwan	Pvt class	Taiwan	Ma	6	F
T6	66	Canada	Online ESP	Canada	Ma	2	M
T7	32	Taiwan	Pvt class	Taiwan	Ba	6	F
T8	44	Ukraine	Grade school	Estonia	Ma	24	F
T9	29	Chile	Online Tutor	Estonia	Ma	8	F
T10	31	Baltics	Sec school	Baltics	Ma	2	F
T11	40	Spain	Pvt mixed	Spain	Ba	5.5	M
T12	27	Canada	Newcomers	Canada	Ba	3	F
T13	NA	Vietnam	Pvt class	Vietnam	Ba	3+	F
T14	45	Ukraine	Uni ESP	Ukraine	Phd	23	F

Notes: Pvt = Private; Uni = University; EAP = English for Academic Purposes; ESP = English for Specific Purposes; Sec = Secondary; Newcomers = Newcomers to an English country language class

The participants were asked for consent to record the interview and use it for research before the interview began. They will be referred to by their number or grouped by their characteristics displayed in Table 1 and 2. Their names will remain anonymous as well as any details they wish to keep anonymous.

3.2 Data Collection Method

This study is a cross-sectional (Rindfleisch et al., 2008) look at the ERTR of language teachers in April and May of 2023. The focus of the study is exploring the readiness of teachers for future ERT situations.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the data gathering method. Semi-structured interviews allow for exploration of a topic through follow up questions, the open-ended initial questions also allow for the interviewee to fully share the information they regarding the subject (Turner, 2010). Semi-structured interviews are recommended as a data gathering method with these research aims in mind (Kitto et al., 2008). The exploratory nature of the research means the interviews are hoping to gain access to information and perceptions rather than clearly organize information (Kelly et al., 2010). As language teachers' online experience may differ from other subjects (Compton, 2009; Hampel & Stickler, 2005; Rai & Rajeshwari, 2021) factors explored in the theory chapter acted as a base to create a question set from with the aim to explore the situation for language teachers.

The five-phase process framework for qualitative interviews developed by Kallio et al. (2016) determined a semi-structured interview would be an appropriate data collection method for this research. The five-phase process was then used to create the interview structure.

(1) The suitability of the research aims was compared to the uses for semi-structured interviews and determined to be compatible, as people's perceptions and opinions will be analyzed (Barriball & While, 1994).

(2) Previous knowledge on the subject was gathered and studied, evidenced in the theoretical overview. This allowed the researcher to gain understanding on the subject knowledge and to add to their own career experience in the field. Understanding of the subject matter of the research is a critical component of semi-structured interviews (Rabionet, 2011).

(3) An interview guide was developed along with a defined list of questions shown in Appendix A. The questions were developed to be participant oriented (Barriball & While, 1994) and clearly worded without leading the interviewee (Turner, 2010). Follow up questions were used to clarify the main themes of the interview for the participant (Turner, 2010), and focus the interview on the main themes (Baumbusch, 2010).

(4) Pilot testing was conducted by field testing the interview process (Kallio et al., 2016) with a participant that fit the sample criteria and it shed light on the best way to conduct the interviews

(Barriball & While, 1994). The focus was on developing questions that delve into the experiences of the participants to elicit the maximum amount of data (Turner, 2010). The pilot interview was a positive experience for the interviewee. The length of the initial interview was found to be 15 minutes. The factors focused on in the interview were reported to cover the interviewee's experience with ERTR. Extra questions were added to gather more data in the following interviews. The question set also adapted as trends emerged from the interviews. (5) An interview guide and the questions (Appendix A) were created and are provided in this paper. The guide and questions aim to be clear, finished, and logical while allowing universal replication (Kallio et al., 2016).

The interviewees were provided with the questions and a letter of information on the research (Appendix B) beforehand to increase their time to consider the topics. The 30-minute to hour long interviews were conducted online using the video conferencing platform Zoom. The participants were asked for their permission to have the interviews recorded and have their responses used for research and published, this was done in an oral consent segment at the start of the interview (Appendix C).

The interview structure followed McNamara's interview guidelines (1999). The purpose of the interview was provided when the participants were contacted. The format, structure, and time frame of the interview was explained to them before the interview. The interviews were recorded using Zoom and OBS studios. The teacher also took notes on the interview as it was conducted. The interviewees were informed they could contact the researcher after the interview if they wished to further discuss the interview. They were sent a Microsoft Forms survey (Appendix D) about their demographics which are displayed in Table 1 and 2.

3.3 Data Analysis Technique

To achieve the aim of learning about teachers' perceptions of their readiness for an ERT situation, the interviews were analyzed using an inductive approach called the general inductive approach developed by Thomas (2006). The approach uses the evaluation of objectives and questions, developed by the researcher, to create a focus for the analysis, but not to set expectations for the findings and follows five steps:

1. *Preparation of raw data files:* The transcripts of the interviews were uploaded to Microsoft 365 and transcribed into text. These texts were compared to the audio several times by the researcher to ensure accuracy. Backups of the audio and transcripts were created.
2. *Close reading of texts:* The transcripts were read closely by the researcher several times to gain, then deepen, the researcher's understanding of the participants' experiences and to search for common themes and events.
3. *Creation of categories:* Based on the readings the researcher identified categories and themes in the raw data. General categories were identified initially based on the research aims, then specific categories were found based on repeated reading and study of the data. Text segments identifying themes were marked in the transcript, and copied to individual theme spreadsheets.
4. *Overlapping coding and uncoded text:* An important aspect of inductive analysis that differs from quantitative analysis is that a text segment can be marked as evidence of more than one theme.
5. *Continuing revision and refinement of category system:* The identified categories were further analyzed for sub-topics. The categories were compared to look for redundancy and themes that could be grouped together. This allowed for a model to be built off the most important categories (Creswell, 1998). Relevant quotations that best conveyed the core theme of the category were chosen for examples.

After the model was developed the findings were assessed for trustworthiness using stakeholder and member checks (Thomas, 2006). Copies of preliminary versions of the findings were provided to the participants and they were asked to assess the accuracy and approve the interpretations made from their interviews. Also, a test of the clarity of categories was done (Thomas, 2006), a second coder was given the text segments, identified as an example of a category, and the categories identified. The second coder then attributed the text segments to the identified categories to assess if they also identify the same links. This suggests the initial coding of text segments and identification of categories was correct.

4. Findings

The interviews' semi-structured nature led to the exploration of a variety of topics around ERT and distance or remote teaching. Several key ideas appeared in many of the interviews. These were coded, gathered, and grouped into six main themes. The themes that will be presented as

the result of the interviews are awareness, support, past experience, personal factors, the nature of the emergency, and finally, the challenges that affect language teachers specifically. Each theme contains several factors and quotes from the interview directly related to the topic. They demonstrate factors teachers perceive affect their readiness and ones that they advise should be considered in the future for themselves and other teachers in the field. The final part of the results will cover challenges faced by language teachers and explain reasons why general teaching research does not always relate to the field of language teaching.

4.1 Awareness

Awareness appeared as a theme in several interviews and was discussed as an important consideration for teachers regarding ERT. Awareness in this context is an entity's knowledge of the nature of and the happenings in their environment. The awareness of the institution where the teacher worked was mentioned as a common influence on that teacher's readiness both positively and negatively. A lack of awareness on the part of the institution could impact a teacher's ability to teach by the closing of the school or the cancellation of classes. This was experienced in Korea and Spain.

In Korea it was, suddenly COVID it exists, and [...] we have to stop going into school[...] one week turned into two weeks and two weeks and into three weeks and [...] then it became a month [...]. You know that just results in a lot of stress for everybody because we didn't even know if we would go back at all. (T5)

Awareness alone, however, was not enough to prevent schools from shutting down and laying teachers off. Teacher 11 stated their school knew the pandemic was coming but they were not prepared for the results.

I started a job in, at the very beginning of February 2020, at an Academy in Lebrija [...]They had zero, even though we all knew the pandemic was coming, they had zero prepared for it at all and they basically shut down the school. (T11)

Awareness paired with pivoting to create resources and systems assisted Teacher 7's school and allowed them to experience only minor disruptions, avoiding the same major issues experienced by the schools Teacher 5 and 11 worked at.

So, when the pandemic first happened, Taiwan was closed off to the rest of the world and we didn't have the same issues that everyone else had [...] where they had to start teaching online immediately. However, we were prepared for it as a school because we were concerned that it would happen to us[...]what happened was first, our school prepared by getting all of our curriculum online, and they had a big school wide meeting

where we practiced with other teachers how we would conduct classes online, if we ever had to. (T7)

Teacher 7 reported their school provided training and resources to teach from home before the pandemic started, this led to only a two-day disruption where emergency lesson plans were given. "The first two days of classes were provided by us to kind of ease into ERT, into online teaching" (T7).

Another area where awareness proved important was a teacher's awareness of their students' digital literacy, resources, and language level. Students with low technical skill levels encountered several problems in the interviewed teachers' classes and could cause the lesson to stop. Teacher 12's experience with a literacy class, so adult students without native literacy let alone English literacy, presented additional challenges as she had to teach digital and English literacy at the same time.

With the literacy class [...] if your learners don't have those digital literacy skills, that's even harder, like our students come from all over. Some of them have zero education back home or they just never had any technology [...] It's those digital literacy skills that are killer. (T12)

Teacher 6 experienced a similar situation, but another student was able to assist.

They were Syrians. The man, the man could read and write Arabic, the woman, she was Arabic, but she couldn't read and write it[...]I don't know what I would have done online if I didn't have the man, because at least you know at least I could write something in English and I could put it into Google Translate and then I could post it to communicate with him at the beginning. (T6)

Here the teacher's ability to work with the students' digital literacy skills can be the deciding factor if a teacher is ready for an ERT situation. A major theme among teachers in particular geographical areas was the students' access to resources. Some students were not able to afford a device to access the internet. Teacher 13 experienced this issue when asked about factors affecting ERT readiness. "Some of the kids in the schools that didn't have the money or the technology to continue learning online, I'd say they've fallen pretty behind, sadly." (T13). Also, when teaching young students, many teachers found physical activities increased engagement, awareness of the student's physical learning space can help a teacher plan appropriate activities.

Resources provided by the institutions and ones accessed by teachers themselves to use in these activities varied tremendously. Teacher 3 was compiling and searching through these resources before the pandemic occurred. "I use a lot of websites for worksheets [...] So, I built up

this huge data bank of digital stuff, even before [...] COVID hit" (T3). This online wealth of resources, lesson plans, and activities should make language teachers' jobs easier, if they have access to the internet. However, some teachers were not aware of these resources and struggled.

A lot of the teachers at our school were struggling to come up with activities or to find resources when all the work had essentially been done for us and was shared across boards and different websites. (T2)

Awareness paired with the next major theme, support, seemed to be key in improving teachers' ERTR.

4.2 Support

Support was the broadest theme that surfaced in the interviews. The most common and surprising aspects will be discussed. The theme will be broken into the sources of support and their effect on language teachers' emergency remote teaching readiness (ERTR). The primary areas of support were the institution the teacher worked with, the teacher's colleagues, online support, student support, and finally parental support for teachers of children. Support in the context of the interviews incorporated providing resources, plans, encouragement, inspiration, and assistance. As well, a lack of support and its effect on teachers' ERTR is also considered.

The teachers interviewed have worked at and currently work at a variety of schools, both public and private. The nature of a school can dictate the challenges a teacher faces and heavily influence the support available due to resources. Teacher 9 worked at several schools of different socioeconomic levels and is now currently self-employed. The differences experienced by her were stark. The wealthy private school she worked at was able to provide considerable support, which was contrasted by a less well-off public school.

In the private school, by communications, by e-mail [...] they have a department of communication with journalists who have this function [contacting parents] so the teachers are not in that situation, the communication department do everything and in the other context [public school]. Me, I need to call to the parents. (T9)

Teacher 9 could further contrast this situation with being a private tutor where there was no institution to assist when she had computer failure. "I spent one week without any laptop without teaching" (T9).

Teacher 9 summarized the importance of institutional support on a teacher's readiness. "It's better when you have an infrastructure, an institution behind you, because you have less

responsibilities and you can spend your time in planning your class” (T9). This sentiment was mirrored by Teacher 5 who believed institutional support and the systems they have prepared are a “dominant” factor. “The school's preparedness is obviously a huge part of it. Like I say, that's like the dominant part” (T5).

The importance of having a system in place that allows teachers to ready themselves for ERT was mentioned before by teacher 7. This support will be referred to as an ERT system in this paper and refers to the plan, resources, and training an institution has ready, and provides their teachers in case of an ERT situation. Teacher 12 discusses the benefits of having such a system not just for themselves but for the school as a whole.

I think because there's no like set guidelines on, okay, if there is an emergency, this is what you do. Like we don't have that written down[...]if we had those in place, it would be a lot easier for somebody to handle a situation like that. (T12)

Reducing uncertainty will reduce the strain on the faculty. As well, teacher 5 stated it can provide a sense of certainty when giving advice on the situation as the emergency unfolds.

I would say, just have a system in place, however basic, even if you don't think you're going to need it. Just have it anyways because it's so much harder to figure things out in the heat of the moment [...] Like it's already too late. (T5)

An example of a system a teacher perceived to be beneficial to their school's readiness was discussed by teacher 7, who assisted in developing it. They commented on the regular curriculum development in their school contributing to the ERT system.

Every piece of curriculum that we design now[...]we now build it with the mindset that we may be in this situation (ERT) again. [...] we develop the same thing but options for virtual and in person. (T7)

Curriculum that is built to be flexible in case of ERT was present at several of the interviewed teachers' schools. The effect on the teachers' ERTR was stated to be significant by teacher 11 “That would mean it [disruption] would be minimal. There'll be 0 almost 0 adjustment needed from the point of the lessons to move online. Because [...] they're used online anyway.” (T11). A key point to remember that was brought up by teachers 8 and 10 is that the system cannot benefit a teacher if they do not have access to it. Teacher 10 was a new teacher and was not given access despite already teaching at the school during the pandemic. “As a new teacher. I didn't have access to everything[...]well my lessons started. [...] I still don't have access to Microsoft Teams [...] so, I had zoom” (T10). Teacher 10 was forced to adapt while also communicating and navigating the issue with her school. Teacher 8 encountered a language barrier at her school and

had to rely on colleagues to keep her updated. "Usually teachers are trained, not me, because I don't speak Estonian. I had to ask my colleagues and they explained." (T8). Colleagues stepped in and assisted teacher 8 when the school failed to keep her informed. Several teachers discussed colleague support as a critical factor to their readiness. "Once we adjusted to online [...] having people share their PowerPoint, their activities, or their ideas for things, it made things immensely easier" (T2). Besides sharing resources, teachers were also able to reach out to their colleagues for feedback on lesson plans they made. Teacher 1 stressed the importance of this assistance.

I think, I would just really emphasize that value of the really strong team [...] I developed or redeveloped my courses with one particular colleague, and that was incredibly helpful [...] it would have been much weaker if it'd been just me. (T1)

Teacher 1 also touched on an issue that was faced by other interviewees. Teachers working as the only educator at their institution had to find other areas of support. Websites and online resources have been mentioned before by teacher 3. Teacher 6 found assistants and colleagues of a sort on Youtube. "There's a great ESL teacher [...] in Fresno, Adar, Russia. [...] I use his video to teach the schwa. It's great" (T6).

Having the online world of English teaching is a resource that some may take for granted. However, Teacher 10, a non-native English teacher, highlighted its importance as it can make their jobs easier than some of the other subjects at their schools.

With this English as a foreign language, you've got plenty of resources [...] My colleagues who are teaching, their subject is not in English, they do add [...] say some video that's on the topic of their subjects, but it's in English. (T10)

These other teachers are described as counting on their students' English proficiency. This indirect form of support is still helpful to have in class and teachers noted other ways their students improved their ability to teach in an ERT situation. They can improve the teachers' attitude about the situation. Teacher 1 recalled "I would say originally I was very nervous, but once I saw that the students were doing their best and all of us were just doing what we could [...] I would say I was pretty enthusiastic about it" (T1). The students direct and indirect support with the teaching method also can increase readiness. Teacher 14 gave a good example of both.

They're adults[...]they're familiar with all these tools. So, I knew that if I send them a link or open a new tool they will get it quickly. And moreover, they will teach me if I don't know something though they will provide me with recommendations and tips how to use it in a more engaging or in a better way. (T14)

Here the students' high digital literacy assisted the teacher and improved their lessons. The students can act as support for each other. Teachers of young students are not always able to rely on the other students for support, and that is why parents are often present with the children. Teacher 2 tried to keep a healthy channel of communication with her students' parents for this reason.

The parents are very, very helpful and. I've often spoken directly to them [...] I would check in with how their [the students'] reading was at home and what kind of habits they had in regards to their homework. (T2)

Parents being present was beneficial for several of the teachers, but they cautioned to remember that it can also cause problems. Parents trying to assist their children could unintentionally give them answers or make the students nervous with their presence. Several teachers noted this but teacher 3 summarized the point. "Another issue I ran into was the helicopter parents sitting there feeding the kids the answers [...] when the parents sitting there, the kids don't act the same they do when they're by themselves at school" (T3). That is why the advice given by several of the teachers about their schools' ERT system was to incorporate the parents. Keep the parents informed of the system and have clear means of communication in case of an emergency. Teacher 9 gave this advice about ERT systems after working with three grade schools as a Spanish teacher during their country's pandemic lockdown. "Educate [...] their families on the process, because you created this culture [...] for the school and for the family" (T9).

A common trend throughout this topic was teachers advocating for an online space for the teachers, students, and school to use as a base for communication, sharing, and community. Several schools maintain one during regular classes and it can help improve teachers' readiness in the case of an ERT situation as resources, colleagues, administration, students, and their families can all be accessed and worked with in one space. This can take the form of a learning management software, such as the one used by Teacher 3.

It [program] pretty much runs your whole business [...] I just give whatever information I need to be put in the system to the manager and it gets put into whatever group, whatever person needs to see it. (T3)

An online chat room like WeChat was used by teacher 4, and WhatsApp was used by teacher 12. "I made the group for all of the students. It's their favorite way to communicate with me, and it's a place where they can all chat, kind of like a community" (T12). This advice and these practices are attributed to teachers' training, and experiences as a teacher and in ERT situations.

Experience of several different situations was discussed by teachers as a factor in their readiness and it was a common theme across interviews.

4.3 Past Experience

Experience was referenced many times by teachers as a reason for how ready they were for an ERT situation. This section will discuss three types of experience the teachers stated affected them. The first will be previous teaching experience, next training, and finally past ERT experiences. An interesting trend indicated by the data was that the type of teaching experience, not age, was an indicator of a teacher's attitude towards emergency remote teaching. Teacher 10 stated this theory outright.

This is something [...] that could be positive about novice teachers [...] they don't really have anything to change.[...] Experienced teachers, they might find challenges, specifically in having to reconsider all their teaching practices. (T10)

Teacher 6, who has taught for 2 years and is 66 years old, is one of the most positive about teaching online and attributed it to what he has experience with. When asked what his attitude towards teaching online is, he stated, "I'm very positive about it" and "I've probably done more teaching online than I have in class" (T6). Teacher 4, who has over 30 years of experience with in-class lessons and is currently teaching online, had a different take on positivity when asked about her attitude to ERT. "I think it has to be positive like we have no choice, right? [...] there's no other option [...] it's not, definitely not my favorite platform by any means" (T4).

The attitude is still positive towards the situation, but only because of the limitations, and she would not choose to teach online. This sentiment of resigned positivity was common among the teachers. Teacher 12 also started her teaching career during the pandemic lockdown and shared her attitude on ERT as well.

I think it's a great way that we can adapt quickly and then the students don't miss out on things they might have missed[...]Personally, if I had to choose a modality I like in person, the best. But I think it has a lot of potential and I don't hate it. I think it's a great way to adapt. (T12)

Teacher 12 also prefers in person classes, but she has a positive outlook on the future of ERT and its benefits.

So, if something came down to it, I wouldn't feel stressed. I would just, boom, make the zoom link good to go, put it in WhatsApp. Let's do this, but some teachers might not feel

the same, or if there's teachers who have only taught in person versus me teaching all the modalities. (T12)

Teacher 14 in contrast to teacher 12's newness to the field has a strong career resume and 20 years of teaching experience. An interesting difference between teacher 14 and other experienced teachers, is her experience from a technical university.

We had special trainings, you know, before COVID [...] we have this continuous professional development lesson [...] and the key points were on digital tools, educational technology. [...] we knew how to use Google for education before Covid. (T13)

Her attitude towards ERT is also based from a place of experience and while not as positive as some of the teachers, it is not as negative as others with considerable teaching experience.

It [ERT] can substitute face to face teaching or in person teaching. It is an absolutely adequate option, but teachers have to consider a lot of these challenges and teachers have to think about a lot of options[...] So yeah, preparation takes more time also. But of course, in this situation it would be impossible[...] if we didn't have [...] all these tools. It would be a disaster. (T13)

She mentioned her training as an experience that improved her readiness, and it was evident in other teachers' responses that training assisted them as well. Teacher 4 recognized the gaps in her technical skills and underwent training to improve her readiness and teaching skills.

So, I signed up for the OISE office. It's a one-year diploma called Learning Experience Design[...]I recognized I had huge gaps in my presentation skills and not just how I presented, but also how I delivered it on a PowerPoint. So, I took that course [...] It helped immensely and also boosted my confidence. (T4)

Training was provided as part of several institutions' support. Teachers provided with optional training also mentioned its importance and their willingness to participate. Teacher 5 was provided with ERT platform training and given the option to undertake more. "I think if memory serves it was like a zoom training session that we did one time [...] and then they suggested that we do like some practice calls with a colleague. If we wanted to, and I did" (T5).

Here again the factors overlap as colleagues can be another source of professional training. Initial training is important as well as training to maintain skills. When asked about her current readiness for an ERT situation teacher 2 said "Like a scale of 1 to 10, about a six. But I feel with like an hour or two of fiddling around and getting back into what I used to do. I feel I can go up to a 7 to 8" (T2). She commented that this was one area her school could improve their readiness as only the materials are currently being maintained.

Everything that we had prepared in the scramble for the COVID outbreak in Taiwan remains frozen in time and is ready to be used later. [...] in terms of having any training or any discussions of possibly needing it again or other emergency situations. It's not really happening. (T2)

Previous learning materials do provide resources for future ERT situations. It also came up that experience with previous ERT situations increased a teacher's current ERTR. Several teachers had a "ready for anything" attitude towards future ERT situations. Teacher 12 has taught several different levels with several different methods, and she states these contribute to her current ERTR.

I am ready to go. I have the whole set up. I have all these different resources I can use for whatever level. I'm used to it, so no big deal. [...] I've done it for three years now. I've encountered multiple different scenarios. I think I would be fine. (T12)

This sentiment was mirrored by several other teachers with teacher 3 stating, "I can start now if you want, if COVID hits tomorrow." and teacher 10 found in-class experience also helps new teachers' ERTR.

I feel, [...] more ready than I was? [...] Also my experience in a face-to-face classroom [...] as I continue developing as a teacher, gaining more experience. I think this face to face also could be transferred and additionally, as I said the computer is not closed and put somewhere up in the attic. It is being used and I continue discovering new tools. (T10)

Her interest in technology as a personal factor may contribute to her readiness for future ERT situations. Personal factors were noted as important by other teachers.

4.4 Personal Factors

In this paper, personal factors affecting a teachers' readiness that will be focused on are attitude, motivation, and adaptability. These three were the core of several questions due to research in the area, and they surfaced naturally in response to questions about important factors for ERTR. The teachers were asked about their attitudes towards ERT. Several responses were given above but few were solely positive and most focused on its usefulness as an alternative. A general positive attitude though was mentioned as an important factor in a teacher's readiness. Teacher 7 attributes their school's success in past ERT situations to the collective general positive attitude of their school.

But I will say that I kept a pretty positive attitude. And honestly like because of our positive attitudes, [...] I really think that we were able to pull through it. I think that if

some of us, even half of us, had felt like this was an insurmountable task or challenge, I don't think we would have succeeded. (T7)

A positive environment was important for teacher 7's readiness, but even a few negative attitudes in a school can have an effect on others. Teacher 12 also believed in the importance of a positive attitude but remembers being affected by others who did not feel the same.

Then there are some teachers who absolutely hated it, and [...] hearing people be negative isn't very motivating, doesn't feel very good [...] Like obviously you can say hey, these things need to be fixed or here's some pros and cons, but to just say stuff like I hate this, I don't care. It's just hard. (T12)

This demotivating effect displays the interconnectedness of attitude and motivation. Many other factors were given that affected teachers' motivation in ERT situations. The majority of the teachers stated their main motivation to participate in ERT was their students. Teacher 9 was one that focused on her students as her primary form of motivation when asked what motivates her. "My students, to teach them something and even distract to them from [...] what happened." (T9). Here she is not only thinking of their education but also how they are dealing with the emergency that is occurring. Teacher 10 focused on the importance of avoiding education disruption and she also discussed how attitude and motivation can overlap.

The teaching learning process cannot be abruptly just halted [...] in fact, I'm the person who sort of does not shy away from challenges. [...] So I think there's also [...] personal characteristics as well. (T10)

Teaching can also be socially healthy for the teacher during an emergency. Especially one with restrictions, Teacher 5 mentioned a few other motivation factors as well. "I'd say, like my kids, my own social needs, and like interactive needs and then also obviously like practical monetary." (T5). Students being the main motivating factor for teachers was one of the most common similarities between the interviews. Another popular trend, but slightly less common, was the importance of adaptability in an ERT situation. Teacher 14 discusses its general importance for teachers.

This flexibility and changeability and acceptance of these challenges. There's a new way of development. This is a key point of modern teacher, just to be ready to change and accept it as a challenge, any kind of development. (T13)

Merging the positive mindset of viewing challenges as an opportunity for development with the ability to adapt helped teacher 14 through several ERT situations. It also contributed to her perception of her readiness.

Now I have a lot of experience and tools and options and skills how to do it so, and now I think I'm ready to teach anywhere, under any circumstances to any audience. So, I think that I've got enough experience. (T13)

All three themes in personal factors come together in this quote to display their importance in a language teacher's ERTR.

However, several teachers noted their perception of their readiness is based on past experiences.

Sure, it's the things you don't think about. [...] that's the issue with that kind of question. Like how ready are you? Like, well, I'm ready for if it's exactly the same as what I've experienced, but it probably wouldn't be. (T1)

4.5 Nature of the Emergency

Several teachers' understanding of ERT revolved around the COVID pandemic and lockdown. A few teachers had other ERT situations occur. Teacher 12 had several issues.

I did have a situation occur where I was teaching a class and my classroom flooded. So, I had to make that switch. Yeah, to online as soon as possible. And I've also had to supply random classes using online stuff, so just kind of quickly in the blink of an eye where everything just kind of moves online. (T12)

Here ERT was used as a response to classroom damage and emergency supply teaching. It prevented the students' education being disrupted. This was very important for Teacher 12's newcomers English class where the students need class time to obtain citizenship. "Yeah, the students motivate me, right? They're here. They want to learn. They need those levels. They want citizenship. So, if they can't have a class, it's harder to reach those goals" (T12). Another short term ERT situation occurred for teacher 6 that he initially did not think of as an ERT situation.

Some of the students would miss those [classes]. And so, I'd have, I'd arrange to do a remote via zoom so, because [...] it was a long way away [back to the school] [...] So that was a great tool to have. (T6)

Emergencies can be minor or major, but the importance is ensuring continuing education for the student. There are also serious situations that can arise unexpectedly and require immediate ERT responses for unknown periods of time. The invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022 caused widespread damage and harm, however the resiliency of the people allowed the education system to continue even when their infrastructure was under attack. Teacher 8 was one of those who had to adapt and found the previous ERT situation of COVID prepared the system in some ways for the current emergency.

This last year, the war started in Ukraine and in February we had to cancel lessons, offline lessons and as most schools were ready to [...] provide online lessons and we did it again so, COVID times were like preparation for teachers. (T8)

Major issues can occur anywhere, teacher 9 had a broad idea of what ERT situations could occur in her country and mentioned several possibilities.

After COVID, every like challenging situation in the context of Chile, everything is like, OK, we can change. [...] We have a protest in our country. So today is the school going to be online? Four years ago, that was not an option. Today it's an option [...] I know I have problems with the water or electricity? So, we can change. (T9)

A possibility that some teachers mentioned that would disrupt their current readiness and make them unable to rely on their online teaching skills is an internet or electricity emergency. Teacher 10 mentioned how this could disrupt her readiness.

Yeah, so sure, you've got a computer, you've got hundreds of tools, but then if something's wrong with electricity. Then sort of nothing really matters, all your skills and your games. (T10)

Teacher 9 and teacher 13 faced situations like these where a lack of resources prevented using online classes for ERT. They both initially used pre-recorded videos. Teacher 13 sent videos home to the parents.

So, then it kind of went in the opposite direction, where it was almost too much for the kids sitting in front of the screen and kind of just listening. We also went through a big learning curve of how to teach the kids online. In example like in the beginning, we went into the school, just the teachers and we actually recorded the class videos [...] and recorded each lesson and it was sent home to them. (T13)

Teacher 13 and her school adapted better when they gained access to more technology. The nature of the emergency's impact seems like it could be mitigated in this case by access to resources. A final common factor that affected the teacher's readiness, especially their motivation and attitude, was the length of the ERT situation. There were different definitions of a short or long emergency with the maximum for a "short" ERT situation ranging from two to a few weeks. However, long term ERT without a known end caused reduced motivation and increased negative attitudes in some teachers. Teacher 4 is currently teaching university students in China online. She has noticed the long period of online classes, which are now distance education, have caused online fatigue and made the students sensitive to ERT situations. When asked about her motivation to teach in an ERT situation she responded,

I was saying [...] if it's a short-term thing you know one or two weeks then I think I'd be highly motivated. [...] But doing it as we're doing it now [only online], I think. [...] For me personally, I just feel I can feel the frustration of the students. (T4)

This sentiment was mirrored by other teachers, though there were those that did not feel differently about the possible length of an ERT situation. Teacher 12 was one of these few out of the teachers I interviewed. “No, no, I think it's fine. Yeah, if it's one day, whatever. If it's a whole semester oh well, it doesn't affect me” (T12). Teacher 12 was one of the teachers who began their career during the COVID pandemic lockdowns.

4.6 Language Teacher ERT Challenges

The final theme that was explored during the interview was the specific challenge of being a language teacher during an ERT situation. English classes are built around four language skills, speaking, reading, writing, and listening. An overall theme that was discussed was the difficulty of teaching students without a shared language online. For teachers of other subjects, they can instruct the student in a shared language. Teacher 7 exclusively teaches children and found ERT presented some difficult challenges.

It was really hard to finish your thought or to be heard or to understand what other people were saying [online]. And then when you factored in the fact that we're both native speakers of different languages. [...] I think that the internet made it a lot harder. (T7).

Writing was mentioned by several teachers as very difficult to teach in an online setting. Teacher 9 found teaching writing to low literacy students very daunting, especially without having a person to support the student at home. “Teach writing, like literacy, that is really, really, really challenging. I don't know. I don't have the answer how to do it that well” (T9). Other teachers found a common program called Padlet helpful in this situation as mentioned by teacher 12 and teacher 10. However, this requires access to the program, a compatible device, and the student having enough digital literacy to be able to use it. As discussed above these resources and skills are not always readily available or even possible to obtain. Speaking was also mentioned as a challenge, as poor internet connections can affect the students' ability to hear correct pronunciation and the teachers' ability to correct a student's pronunciation. Teacher 7 discussed this when asked about challenges for language teachers. She teaches in Taiwan which has a traditionally strong internet and well-developed infrastructure. “And of course, there are the bad connections” (T7). Recorded audio is one way to get around this but the recorded nature of the

work can pose additional problems as encountered by teacher 4. Teacher 4 recalled, “they didn't like the way their voice sounded in another language [...] they didn't like the sound of their voice, or they become really critical of their pronunciation ability” (T4).

The students' language level as mentioned before can be a deciding factor on if the classes progress at all. As mentioned in the support section, being unable to communicate effectively with your student, and not having a person in their environment to assist can cause frustration and stalled classes. Teacher 12 described the range of levels she experienced.

I find that the lower levels have their cameras on more, whereas the higher levels don't. So that takes away the whole aspect of kind of eye [...] trying to communicate with the lower levels, especially when I was teaching literacy online was very hard because they're having to learn all of those digital literacy skills too. And I'm not there with them to help them. So, it's very difficult. I used a lot of WhatsApp when I taught a low level, lot of pictures. (T12)

The online space allowed visual aids to be shared and used with the students. She also mentioned eye contact and the effect of having cameras on or off. This was noticed by other teachers who remarked on the difficulty of teaching body language to students.

As an instructor trying to evaluate my students. You know, like I can't see [...] their body language [...] have a difficulty with enunciation [...] with face to face, I could see what was happening. (T4)

5. Discussion

The focus of this paper is to explore language teachers' perceived readiness for emergency remote teaching. In order to answer the research questions, the teachers' views on factors affecting their readiness as well as the challenges they faced as language teachers are discussed through the common themes that emerged across the interviews. Their implications are explored by comparing them to the research in the field of ERT. Also, the implications of this research for future studies will be discussed, as understanding this issue can heighten the preparedness of the field and help avoid educational disruptions.

The main themes that emerged in the interviews are labelled awareness, support, past experience, personal factors, the nature of the emergency, and the challenges faced by language teachers. Each theme had sub-themes and factors of their own.

Awareness of current events, online resources and students' environment and abilities all emerged in several interviews as important. Awareness and the ability to act on it was the

deciding factor in several teachers' ability to conduct ERT. This refers to the schools' and teachers' awareness of possible oncoming emergencies and the learning environment their students have access to. Students without the resources to have online classes could not join ERT classes, and the schools not prepared for the oncoming emergency did not have an ERT system in place to respond. Despite the apparent importance, potential emergency awareness has not been indicated as a major factor by some studies on the topic (Ferri et al., 2020; Palero & Mutya, 2022; Scherer et al., 2021). Awareness of the students' language level and technical skills also affects a teacher's readiness. The significance of recognizing the student's situation regarding their physical space was found in Ferri et al. (2020) research.

Support from the school was seen as a crucial factor for teachers' readiness, this was in the form of materials, lesson plans, and communications systems. This was an evident factor before COVID (Koo, 2008) and has been determined as a key factor in the modern teaching field (Scherer et al., 2021). It was found that even established systems were not consistently tested or kept updated. Many resources were mentioned to be frozen in time but available. Teachers feel there needs to be improved upkeep of the systems (Ferri et al., 2020). The ERT system incorporating an online space to allow the building of a community among the teachers, their colleagues, and students was mentioned as being beneficial by several teachers and a motivating factor. This was recommended by studies to improve the ERT experiences (Hodges et al., 2020; Ferri et al., 2020). Ferri et al. (2020) recommended a similar system to combat isolation and lowered student engagement. Colleague or team support was crucial for some teachers. The importance of an online community is stressed in ERT and online education research. Ferri et al., (2020) stated the importance of this space, but did not discuss how parents and guardians being included can help. Hodges et al. (2020) expanded on the numerous factors affecting learners, but only mentioned family factors as a future study recommendation.

Online support in the form of language learning material websites, tutorials, fellow teachers, and programs assisted teachers in overcoming the difficulties of ERT, as well as providing tools to use in regular face-to-face classes. Student support came in the form of advice for the teacher and motivation to teach during an emergency. Encouraging this student feedback was found to be beneficial in other research as well (Jiang et al., 2023). Having an open channel of communication can help more than just organizing classes and assigning work. Teachers in this study also found ensuring parents were included helped significantly. Parental support of the

child's learning was a double-edged sword during the ERT situations the teachers experienced. The parents could help the child, but also some gave their children answers and made them nervous. Parental support has been found to be important by other research (Ferri et al., 2020), the negative of having parents present was not focused on to the same extent.

Past experiences related to the teachers' perceived readiness in several interviews. The teachers who had started their careers utilizing ERT had neutral to very positive attitudes towards online learning and high perceived levels of readiness. The teachers with longer teaching careers set in face-to-face classrooms had more issues with ERT and the length of time they would have to use remote teaching. The age of the respondents was not an indicator of readiness or a defining factor in their attitude. Palero and Mutya (2022) also did not find length of experience to be an indicating factor, but due to the nature of their quantitative study focusing on science teachers, they did not investigate the type of experience. An overlap was that training was a significant factor in determining readiness in their study. It could be that past experience with remote or distance education builds technical skills due to the need to use them, which is the aim of training in this area. Scherer et al. (2021) did find previous online experience positively affected readiness. An interesting note is that Martin et al. (2019) found teachers with less than five years of online teaching experience to have low perceptions of their readiness. The two teachers that were the most positive about ERT in this study had less than five years of total teaching experience. Perceptions of experience and training may need to be adjusted due to the pandemic. The interviews indicated that training was appreciated, and even sought out by the teachers to improve their readiness for ERT. It has also been recommended in several studies (Alqabbani et al., 2021; Ferri et al., 2020; Martin et al., 2019; Scherer et al., 2021). Several teachers mentioned needing an hour to two hours to improve their readiness to a high or comfortable level. This skill upkeep was not mentioned in Ferri et al. (2020) or Palero and Mutya (2022). Scherer et al. (2021) only found that support is needed, not what type. This could create a false sense of readiness, as trained teachers may feel prepared, but their skills have not been maintained and they could face issues with newer technology. Self-awareness and an understanding of skills and weaknesses can allow teachers to seek specific training that can improve their readiness. Teacher 4 did this with her learning design course. A needs assessment for the teaching staff's technical skills has been recommended to understand the current gaps (Palero & Mutya, 2022). Individual characteristics have been found to be more indicative of

readiness than cohorts (Scherer et al., 2021). When Whittle et al. (2020) developed their readiness framework for all teachers, they followed advice from Hodges et al. (2020). Hodges et al. (2020) discussed continuous monitoring of performance to best find areas for improvement.

Experience with previous emergencies affected the teachers in this study. Several stated that the difficulties and hardships they have endured gave them an open mind and improved their adaptability. A resilient defiance in the face of whatever the future may bring was stated by several teachers, and they felt ready to teach at the drop of a hat. Experience with ERT has been found to improve readiness (Scherer et al., 2021), reduce anxiety, increase confidence, as well as increase the likelihood of exploring new programs (Estrella, 2022). A sense of resiliency was not mentioned in Estrella's research, however, the boost to confidence could be a source of overlap.

Personal factors that appeared in multiple interviews as major themes were attitude, motivation, and adaptability. Attitudes towards ERT amongst the teachers interviewed were either fully positive or positive as there was no other choice. The teachers only considered canceling classes as an acceptable alternative for a brief emergency. A positive attitude has also been linked to higher likelihoods of participation and greater adoption (Koo, 2008; Scherer et al., 2020). The effect of forced positivity due to culture or lack of alternatives, in a field with high motivation to work, may have a different effect than a positive attitude. The motivation factors described by the teachers in the interviews were heavily based on their students and were at a high level. The teachers had the best interests of their students in mind, and they wanted to make sure the students' academic journey continued. This general concern was also seen in a study by Whittle et al. (2020). This is an external factor on the Work Task Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST) (Fernet et al., 2008). Intrinsic factors were also mentioned such as a desire to make a difference. However external factors were overwhelmingly the norm. Amotivation was not encountered in these interviews. Although external motivation is considered less motivating than intrinsic factors, the teachers were adamant about their reasons. The ability to adapt was another one of the factors teachers in the interviews stressed regularly. The surprise of the lockdowns, changing technology, and challenges of teaching online pushed teachers to evolve their teaching style. Estrella (2022) found teachers' ability to adapt helped the teachers frame the ERT experience as positive.

The nature of the emergency was a significant area of discussion when it came to the future of ERT. An ERT system prepared for a single type of emergency is not as useful if a

different emergency occurs. Blackouts, slow or downed internet, a need to evacuate, and damaged classrooms were just some of the emergencies mentioned besides a pandemic situation. The possibilities of future emergencies also were a driving factor behind Hodges et al.'s (2020) paper when they created the term ERT. Ferri et al. (2020) recommended studying countries where other methods such as television and radio were successfully implemented, because this could also prepare teachers for different emergencies as well. The length of the possible emergency affected some teachers, they mentioned lowered motivation, and possible student pushback due to long term ERT situations. Research found ERT can affect the perception of distance education (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). In this study, it was found they could affect each other as online fatigue was noticed by the teachers for both methods.

Language teachers faced challenges that are also found in other school subjects; however, a few challenges were noted as prominent in language learning. Each of the four skills of English were mentioned in the interviews. Speaking and writing were mentioned as the most difficult to teach. The unstable connection and lack of ability to properly see body language affected speaking. The inability to physically work with learners made learning writing difficult. This has been found by studies on the challenges of teaching online (Naqvi & Zehra, 2020; Rai & Rajeshwari, 2021). Naqvi & Zehra (2020) in their research on 100 English language teachers. They found speaking to be the second most difficult, however, the body language issue was only covered under the general issue of cameras. The importance of body language and mimicking enunciation could be a reason for cameras being on, as a policy, during English speaking activities.

The final section of each interview was focused on the topic of the teachers' current readiness. All the teachers not currently teaching remotely reported above average to high levels of personal perceived readiness. A common reason given was the magnitude of the past ERT situations they endured. COVID-19 lockdowns and the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war were listed as the significant emergencies. The length, seriousness, uncertainty, and their countries responses to these emergencies caused them to face many challenges. The lessons learned from overcoming these difficulties are still fresh in the minds of these teachers and shaping their skills and resources. Ensuring these skills and lessons are taught to the next cohort of teachers who did not experience ERT on this scale should be priority, so the field of education is not caught unprepared again.

5.1 Areas for Possible Future Research

To address the issue of awareness, research could be done on the best sources to find resources. Reliable sources to learn about new resources, and current ones that tackle common problems involved in ERT would solve issues brought forth by the interviewees. As well, levels of these resources targeted to different socioeconomic groups would address the problem experienced by teachers whose classes could not access useful technology like Padlet. Several teachers mentioned trying to emulate a regular class online and finding it impossible. Other teachers leaned into remote teaching, and one preferred it. Having the ability to teach remotely as a skill set allowed many situations that would have caused disruption to a student's education to simply become less ideal. Studying the most efficient method for teaching remotely for language teachers specifically is another possible avenue of research being called for (Pozas et al., 2022; Scherer et al., 2021). The final recommendation is an exploratory study into the nature of different emergencies and how to best conduct ERT as a response. Blackouts occur, phone lines go down, and the internet can be disrupted. In these situations, teachers should have a plan in place so they do not have to undergo the "scramble" (T2) of the COVID outbreak again.

6. Limitations

The research was conducted during 2023, the sample size is small and cannot represent the experiences of many teachers and teaching situations. The teachers selected have internet access, and experienced teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. New teachers to the field may have different views and training from established teachers. In addition, teachers without access to the internet were not able to be interviewed. Their remote education system may be vastly different. Although the interviewed teachers are from different areas of the world, there are not statistically significant concentrations of them from any specific region. Conclusions should not be drawn about the teaching situations in these represented areas. Since the research is based on the teacher's recollections and opinions, biases and incorrect data may exist in the collected responses. Students were not a part of this research. Their experiences and readiness were not considered and may result in the teachers' opinions and beliefs not telling both sides of the classroom story. Participants were drawn from primary and secondary contacts of the researcher. This creates a skew towards regions and types of teachers. Teachers are drawn from both the

public and private sectors of education. The nature of both systems is different and future research focused on either could draw clearer results.

7. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Katrin Saks (PhD). Her support and guidance were pivotal during this process, it kept me focused and gave me direction. I truly appreciate the language teachers who volunteered for the interviews, this would not have been possible without them. Finally, the program director, Emanuele Bardone, the other lecturers, and my enthusiastic classmates were all sources of inspiration and guidance that improved this paper and my abilities as a teacher.

8. Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I have written this thesis independently and that all contributions of other authors and supporters have been referenced. The thesis has been written in accordance with the requirements for graduation theses of the Institute of Education of the University of Tartu and is in compliance with good academic practices.



06/01/2023

Cameron Forbes McLelland

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Appendices

Appendix A. Interview questions

Interview Questions	
Research questions:	Interview questions which help to answer each RQ: Possible follow-up questions are presented as (1)
Clarifying questions:	1. Could you explain where you currently teach and the level you currently teach? 2. Can you describe your experience with ERT situations?

RQ1. How do teachers perceive their readiness for an ERT situation?

1. Have you experienced an ERT situation since COVID? If so, can you describe what occurred?

2. How would you describe your technical skills when it comes to teaching remotely?

2.1 Tell me about the programs you use to teach remotely.

2.2 Tell me about how you adapt your classes for remote teaching.

2.3 How are your students' levels of communication during remote education?

2.4 How would you describe your personal style of teaching remotely?

3. How would you describe your attitude towards teaching remotely in an emergency situation?

3.1 Please describe your attitude towards using remote teaching as a solution to an emergency situation?

4. How motivated do you feel to teach during an ERT situation?

4.1 What motivates you to teach in an ERT situation?

<p>RQ2. How do teachers perceive the systems they have and the support they receive in an ERT situation?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How would you describe the systems in place at your (school/ institution) in case of an ERT situation? 1.1 What experience do you have with these systems? 1.2 What can you tell me about the development and testing of these systems? 3. What support is available to you in case of an ERT situation? 4. How do you feel about the support available to you? 5. Have you found student motivation affects you in ERT situations? 6. What is your experience with technical or ERT training?
<p>RQ3. What have the teachers learned about readiness during their past ERT experiences and what can better prepare them for the next?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Based on your experiences, are there factors you believe affect emergency remote teaching readiness? 1.1 In what way have you seen these factors affect your readiness? 2. What would be your advice to schools or other teachers to improve their level of readiness for an ERT situation? 3. How do you feel ERT affects language teachers specifically? 4. How ready do you feel to teach in an emergency situation?

Appendix B. Letter of information

Template (University of Waterloo, 2023)

Letter of Information

April 16th, 2023

Project Title: LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEIVED

EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING READINESS

Researcher: *Cameron Forbes McLelland, Institute of Education, University of Tartu, 1-226-755-0984, cameron.forbes.mclelland@ut.ee*

This letter explains what the study is about, what participation involves, possible risks and benefits, and your rights as a research participant. You may download a copy or ask for one to be emailed to you for your records. If you do not understand something in the letter, please ask the researcher before consenting to participate.

The information collected in the interview and survey will be used for my master's thesis research which is being done for the Educational Technology Master's program at the University of Tartu.

The focus of this research is exploring language teachers' perceived emergency remote teaching (ERT) readiness. The definition for ERT and the creation of the term comes from Hodges et al.'s paper (2020, p. 6) "emergency remote teaching (ERT) [...] involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction or education that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face or as blended or hybrid courses and that will return to that format once the crisis or emergency has abated".

Ensuring teachers are prepared for future emergency remote teaching situations will reduce the negative impact on the teachers. The benefits of teacher readiness were indicated by studies on pandemic ERT (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022; Pozas et al., 2022). A high level of readiness among teachers leads to reduced anxiety around unknown factors that the future may introduce. Viewing an ERT system as a constant required by learning institutions could promote better development of these systems, as well as promote training with them (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022). Developing these systems with an understanding of teachers' current readiness can expose the gaps. The difference between where the institution intends to be and where it is currently can be discovered and acted on.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately **30 minutes** in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. As well, the research will also involve an online form to gather participant demographic information. You may decline to answer any of the interview or survey questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. If you wish to withdraw your study data after participating, please contact the researchers. You can request your data be removed from the study up until **June 1st, 2023** as it is not possible to withdraw your data once papers and publications have been submitted to the school.

With your permission, the interview will be audio/ video recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

Your identity will be confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained for at least 1 year to which only researchers associated with this project will have access. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

For all other questions or if you would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me by email at cameron.forbes.mclelland@ut.ee. My supervisor is associate professor Katrin Saks, University of Tartu.

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to the broader research community.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,

Cameron McLelland

Appendix C. Oral Consent Script

Template (University of Oxford, 2021)

Oral consent script

Language Teachers' Perceived Emergency Remote Teaching Readiness

Oral Consent Script

Introduction:

Hello. My name is Cameron McLelland. I am conducting research about language teachers' perceived emergency remote teaching readiness. This interview and a following online survey are part of my master's thesis research at the University of Tartu in Tartu, Estonia. I'm working

under the supervision of associate professor Katrin Saks of the University of Tartu's faculty of Social Science.

Thank you for participating in my research.

Have you had time to read the Letter of Information I sent you?

Great, then I would like to take a moment to review some main points from the Letter of Information before we continue.

Confirm the following to the participant:

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still be in the study.

You can decide to stop at any time, even part-way through the interview or online survey for whatever reason.

If you decide to stop during the interview, I will ask you how you would like me to handle the data collected up to that point, whether returning it to you, destroying it or using the data collected up to that point.

You can ask to remove your data from the study up until approximately June 1st, 2023.

Do you have any questions, or want me to go over any study details again?

Consent questions:

Do you agree to participate in this study?

If yes,

- Would you like a copy of the study results? If yes, where should we send them (email, mailing address)?
- Do you agree to audio and/or video recording?
- Would you like to be contacted for a follow up participant check of the research? How do you prefer to be contacted?
- Do you agree to allow your study data to be stored and used for future research as described in the Letter of Information?

If no, "Thank you for your time."

Appendix D. Demographics Survey

Demographics

Demographic information

Name

Short answer text

Age

Short answer text

Gender

Short answer text

How many years have you taught?

Short answer text

Education attained

- Bachelor
- Master
- Doctorate
- Other...

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Cameron McLelland
05/31/2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cameron McLelland', written in a cursive style.