An Insight into Attitudes of Slovenian University Students of Tourism during the COVID-19 Pandemic Towards the Online Learning of Language for Special Purposes

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Abstract The chapter presents the results of an online survey conducted among the university students of tourism regarding their attitudes towards the methods of teaching and learning of language for special purposes (LSP) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Three research hypotheses were put forward: Attitudes of tourism students regarding the teaching methods of their online LSP course differ statistically based on their age (RH1), and their gender (RH2), and RH3: There are statistically significant differences in attitudes towards foreign language learning of tourism students regarding their affiliation. Based on results of linear regression and t-test some statistically signifnicant differences were reported among female and male respondents with regard to teaching methods for students with special needs and with regard to the way teachers used online tools to manage the lerning process. Further, statistically significant differences were found among attitudes of two slovenian tourism faculties with regard to six items related to LSP.

Keywords: attitudes, COVID-19 pandemic, language for special purpose, online teaching and learning, university students of tourism

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1 Introduction

Services play a crucial role in meeting human needs of consumers of a post-industrial society. Tourism, one of the most battered industries during the Covid-19 pandemic, plays a significant role in the service sector. In the services sector such as tourism, the service is provided mostly via interpersonal interactions, which makes front line employees the first and only representatives of the business to make that important first contact (Hartline, Maxham & McKee, 2000). In order to ensure the quality of service there must be a common language between suppliers of a service and demanders of a service, hence a common language is the prerequisite to face-to-face communications. Speaking in the tourist's language is of vital importance especially when there is a problem (Cocoa & Turner, 1997). Foreign language (henceforth FL) competencies and skills play a crucial role in the tourism management sector and are a basis for comprehensible communication. Foreign language competencies and skills are at this point of great importance and play a key role for tourism sector employees (Sindik & Božinović, 2013). Establishing effective communication with the world travellers has proven to be a wise strategy for the creation of distinct advantages in the competitive business on a global scale. The English language has become the lingua franca in international communication and a prerequisite for those who work in the tourism industry. Beside the good command of target language in the tourism sector, employees should also learn the basic social skills of the English language (Alison, 2016). Many universities employ English language for their regular tourism courses. Besides English, other European and non-European languages are taught as well, such as German, Italian, French, Chinese, and Spanish, to name the most frequent. How well a FL is learnt depends on many factors. Firstly, motivation plays a significant role in language learning since Smit and Dalton (2000) claim that there are two types of motivation named as extrinsic and intrinsic ones; extrinsic motivation is stable over time and leads an individual to self-determination, and the intrinsic motivation arouse awareness for learners in terms of external benefits such as better pay, get along in a foreign country and the like. It is therefore impossible for the tourism employees, who cannot have a good dialog with the guests and cannot understand the language they speak, to provide good service to their customers (Akgöz & Gürsoy, 2014). Parallel to its role in the tourism sector, the English language has been accepted as the international business mediating language, and thus companies, which select English as their official language due to

the importance of establishing effective communications, are on the rise (Charles, 2007). As far as the tourism sector is concerned, it is impossible for students with poor skills and language proficiency for the chosen profession in the tourism sector, who do not make the effort to succeed, to retain their position in tourism. Good FL competencies are one of the most important qualifications required in the tourism sector (Davras & Bulgan, 2012; Miškulin Čubrić, 1997, 2000). In sum, English mediated classes, and that goes for all other FL guided classes, may guide learners to acquire the target language more accurately and faster (Krashen, 1995) since the instructors don't deal with teaching language proficiency, instead they generally focus on the content of the class. It is therefore clear that the main purpose regarding the English mediated classes in the department of Tourism is to gain awareness of the target course via English language. The internationalization of education, globalization, and the employability of graduates (Vinke, 1995; Vinke, Snippe, & Jochems, 1998; Vogt & Oliver, 1998) have all contributed greatly to the rise of the English mediated classrooms in foreign language departments of Tourism faculties.

With the introduction of computers, computer-assisted language learning and the growing use of internet, the learning opportunities seem to be limitless. Since the area of research of computer-assisted online FL learning is relatively recent, various terms have been used referring to the issue of online learning and there seems to be little agreement on the terminology used (Gluchmanova, 2015; Moore, Dickson-Deane & Galyen, 2011). Terms such as distance learning, distance education, online instruction, online training, e-learning, asynchronous vs. synchronous learning as well as web-based education are some of the more popular terms recently used in instructional and technological contexts (ibid.). All of the aforementioned terms are sometimes covered by "e-learning", "online learning" or "distance learning", all of which are basically interchangeably used in the current study and indicate any learning activity which is provided with the help of technology. The terms online learning and distance learning have been chosen to be the most appropriate by the authors of the paper and will consequently appear most frequently in the underlying study.

2 Background of the research

2.1 Students' attitudes towards the English language

Attitude is defined as a set of beliefs, which are developed in a society over a period. Attitude in language learning can affect students' participation in learning a language (Abdullah, 2014). Gardner (1985) introduces two types of attitudes: "attitudes towards learning the language, and attitudes towards the other-language community" (p. 39). He further defines attitude as "an evaluative reaction to some referent or object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent" (pp. 91-93). According to social psychologists, attitudes include three components: "a cognitive component, an affective component, and a behavioural component" (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 2009, p. 662). In order to estimate the magnitude of attitude and motivation on language learning, most of the researchers build upon a tripartite model, suggesting attitude can be divided into three major components: cognitive, affective and behavioural (Liaw, 2002; Wenden, 1998). The cognitive component involves beliefs or perceptions about the objects or situations related to the attitude. The affective component expresses the feelings that arise about the cognitive element and the appraisal (good or bad) of these feelings. Finally, the evaluation of the affect is translated into a behavioural component that gives utterance to the attitude and certain attitudes tend to prompt learners to adopt particular learning behaviours (Vandewaetere & Desmet, 2009). Attitudes to language learning and teaching have already attracted the attention of scholars in the 1960s (cf. James, 1969; Rivers, 1965; Jakobovits, 1970). These authors have addressed the question of attitudes at a time of great social change, with social changes occurring overnight, students protesting in the eastern part of Europe and unrest in the western part of the old continent. There were similar breaks with the past in the theory of language teaching, which focused more on the individual needs of students. Obviously, changes had to be made to meet the newly identified needs, which Jakobovits (1970) described as a "more liberal" approach to language teaching. Such an approach placed the student at the centre of the teaching and learning process. Similarly, the roles of teachers have changed, in particular, the notion of a teacher best qualified to make decisions about introducing innovations into the teaching process has taken shape. Such a teacher should be able to choose from a wide range of teaching and learning materials and select those that would make the most of the learning

experience. In addition to subject didactic methodological skills, a foreign language teacher should also have acquired specific skills in the field of psychology, and attitudes are an important aspect of psychology. Attitudes play "a central role in the socio-psychological model for explaining and predicting human behaviour" (Nastran Ule, 2000, p. 115). Attitudes guide our actions in the world and vice versa, which in turn influences the formation of our patterns of action or behaviour (ibid.). Krech, Crutchfield & Ballachey (1962, in Nastran Ule, 2000, p. 116) claim that attitudes are actually "permanent systems of positive or negative evaluations, feelings and activities that interact with various social situations and objects, and are therefore important for our research. On the other hand, (Nastran Ule, 2000) also claims that attitudes are "socially acquired and not innate, so that it is possible to change them in the course of life" (ibid. p. 121).

Considering the nature of attitudes in general and their formation (Nastran Ule, 1997; Ule, 2000) the author deemed there might be some changes in the onset of university students' attitudes towards FL learning, since the entire process of FL teaching and learning moved to online due to the outburst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.2 An overview of teaching approaches and methods

Considering the fact that one of the more important variables in the research are LSP teachers' teaching methods and approaches we deemed appropriate briefly presenting the ones included in the research. In history of language teaching, different-sounding terms are often interchangeable, they can even be written in different ways, hence there might be minor discrepancies in the style of the writing for the teaching methods and approaches in question.

2.2.1 Audiolingual method

Richards & Rodgers (2014) suggest that the approach is based on "the Coleman Report from 1929 recommending a reading-based approach for language teaching in American schools and colleges (p. 58)". This approach emphasized teaching the comprehension of the text. Students need not necessarily understand everything they said but could lead a conversation. This method caused students to learn up to 10

hours a day, six days a week (p. 59). This type of methodology derived from the intensity of contact with the target language. It was basically an intensive, oral-based approach of foreign language learning. In short, this approach became dominant in the United States during the 1940s, 19505, and 1960s; it takes much from the direct approach but adds features from structural linguistics and behavioural psychology. According to this method lessons begin with dialogs, teachers should use mimicry and memorization, based on the assumption that language is habit formation. Grammatical structures are sequenced and rules are taught inductively; skills are sequenced. This method postpones listening, speaking-reading, and writing. From the very beginning, the pronunciation is stressed. Vocabulary is severely limited in the initial stages of the language learning. Great effort is made to prevent learner errors. Language is often manipulated without regard to meaning or context. The teacher must be proficient only in the structures, vocabulary, and the like, since her/his teaching activities and materials are carefully controlled (cf. Celce-Murcia, 1991, p. 3).

2.2.2 Grammar translation method

According to Celce-Murcia (1991, p. 3) this method is an extension of the approach used to teach classical languages to the teaching of modern languages. The instruction is given in the native language of the students. During the teaching process there is little use of the target language, because the focus is on grammatical parsing, i.e., the form and inflection of words. The emphasis is on the early reading of difficult classical texts. A typical exercise in course of a typical lesson is to translate sentences from the target language into the mother tongue. The result of this approach is usually an inability on the part of the student to use the language for communication. The student only needs to understand the grammar rules and for that reason, the language teacher's proficiency does not have to meet the highest standards.

2.2.3 The CLIL approach

According to Korosidou & Griva (2014, pp. 240-242) Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach has been practiced for the last two decades with proven positive effects on the language skills of second/foreign language (L2/FL) learners (Korosidou & Griva, 2013; Lasagabaster, 2008; Zydatiss, 2007). The CLIL approach mainly focuses on language, content and learning skills (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008), and can yield successful outcomes when applied both at early language teaching and adult language learning (Eurydice Report, 2006). Korosidou & Griva reported that Coyle (2006) designed the 4C'sFramework with the purpose of creating individual CLIL materials (Content- Cognition- Communication- Culture), offering a theoretical and methodological foundation for planning and implementing CLIL, as well as designing CLIL materials (Coyle, 1999, 2006 in Meyer, 2010). The CLIL approach includes inquiry-based learning activities, where students develop their higher order thinking skills in a curricular context, using context specific language, and being evaluated by demonstrating their knowledge of language and content. The CLIL approach aims at overcoming the limitations created by the traditional curriculum, where each content/subject area is taught separately. The experts in the field sustain that it actually succeeds in integrating various contents/subject areas with learning the target language (Coyle, 2006; Mehisto et al., 2008).

2.2.4 Task-based approach

According to Sánchez (2004, p. 3) "the emergence of the TBA is connected to what became known as the 'Bangalore Project' (Prabhu, 1987) initiated in 1979 and completed in 1984." The term 'task' was often used to refer to the special kind of activities carried on in the classroom. Such activities are characterised among other features, by the emphasis put on the meaning and the importance assigned to the process of doing things (how) vs. the prevailing role given to content in the teaching practice of that decade. The author also claimed that communicative competence was to develop in the course of meaning-focused activity. One should also bear in mind that grammatical competence was to be built through internal self-regulating processes and for that, it would help to convey meaning in favourable conditions. The most important responsibility of the language teachers was to create the right

conditions for the learners to be able to engage in meaningful situations. Any prior regulation of what had to be learnt according to a predefined formal o grammatical syllabus was to be excluded.

2.2.5 Communicative approach

According to Celce-Murcia (1991, p. 6) the communicative approach grew out of the work of anthropological linguists (e.g., Hymes, 1972) and Firthian linguists (e.g., Halliday, 1973), who view language first and foremost as a system for communication. It is assumed that the goal of language teaching is learner ability to communicate in the target language. The content of a language course is supposed to include semantic notions and social functions, not just linguistic structures. During the communicative lesson students would regularly work in groups or pairs to transfer (and, if necessary, negotiate) meaning in situations where one person has information which the other(s) lack. Hence, students would often engage in role-play or dramatization to adjust their use of the target language to different social contexts. Classroom materials and activities are supposed to be as authentic as possible to reflect real-life situations and demands. Language skills are integrated from the very beginning, meaning that a given activity may involve reading, speaking, listening, and perhaps writing, provided that the learners are educated and literate. The teacher's role in communicative approach is primarily to facilitate communication and only secondarily to correct errors. It is assumed that the language teachers are able to use the target language fluently and appropriately.

2.2.6 Cross-curricular approach

According to Beckmann (2009, p. 14) "cross-curricular teaching is a specific form of instruction." The term cross-curricular implies the existence of clearly defined subjects, disciplines. All pupils know about the existence of such subjects from their own experience (ibid.). Also, the term cross-curricular implies the possibility that we go beyond a subject, i.e. that we cross disciplinary boundaries and in the process we touch on something else. Beckmann also claimed (p. 15) that cross-curricular teaching means the extension to other subjects or the integration of these into one's own subject." Hence, successful work requires a proficient co-operation with other subjects. An individual teacher can only achieve this through some proficiency in

multiple subjects. This can only occur through co-operation with specialists, such as teachers in the relevant subjects. The forms of co-operation can vary. It may simply be restricted to subject related co-operation, enriching the individual subjects involved mutually; it may, however, also mean joint planning of the content, the objectives and methods, the examples or courses of instruction; and can also be expressed in joint project work.

2.2.7 Language shower

According to Miettinen (2013) the concept's aim is, as claimed by Nikula & Marsh (1997, p. 24) "to familiarize pupils with a foreign language and its use." A more recent definition by Mehisto et al. (2008, p. 13) asserts that the objective is to make pupils "aware of the existence of different languages" and to "develop a positive attitude towards language learning". They also say that language showers are a way of helping pupils to be better prepared for studying languages. The amount of time used to meet these goals varies, but is generally very limited. It can be, for instance, one lesson or less in a week (Nikula & Marsh, 1997, p. 24) or from 30 to 60 minutes per day (Mehisto et al., 2008, p. 13). In other words, language showers are not to be seen as actual language teaching, but instead as a means of raising interest towards the language, and providing pupils with positive experiences as language users (Nikula & Marsh, 1997, p. 25).

Interestingly, both Nikula & Marsh (1997) and Mehisto et al. (2008) position language showers in the framework of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), even though the objective is not to teach any specific non-language content to the pupils (Nikula & Marsh, 1997, p. 25). Mehisto et al. (2008, pp. 12–13) place language showers at the beginning of a CLIL continuum ranging from short-term, low-intensity exposure to a foreign language to high-intensity, long-term language programmes such as immersion.

2.2.8 Multiple intelligences approach

According to Derakhshan & Faribi (2015) there is a positive relationship between multiple intelligences and learning English. For the first time, it was Gardner (1983) who proposed Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT) and challenged the too narrowly defined intelligence with his proposal of basic human intelligence types (linguistic, mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic interpersonal and intrapersonal). At the beginning, there were seven types of intelligences and by his further research, Gardner proposed the eighth intelligence, "naturalistic intelligence", which has been added to the list and now there is the possibility of the ninth intelligence "emotional intelligence" (Armstrong, 2008).

Derakhshan & Faribi (2015, p. 66) reported the following: the integration of MI (Multiple Intelligences) into language teaching: a foreign language teacher educators are responsible for creating curricula for the programs that provide prospective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers with a foundation for what they should know as professional language teachers. Much of what we include in TEFL (Teaching Engish as a Foreign Language) programmes is based on academic tradition. EFL teachers are expected to know about methods, testing, theory, teaching grammar, reading, speaking, listening, and so forth. Most teacher education programmes include courses in all of these subject areas. Teacher education programs are also expected to keep current by introducing teachers to the newest and most creative ideas in second language pedagogy. When new concepts and ideas are embraced by the profession, teacher education programs are challenged with integrating them into existing programs (Christison, 1998). Basically, the authors claimed that in the second or foreign language classrooms, it is possible to motivate learners by different activities relating to the different intelligences (p. 70).

2.3 The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on FL distance learning and teaching

The World Health Organization (henceforth WHO) declared COVID-19 as a global public health emergency of international concern on 30th January 2020 as well as a pandemic on March 11 2020 (Cucinotta & Vanelli, 2020). Consequently, as of March 13, 61 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and South

America have announced or implemented school and university closures and most of universities have enforced localized closures (UNESCO, 2020). The outbreak of the pandemic has had, like many other aspects of everyday life, a serious impact on students, teachers, and educational organizations around the globe (Mailizar, Almanthari, Maulina, & Bruce, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has caused schools, colleges, and universities across the globe to shut down so that students could follow social distancing measures (Toquero, 2020). The move from an environment of conventional pre-pandemic education to distance and virtual learning could of course not happen overnight. This rapid transformation has encountered various obstacles and challenges on the way (Crawford et al., 2020). With no quick end of the pandemic in sight, educational institutions across the globe decided to use the already available technical resources to create online learning materials for students of all academic fields (Kaur, 2020). The outbreak of Covid-19 compelled academics and practitioners alike to reconsider the traditional way of in-presence teaching and learning. Consequently, they started considering distance online learning as a feasible option to fill the classroom void for duration of school closure, thus reducing the risk of infection for students before conventional activities could resume (Kaur, 2020). Hundreds of educational institutions provide for online courses, yet some problems exist. Firstly, from a macro point of view, not enough evidence has been established regarding the effects and efficacy of online education (McPherson & Bacow, 2015). Secondly, the capacity to successfully teach digitally is likely to differ based on the wide range of learning goals that guide our instructional and educational priorities (Liguori & Winkler, 2020). Thirdly, the distribution of learning tools such as computers or tablets are uneven in the population, and what is more, due to the closure of universities many students had to return home. Being reintroduced to a new form of family life, where there may have been other siblings who learnt online and in some cases parents, too, worked from Home Office, has not favoured positive learning outcomes. Fourthly, not all households are provided with broadband internet, hence many families had to resort to creative measures such as wireless internet, which has its limitations of range, the reason for which many families were cramped together in one room, because everybody either worked from home or learnt online. Consequently, lack of access to fast, affordable and reliable internet connection hindered the process of distance learning especially for those who are living in underprivileged or rural as well as marginalized communities of low-income families. And lastly, distance learning can be effective in digitally

advanced countries (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). Nevertheless, students who access the internet via smartphones were often unable to take advantage of distance learning because a significant amount of online content is not accessible via smartphones, for example not all Zoom features, a platform widely used in Slovenia for distance learning as of March 2020, are accessible to tablet or smartphone users.

The sudden transfer from in-presence learning and teaching to distance learning became an issue of organizational agility (Wu, 2020), all elementary and secondary schools as well as academic organisations in Slovenia consequently focused on the transfer of the pedagogical process to the digital world while not primarily focusing on online teaching and delivery methods as well as content. There was also a general perception of underpreparedness among teachers in Slovenia at all levels and many felt undertrained for distance teaching. Besides, there was a feeling of unpreparedness and insufficient access and availability of the internet and the lack of latest technology on the students' side as well, which, along with organizational unresponsiveness undermined students' capacity to participate in digital learning (Zhong, 2020). Moreover, absence of proper interaction with instructors is another major concern associated with distance teaching and learning. Additionally, issues arising from content of the online course would normally be discussed with the relevant course instructor by e-mail or on one of the online platforms such as Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams and the like, which requires response time (Zhong, 2020). It is highly unlikely for students to be truly interested in virtual classes, which is especially true for younger students who are tactile learners. Another major issue of distance learning is the absence of conventional classroom socialization. Students namely only communicate with their peers digitally and never actually see them in person, and thus the real-time sharing of ideas, knowledge and information is heavily obstacled and partially missing from the digital learning world (Britt, 2006).

Consequently, some recent research studies have aimed at exploring the challenges on one hand and opportunities on the other associated with e-learning during pandemics (Mailizar et al., 2020). The authors of the study suggested that students' voices are important on this issue; hence, the future research should investigate students' opinions regarding online learning to examine the challenges faced by students.

Based on the premises outlined above, the research objective focused on the attitudes of university students of tourism in the Republic of Slovenia towards the online FL learning. The following part of the chapter deals with the research methodology. Our study aimed to explore the differences in attitudes towards the online teaching methods of LSP during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown with regard to the respondents' age and affiliation (Faculty of Tourism at Brežice vs Faculty of Tourism Studies-Turistica at Protorož); hence, the following research hypotheses were explored:

2.4 Research hypotheses

According to the literature review and the purposes of the study the following research hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1. The used method of learning influences the perception of the usefulness of the tools used for digital learning. Scholars from the 60s (cf. James, 1969; Rivers, 1965; Jakobovits, 1970 and others) started addressing the importance of attitudes of students towards learning methods at a time of great social change. A similar situation occured in 2019 and 2020, with the spreading of the pandemic, causing schools to be closed. Their adaptation to the situation had to be quick. It is important to measure how the used method of learning can influence the perception of students about the usefulness of the tools.

Hypothesis 2. The faculty of the study influences the perception of the usefulness of the tools used for digital learning. English mediated classes may guide learners to acquire the target language more accurately and faster (Krashen, 1995) since the instructors don't deal with teaching language proficiency, instead they generally focus on the content of the class. Since students at different faculties have different teachers, it is important to measure if the teacher itself could be the cause of the differences in perceptions among students of different faculties of tourism in Slovenia.

Hypothesis 3. The gender of respondents influences the perception of the usefulness of the tools used for digital learning. The gender plays an important role in shaping attitudes and perception (Stevens Aubrey & Harrison, 2004).

3 Research method

3.1 Research design

A quantitative research paradigm has been applied in this study, which employed a survey design in order to measure the university students' attitudes regarding online teaching and learning of languages for special purposes during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The paradigm consists of a descriptive and causal-non-experimental method of empirical pedagogical research. Our research has focused on the study of a pedagogical topic (in the case of the chapter Attitudes of Slovenian university students of tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic towards the online learning of foreign languages for special purposes); therefore, the appropriate research method is descriptive. Sagadin (1991, p. 29) described this method as an investigation of the pedagogical field. To elicit data for the study, the students have responded to a 17-item online questionnaire, of which 5 variables were nominal, 11 ordinal, and 1 proportional.

3.2 Data collection, target population and research sample

The online survey was drawn by Associate Professor Eva Podovšovnik Axelsson, PhD, from the Faculty of Tourism Studies-Turistica in 2020. Great importance was given to the anonymity and confidentiality of the research, hence no personal data such as date and place of birth, name or last name was elicited. It was remodelled and published by the co-author Tilen Smajla, PhD, on 22 February 2021 and made available on the online service provider Arnes. Due to contact restrictions and in line with the Covid-19 pandemic regulations the survey was distributed exclusively online in order to avoid crowded lecture rooms and the potential spread of the Sars-Cov-2 virus. University teachers of foreign language who teach a LSP in various faculties in Slovenia were encouraged to motivate their students to click on the survey and finish it. Consequently, this led to 693 clicks on the survey, 465 partially finished surveys, and 328 completed surveys.

Table 1 shows the distribution among the six public and private Slovenian universities comprised in the survey as well a the sample of respondents

Table 1: Sample of university students who participated in the survey

University		**sample of respondents**	**f %**
University of Ljubljana	public	222	48
University of Maribor	public	162	38
University of Primorska	public	82	18
University of Nova Gorica	public	1	0
University of Novo mesto	private	1	0
Nova univerza	private	0	0
Total		**468**	**100**
Clicks on the survey		693	100
Click on the introduction section		501	72
Started the survey		480	69
Partially completed survey		465	67
Fully completed the survey		328	47
Gender the respondents of the entire online survey		**M**	**F**
		f	f %	f	f %
		161	38.16	261	61.84
Gender of students of tourism studies		**f**	**f %**
M		55	39
F		80	56.7
missing		6	4.3
Affiliation of university students of tourism		**Faculty of Tourism Brežice**	**Faculty of Tourism Studies Portorož**
		f	f %	f	f %
		66	46.8	75	53.2
Total		**141**	**100**
Age of students of tourism studies		**M**	**SD**
		25.66	6.813
		Min	**Max**
		19	55

The results shown are as follows: percentages and numbers vary because not all participants who clicked on the survey continued it and completed it in its entirety. 693 students have clicked on the survey. Some participants continued by clicking on the introduction section, but did not continue (501 partecipants or 72 %), 480 or 69 % of the participants actually started the survey, 465 or 67 % of the participants partly completed the survey, and finally, 328 or 47 % of the participants fully finished the survey. Table 1 also reveals that the 48 % of the sample consists of respondents enrolled in the University of Ljubljana, which is not a surprising fact, since the University of Ljubljana is the largest and the oldest (established in 1919) public university in Slovenia. The University of Maribor was established in 1975, making it the second largest and second oldest public university in Slovenia, contributing 38

% of the respondents. The third oldest and largest public university in Slovenia is the University of Primorska, established in 2003 and contributing 18 % of the respondents. The remaining universities listed in Table 1 (Univerza v Novi Gorici, Nova Univerza, Univerza v Novem mestu) have all been established later, in case of the UN NG the official opening dates to 2006, whereas Nova Univerza dates to 2017, the same goes for Univerza v Novem mestu. As far as the gender distribution is concerned, 261 female students and 161 male students participated in the online survey.

The sample used for the purposes of this study consists of 141 tourism students from two Slovenian faculties of tourism, namely, the Faculty of Tourism at Brežice, member of the University of Maribor (66 respondents), and Faculty of Tourism Studies - Turistica at Portorož, member of the University of Primorska (75 respondents), who successfully completed the online survey in the period between 22 February 2021 until 29 March 2021 and whose average age was 25,6 with the standard deviation of 6.813. Table 1 also shows that the majority of respondents (80 or 56.7 %) were female students, whereas 55 respondents or 39 % of the sample represented the male students, 4.3 % have chosen not to respond. Table 1 ultimately shows that there were slightly less respondents from the Faculty of Tourism at Brežice or 46.8 % of the sample, whereas the bulk of the sample from Faculty of Tourism Studies-Turistica at Portorož represented 53.2 % of the studied sample. Six students or 4.3 % of the sample have chosen not to reveal their gender.

3.3 Research instrument

Research instruments are tools, which researchers select and use in carrying out their activities to collect data, in order to make it systematic and easy. In this study, researchers used an online questionnaire as a research instrument. It is made out of 17 items, five of which are nominal variables, 11 are ordinal, and one is relational variable. The research instrument used to measure the attitudes of university students was a questionnaire, which was originally designed by assoc. prof. Eva Podovšovnik, PhD, in the Slovenian language, and remodelled by Tilen Smajla, PhD, for the purposes of the underlying study. The online questionnaire contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions as well as a relational scale. The closed-ended questions required students to answer by assigning a Likert-type (Arnold,

McCroskey & Prichard, 1967) scale quantifier (from 1-10), whereas the open-ended questions referred to the students' opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of language learning online during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.4 Data analysis

The data were statistically analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency distributions, mean values and standard deviation of mean). The data was processed using SPSS IBM Statistical Package version 26. The frequency distribution of the variables and their parameters were examined, and skewness and kurtosis coefficient were determined, in order to test for the normality of the distribution. In order to reduce the number of variables for the perception of the usefulness of the tools for distance education, the factor analysis was used. Research hypotheses were tested using linear regression and the t-test. Results are presented in the follow up.

First, the descriptive statistics of the used methods for language teaching are presented (see Table 2). Students were asked if during distance learning different methods were used by their language teachers. Each teaching method or approach was breafly explained in the questionnaire. The parcipants could choose more than one teaching method or approach. The answers were measured on a dychotomous scale (0 – not selected, 1 – selected). In Table 2 the number and percentage of »yes« answers is presented – thus, meaning the number and percentage of respondents that experienced language learning using a particular method during distance learning.

Table 2: Distribution of the used methods for language teaching

Method/approach	f	f%
Audio-lingual method	48	39.0
Grammar translation method	49	39.8
CLIL approach	76	61.8
Task-based approach	29	23.6
Communicative approach	88	71.5
Cross-curricular approach	54	43.9
Language shower	57	46.3
Multiple intelligences approach	9	7.3

As it can be seen from Table 2, the majority of respondents who fully completed the survey or 71.5 % answered that the communicative approach was used for language teaching during their course. The next methods follows: CLIL approach (61.8 %), the language shower (46.3 %), the cross-currilar approach (43.9 %), the grammar translation method (39.8 %), the audio-lingual method (39 %), the task-based approach (23.6 %) and the multiple intelligences approach (7.3 %). Since the last approach was not common, we decided to exclude it from further statistical analysis.

In the following (see Table 3), respondents were asked to evaluate their perception of the usefulness of learning tools used for language teaching during distance learning. The usefulness of learning tools was adapted to the study developed by the Italian Society of Special Pedagogy (www. https://s-sipes.it/). They were asked to use a 10-point Likert-type scale (1 meaning completely disagree, 10 meaning completely agree).

Table 3: Distribution of the perception of the usefulness of the tools used for digital learning

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
LSP online teaching tools can be adapted to any particular form, regardless of the typology and number of students.	8.08	1.711	-1.107	1.261
LSP online teaching tools' users are provided with help in case they run into trouble.	7.26	2.125	-0.795	-0.060
LSP online teaching tools enable users to access different communication channels (audio, video, text).	7.37	2.255	-0.691	-0.463
LSP online teaching tools enable a flexible use of their functions (the possibility of multiple tasking, access to different functions based on diversification).	6.86	2.218	-0.201	-0.797
In my opinion all users can make use of LSP online teaching tools.	5.23	2.948	0.107	-1.402
In my opinion LSP teaching tools are accessible to students with special needs.	3.92	2.816	0.673	-0.997
Even when offline, LSP online teaching tools retain their functionality as well as content.	5.32	2.272	0.006	-0.376
LSP online teaching tools have the capability of integrating learners by using synchronous and asynchronous communication.	5.91	1.915	-0.319	0.099
LSP online teaching tools are used by university professors to check upon their students' attendance.	7.95	2.478	-1.160	0.202
Most university professors seem familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.	7.52	2.067	-0.878	0.134

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Most university professors seem to have basic knowledge of LSP online teaching tools.	6.48	2.448	-0.450	-1.024
By using LSP online teaching tools university professors are able to actively control the learning process.	7.86	2.100	-1.240	0.924
Online teaching of LSP has modifed my attitude towards my university professor.	5.61	2.777	-0.014	-1.459
The choice of LSP online teaching methods and approaches has had a significant impact on my learning outcome.	5.38	2.767	-.081	-1.324
I am familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.	6.31	2.497	-.195	-1.044
I have basic technical/digital competencies with regard to dealing with LSP online teaching tools.	6.17	2.560	.036	-1.192

It can be concluded from Table 3 that respondents on average agree with almost all the statements ($5.23 < M < 8.08$). The only exception is the perception of the the tools designed for LSP on distance are not accessible to students with special needs ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.82$). On average, respondents mostly agree that the tools for LSP on distance can adapt easily to any form and specific LSP ($M = 8.08$, $SD = 1.71$), that teachers can use LSP in distance learning to check the attendance rate of students ($M = 7.95$, $SD = 2.48$), that teachers can benefit for active management of the learning process, while using LSP in distance education ($M = 7.86$, $SD = 2.1$), that most of the teachers show domesticity while using LSP in distance education ($M = 7.52$, $SD = 2.07$), that tools designed for LSP distance learning allow teachers to use different communication channels ($M = 7.37$, $SD = 2.26$), and that users can use help while using LSP in distance learning ($M = 7.26$, $SD = 2.13$). Respondents, on average, also agree that tools designed for LSP in distance learning allow flexibility ($M = 6.86$, $SD = 2.22$), that most of the teachers possess the basic skills to use the tools designed for LSP in distance learning ($M = 6.48$, $SD = 2.45$), that respondent know how to use the tools designed for LSP in distance learning ($M = 6.31$, $SD = 2.5$), that they possess the necessary technical skills to use LSP in distance learning ($M = 6.17$, $SD = 2.56$), and that while using LSP in distance learning users can use synchronous and assynchronous forms of communication ($M = 5.91$, $SD = 1.92$). On average, respondents tend to neither agree neither disagree that the use of LSP in distance learning has changed their attitude towards teachers ($M = 5.61$, $SD = 2.78$), that learning techniques used by teachers in distance learning have developped respondents' knowledge ($M = 5.38$, $SD = 2.77$), that teachers can use

LSP in distance learning also offline (M = 5.32, SD = 2.27), and that all users can use the tools designed for LSP in distance education (M = 5.23, SD = 2.95).

Regarding the distribution of the variables, we can see (from Table 3) that all the included statements show a distribution close to a normal one (-1.24 < skewness < 0.11; -1.46 < kurtosis < 1.26). Thus, we can retain all the mentioned items of the perception of the tools designed for LSP on distance for further statistical analysis.

In the next step, the reliability of the research instrument was tested. Sixteen variables were included, the reliability of which is, based on Ferligoj et al. (1995), very good, since the value of the Cronbach alpha coefficient is $\alpha = 0.8$.

Internal validity was tested using the Pearson's correlational coefficients (see Appendix 1). Results show that most of the Pearson's correlational coefficients are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, showing internal validity of the research instrument. The exceptions are in the case of the agreement with statements that the tools designed for LSP in distance education can be adapted to any form and specific of LSP learning, that most of the teachers show a level of domesticity with the tools designed for LSP distance learning, that most of the teachers show basic skills for the usage of LSP in distance learning, that distance learning has changed respondent's attitude towards teachers, and that the used methods in LSP distance learning helped develop respondent's knowledge. In the mentioned cases, the items present a partial significant correlation with other items.

4 Results and discussion

To test the formulated research hypotheses t-test analysis was used, for each item separately.

First, the results of the influence of different learning techniques on the perception of the usefulness of the tools for distance education was measured. Results are presented in Appendix 2. Statistically significant values at the 0.05 level are highlighted in the table. In the following, results are presented, according to the used learning technique.

There can be seen some statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level among respondents that stated that their teachers used audio-lingual method for language learning and those who answered their teachers did not use this method. Respondents that answered their teachers used the audio-lingual method for language teaching agreed more than students that reported their teachers did not use the audio-lingual method during lectures that:

- the LSP for distance learning is accessible for all,
- the LSP for distance learning is accessible for students with special needs,
- they are familiar with the use of LSP for distance learning and
- they have the basic technical skills for the use of LSP for distance learning.

There can be seen some statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level among respondents that stated that their teachers used grammar translation method for language learning and those who answered their teachers did not use this technique. Respondents that answered their teachers used the grammar translation method for language teaching agreed less than students that reported their teachers did not use the grammar translation method during lectures that LSP for distance learning can be adapted to any form of education. Respondents that answered their teachers used the grammar translation method for language teaching agreed more than students that reported their teachers did not use the grammar translation method during lectures that:

- LSP for distance learning enables users to access different communication channels,
- all users can use LSP for distance learning,
- most teachers have basic knowledge on how to use LSP in distance learning and
- they are familiar with the use of LSP for distance learning.

There can be seen some statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level among respondents that stated that their teachers used the CLIL approach for language learning and those who answered their teachers did not use this approach. Respondents that answered their teachers used the CLIL for language teaching

agreed more than students that reported their teachers did not use the CLIL approach during lectures that LSP for distance learning can be adapted to any form of education. Respondents that answered their teachers used the CLIL approach for language teaching agreed less than students that reported their teachers did not use CLIL during lectures that:

- LSP for distance learning enables users to access different communication channels,
- LSP for distance learning enables a flexible use of the tools,
- all users can use LSP for distance learning,
- LSP for distance learning is accessible for students with special needs,
- LSP for distance learning can be used offline,
- LSP for distance learning enables the use of synchronous and assynchronous communication,
- LSP for distance learning can be used to check students' attendance,
- teachers have basic knowledge on how to use LSP for distance learning,
- using LSP for distance learning had an impact on their knowledge,
- they are familiar with the use of the LSP for distance learning and
- they possess the basic technical skills to use LSP for distance learning.

There can be seen some statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level among respondents that stated that their teachers used the task-based approach for language learning and those who answered their teachers did not use this approach. Respondents that answered their teachers used the task-based approach for language teaching agreed less than students that reported their teachers did not use the task-based approach during lectures that LSP for distance learning can be used by anyone.

There can be seen some statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level among respondents that stated that their teachers used communicative approach for language learning and those who answered their teachers did not use this approach. Respondents that answered their teachers used the communicative approach for language teaching agreed more than students that reported their teachers did not use the communicative approach during lectures that they possess the basic technical skills for LSP in distance learning.

There can be seen some statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level among respondents that stated that their teachers used cross-curricular approach for language learning and those who answered their teachers did not use this approach. Respondents that answered their teachers used the cross-curricular approach for language teaching agreed more than students that reported their teachers did not use the cross-curricular approach during lectures that LSP for distance learning can be adapted to any form of education. Respondents that answered their teachers used the cross-curricular approach for language teaching agreed less than students that reported their teachers did not use the cross-curricular approach during lectures that:

- LSP for distance learning enables users to access different communication channels,
- LSP for distance learning enables a flexible use of the tools,
- LSP for distance learning is appropriate for all users,
- LSP for distance learning is accessible to students with special needs,
- they are familiar with the use of LSP for distance learning and
- they possess the basic technical skills to use LSP for distance learning.

There were no statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level among respondents that stated that their teachers used the language shower for language learning. Thus, the research hypothesis can be partially confirmed.

Results for the variable gender are presented in Appendix 3. Statistically significant values at the 0.05 level are highlighted in the table. Based on results shown in Appendix 3 there are statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level in the perception of the tools designed for LSP on distance by the gender of respondents. Females respondents agree more (M = 4.53) than male respondents (M = 3.2) that tools designed for LSP distance learning are accessible for students with special needs. Male respondents agree more (M = 8.48) than female respondents (M = 7.36) that tools designed for LSP distance learning allow teachers to actively manage the learning process. Thus, the research hypothesis can be partially confirmed.

Results of the t-test with regard to the students' affiliation (Faculty of Tourism at Brežice vs Faculty of Tourism Studies –Turistica at Portorož) are presented in Appendix 4. Statistically significant values at the 0.05 level are highlighted in the table. From Appendix 4 we can observe that there are statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level in the perception of the tools designed for LSP on distance with regard to the students' affiliation. Respondents from the University of Maribor agree more than respondents of the University of Primorska that the tools designed for LSP in distance learning:

- allow the use of different communication channels,
- are useful for all users,
- it can be used offline,
- teachers can use it to check the attendance of students,
- they know how to use it and
- they possess the basic technical skills in order to be able ot use the tools.

Thus, the research hypothesis can be partially confirmed.

5 Conclusions

The Covid-19 pandemic has been quite a challenge for all stakeholders in school systems on the globals scale. Since all educational facilities were forced to suspend their in-presence teaching and learning due to Covid-19 restriction measures on the one hand, and find a suitable and appropriate way to continue the educational process on the other hand, many students of all levels were grounded at home. At first glance online teaching and learning appeared easy and one-measure-fits–all, soon proved to be quite an obstacle for many students, because not all were equipped to take up online classes. No one has believed that the pandemic would tako so long to play out, which led to an underpreparedness of students and internet providers alike. LSP teachers' digital competences were also put to a strict test, since they needed to deliver on their curruculum, inspite of all the circumstances.

Our research has highlighted some important issues and differences among the sets of university students of two tourism faculties in Slovenia, which were faced with a strenuous effort to transfer the entire teaching and learning online. It was an endeavour in itself, since neither the internet providers, nor students, not even language teachers were fully prepared. Whether or not a LSP teacher was digitally literate became one of the main issues during the 2020 Spring lockdown in Slovenia, and what is more, whether or not her/his teaching approaches or methods were used and adapted to the new situation of online teaching was the next important factor. Constant and quality access to internet services as well as well-developed digital competencies were suddenly highly valued qualities and not always present. To cope with this challenge, the European Union has thought in advance and conducted a survey in 27 European countries with the aim to highlight the actual use of internet in schools, the percentage of digitally competent teachers and access to internet. The overall outcome of the 2006 research is according to Božič (2018, pp. 41-45) a rather low level of digital preparedness of elementary school teachers and medium coverage of schools with a sufficiently stabil intenet connection. Also, as Basantes-Andrade et al. would put it (2020), higher education institutions needed to make the effort and take up the challenge of training and updating knowledge for their educators, so that they can develop the necessary digital competence and thus motivate their students to strive for better learning outcomes. Digital competences have marked a relevant bulk of research line in the previous years and at different levels and in different contexts (Caena & Redeker, 2019; Maderick et al., 2016; Moreno & Delgado, 2013; Nykes, 2018; Spante et al., 2018), keeping in mind that the digital competence is a set of techno-pedagogical and communicative skills to function effectively in the new educational contexts generated by technology. At the same time LSP teachers needed to reflect on their teaching approaches and methods in order to make them online-friendly and still cater for the students' needs. That was precisely the reason our research was undertaken in the first place.

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Appendix 1. Pearson's correlational coefficient of the perception of the usefulness of the tools used for digital learning

Perception of the usefulness of the tool

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13	T14	T15	T16
T1	1	.519**	.078	-.151	-.207*	-.089	-.056	.090	.081	.170	.054	.194	-.047	-.029	-.197	-.061
T2	.519**	1	.442**	-.080	.015	.125	.098	.259**	.228*	.230*	.197*	.201*	.041	.167	.188	.200*
T3	.078	.442**	1	.314**	.398**	.370**	.192	.221*	.117	-.058	.272**	.086	.145	.173	.476**	.498**
T4	-.151	-.080	.314**	1	.494**	.358**	.322**	.332**	.076	-.108	.184	.227*	.241*	.076	.337**	.282**
T5	-.207*	.015	.398**	.494**	1	.635**	.242*	.338**	.144	-.189	.474**	.047	.184	.161	.464**	.454**
T6	-.089	.125	.370**	.358**	.635**	1	.377**	.387**	.082	-.107	.422**	.089	.138	.147	.412**	.420**
T7	-.056	.098	.192	.322**	.242*	.377**	1	.610**	.199*	.146	.159	.326**	.091	.073	.482**	.477**
T8	.090	.259**	.221*	.332**	.338**	.387**	.610**	1	.315**	.152	.057	.222*	.081	.146	.400**	.384**
T9	.081	.228*	.117	.076	.144	.082	.199*	.315**	1	.461**	-.173	.461**	.035	.085	.254*	.256**
T10	.170	.230*	-.058	-.108	-.189	-.107	.146	.152	.461**	1	-.046	.210*	-.020	.104	-.066	-.063
T11	.054	.197*	.272**	.184	.474**	.422**	.159	.057	-.173	-.046	1	-.013	.007	.095	.172	.257**
T12	.194	.201*	.086	.227*	.047	.089	.326**	.222*	.461**	.210*	-.013	1	.014	-.124	.320**	.267**
T13	-.047	.041	.145	.241*	.184	.138	.091	.081	.035	-.020	.007	.014	1	.366**	.033	.088
T14	-.029	.167	.173	.076	.161	.147	.073	.146	.085	.104	.095	-.124	.366**	1	.246*	.246*
T15	97	98	100	97	95	99	97	98	99	99	100	94	97	98	100	99
T16	-.061	.200*	.498**	.282**	.454**	.420**	.477**	.384**	.256**	-.063	.257**	.267**	.088	.246*	.801**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 2. t-test for the influence of the learning techniques on the perception of the usefulness of the tools used for digital learning

Statement	Audio-lingual method	Grammar translation method	CLIL approach	Task-based approach	Communicative approach	Cross-curricular approach	Language shower
T1	t = 1.550, sig = 0.533	**t = -2.239, sig = 0.024**	**t = -3.543, sig = 0.001**	t = -0.264, sig = 0.793	t = -0.411, sig = 0.682	**t = -1.986, sig = 0.050**	t = 0.342, sig = 0.733
T2	t = 0.795, sig = 0.429	t = -1.454, sig = 0.149	t = -0.671, sig = 0.504	t = -0.620, sig = 0.537	t = -1.306, sig = 0.194	t = 0.169, sig = 0.866	t = 0.418, sig = 0.677
T3	t = -1.355, sig = 0.178	**t = -2.994, sig = 0.003**	**t = 3.016, sig = 0.003**	t = 0.777, sig = 0.439	t = -0.285, sig = 0.776	**t = 2.975, sig = 0.004**	t = 0.238, sig = 0.812
T4	t = -0.613, sig = 0.541	t = -0.685, sig = 0.495	**t = 3.777, sig = 0.001**	t = -1.730, sig = 0.089	t = 1.719, sig = 0.089	**t = 2.426, sig = 0.017**	t = -1.299, sig = 0.197
T5	**t = -2.572, sig = 0.012**	**t = -3.193, sig = 0.002**	**t = 4.881, sig = 0.001**	**t = 2.792, sig = 0.007**	t = -0.850, sig = 0.398	**t = 4.478, sig = 0.001**	t = 0.028, sig = 0.978
T6	**t = -3.290, sig = 0.001**	t = -1.086, sig = 0.280	**t = 5.733, sig = 0.001**	t = 1.000, sig = 0.322	t = -1.733, sig = 0.086	**t = 4.669, sig = 0.001**	t = 0.853, sig = 0.395
T7	t = -1.336, sig = 0.185	t = 0.375, sig = 0.709	**t = 4.184, sig = 0.001**	t = 0.210, sig = 0.834	t = -0.708, sig = 0.480	t = 1.635, sig = 0.105	t = -0.042, sig = 0.967
T8	t = -0.917, sig = 0.361	t = 0.024, sig = 0.981	**t = 2.002, sig = 0.048**	t = -0.641, sig = 0.523	t = 0.083, sig = 0.934	t = 1.541, sig = 0.126	t = 0.520, sig = 0.604
T9	t = -0.549, sig = 0.584	t = 0.012, sig = 0.991	**t = 2.194, sig = 0.030**	t = -0.290, sig = 0.772	t = -1.007, sig = 0.316	t = 0.892, sig = 0.374	t = -1.521, sig = 0.131
T10	t = 0.167, sig = 0.868	t = 1.670, sig = 0.098	t = -0.709, sig = 0.480	t = -1.480, sig = 0.142	t = -1.204, sig = 0.231	t = -1.691, sig = 0.094	t = -0.512, sig = 0.610
T11	t = -0.967, sig = 0.336	**t = -2.978, sig = 0.004**	**t = 2.575, sig = 0.013**	t = 1.447, sig = 0.151	t = -0.639, sig = 0.524	t = 1.396, sig = 0.166	t = 0.761, sig = 0.448
T12	t = -1.296, sig = 0.198	t = 0.749, sig = 0.456	t = 1.968, sig = 0.052	t = -1.777, sig = 0.081	t = -0.270, sig = 0.788	t = 0.430, sig = 0.668	t = -0.116, sig = 0.908

Statement	Audio-lingual method	Grammar translation method	CLIL approach	Task-based approach	Communicative approach	Cross-curricular approach	Language shower
T13	t = 1.014, sig = 0.313	t = -0.039, sig = 0.969	t = 0.679, sig = 0.499	t = -1.376, sig = 0.172	t = -0.609, sig = 0.544	t = 1.680, sig = 0.096	t = -0.102, sig = 0.856
T14	t = 0.140, sig = 0.889	t = -1.689, sig = 0.094	**t = 2.242, sig = 0.028**	t = -0.981, sig = 0.329	t = -1.498, sig = 0.137	t = 1.605, sig = 0.112	t = 0.886, sig = 0.378
T15	**t = -2.627, sig = 0.010**	**t = -1.980, sig = 0.050**	**t = 6.718, sig = 0.001**	t = -0.146, sig = 0.885	t = -0.753, sig = 0.453	**t = 3.548, sig = 0.001**	t = 0.729, sig = 0.468
T16	**t = -3.370, sig = 0.001**	t = -1.814, sig = 0.073	**t = 6.424, sig = 0.001**	t = 0.819, sig = 0.414	**t = -2.222, sig = 0.028**	**t = 4.771, sig = 0.001**	t = 0.449, sig = 0.654

Appendix 3. t-test for the influence of the gender of respondents on the perception of the usefulness of the tools used for digital learning

Statement	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
LSP online teaching tools can be adapted to any particular form, regardless of the typology and number of students. LSP online teaching tools' users are provided with help in case they run into trouble.	M	8.22	1.988	0.744 (p = 0.458)
	F	7.97	1.463	
LSP online teaching tools enable users to access different communication channels (audio, video, text). LSP online teaching tools enable a flexible use of their functions (the possibility of multiple tasking, access to different functions based on diversification).	M	7.45	2.310	0.837 (p = 0.405)
	F	7.10	1.962	
In my opinion all users can make use of LSP online teaching tools. In my opinion LSP teaching tools are accessible to students with special needs.	M	7.04	2.249	-1.4 (p = 0.165)
	F	7.64	2.242	
Even when offline, LSP online teaching tools retain their functionality as well as content. LSP online teaching tools have the capability of integrating learners by using synchronous and asynchronous communication.	M	6.63	2.140	-0.982 (p = 0.328)
	F	7.05	2.284	
LSP online teaching tools are used by university professors to check upon their students' attendance. Most university professors seem familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.	M	4.77	3.115	-1.482 (p = 0.142)
	F	5.63	2.767	
Most university professors seem to have basic knowledge of LSP online teaching tools. By using LSP online teaching tools university professors are able to actively control the learning process.	M	3.20	2.499	**-2.547 (p = 0.012)**
	F	4.53	2.945	
Online teaching of LSP has modifed my attitude towards my university professor. The choice of LSP online teaching methods and approaches has had a significant impact on my learning outcome.	M	5.19	2.233	-0.535 (p = 0.594)
	F	5.43	2.318	
I am familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.	M	5.88	1.996	-0.149 (p = 0.882)
	F	5.93	1.862	

Statement	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
LSP online teaching tools can be adapted to any particular form, regardless of the typology and number of students. LSP online teaching tools' users are provided with help in case they run into trouble.	M	8.39	2.326	-1.673
	F	7.59	2.560	(p = ,097)
LSP online teaching tools enable users to access different communication channels (audio, video, text). LSP online teaching tools enable a flexible use of their functions (the possibility of multiple tasking, access to different functions based on diversification).	M	7.72	2.223	0.94
	F	7.34	1.924	(p = 0.349)
In my opinion all users can make use of LSP online teaching tools. In my opinion LSP teaching tools are accessible to students with special needs.	M	6.32	2.503	-0.615
	F	6.61	2.414	(p = 0.540)
Even when offline, LSP online teaching tools retain their functionality as well as content. LSP online teaching tools have the capability of integrating learners by using synchronous and asynchronous communication.	M	8.48	1.849	**2.755**
	F	7.36	2.172	**(p = 0.007)**
LSP online teaching tools are used by university professors to check upon their students' attendance. Most university professors seem familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.	M	5.63	3.043	0.045
	F	5.60	2.550	(p = 0.964)
Most university professors seem to have basic knowledge of LSP online teaching tools. By using LSP online teaching tools university professors are able to actively control the learning process.	M	5.36	2.848	-0.081
	F	5.40	2.718	(p = 0.936)
Online teaching of LSP has modifed my attitude towards my university professor. The choice of LSP online teaching methods and approaches has had a significant impact on my learning outcome.	M	6.41	2.455	0.379
	F	6.22	2.553	(p = 0.705)
I am familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.	M	5.88	2.782	-1.082 (p = 0.282)

Appendix 4. t-test for the influence of the faculty of respondents on the perception of the usefulness of the tools used for digital learning

Statement	Faculty / University	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
LSP online teaching tools can be adapted to any particular form, regardless of the typology and number of students. LSP online teaching tools' users are provided with help in case they run into trouble.	Primorska	8.36	1.447	1.87 (p = 0.650)
	Maribor	7.72	1.951	
LSP online teaching tools enable users to access different communication channels (audio, video, text). LSP online teaching tools enable a flexible use of their functions (the possibility of multiple tasking, access to different functions based on diversification).	Primorska	6.92	2.149	-1.921 (p = 0.057)
	Maribor	7.70	2.031	
In my opinion all users can make use of LSP online teaching tools. In my opinion LSP teaching tools are accessible to students with special needs.	Primorska	6.68	2.231	**-3.9 (p = 0.001)**
	Maribor	8.28	1.964	
Even when offline, LSP online teaching tools retain their functionality as well as content. LSP online teaching tools have the capability of integrating learners by using synchronous and asynchronous communication.	Primorska	6.51	2.292	-1.85 (p = 0.067)
	Maribor	7.31	2.054	
LSP online teaching tools are used by university professors to check upon their students' attendance. Most university professors seem familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.	Primorska	4.54	2.841	**-2.723 (p = 0.008)**
	Maribor	6.09	2.882	
Most university professors seem to have basic knowledge of LSP online teaching tools. By using LSP online teaching tools university professors are able to actively control the learning process.	Primorska	3.48	2.790	-1.877 (p = 0.063)
	Maribor	4.49	2.773	
Online teaching of LSP has modifed my attitude towards my university professor. The choice of LSP online teaching methods and approaches has had a significant impact on my learning outcome.	Primorska	4.88	1.858	**-2.212 (p = 0.030)**
	Maribor	5.89	2.627	
I am familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.	Primorska	5.72	1.678	-1.162 (p = 0.248)
	Maribor	6.15	2.180	

Statement	Faculty / University	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
LSP online teaching tools can be adapted to any particular form, regardless of the typology and number of students. LSP online teaching tools' users are provided with help in case they run into trouble.	Primorska	7.55	2.690	**-2.081 (p = 0.040)**
	Maribor	8.50	2.063	
LSP online teaching tools enable users to access different communication channels (audio, video, text). LSP online teaching tools enable a flexible use of their functions (the possibility of multiple tasking, access to different functions based on diversification).	Primorska	7.44	1.939	-0.483 (p = 0.630)
	Maribor	7.63	2.245	
In my opinion all users can make use of LSP online teaching tools. In my opinion LSP teaching tools are accessible to students with special needs.	Primorska	6.39	2.279	-0.439 (p = 0.662)
	Maribor	6.60	2.676	
Even when offline, LSP online teaching tools retain their functionality as well as content. LSP online teaching tools have the capability of integrating learners by using synchronous and asynchronous communication.	Primorska	7.67	2.055	-0.985 (p = 0.327)
	Maribor	8.09	2.155	
LSP online teaching tools are used by university professors to check upon their students' attendance. Most university professors seem familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.	Primorska	5.11	2.826	-2.094 (p = 0.039)
	Maribor	6.24	2.609	
Most university professors seem to have basic knowledge of LSP online teaching tools. By using LSP online teaching tools university professors are able to actively control the learning process.	Primorska	5.00	2.972	-1.713 (p = 0.090)
	Maribor	5.89	2.406	
Online teaching of LSP has modifed my attitude towards my university professor. The choice of LSP online teaching methods and approaches has had a significant impact on my learning outcome.	Primorska	5.63	2.277	**-3.24 (p = 0.020)**
	Maribor	7.18	2.518	
I am familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.	Primorska	5,66	2,265	**-2.353 (p = 0.021)**