Foreign Language Teaching During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Differences in Students' Attitudes Towards the Online LSP Course. The Case of the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security

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Abstract This paper presents the results of an analysis of the attitudes of students of the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security at the University of Maribor (FVV UM) towards the use of distance learning tools in their language for specific purposes (LSP) course. Our aim was to investigate the students' experience with LSP distance learning tools by focusing on the impact of different language teaching methods on the respondents' attitudes towards LSP distance learning tools, on the students' and professors' perceptions regarding the use of digital tools for online learning and the professors' ability to adapt their teaching methods to online learning. The results were as follows: there were no major differences in attitudes regarding the students' gender, the students have proven to have sufficient knowledge of the use of digital tools, the professors have proven to have sufficient knowledge of the use of digital tools and are able to adapt them accordingly, although the perceptions of students regarding the adaptations made by the professors differed significantly from those of the professors. Consequently, a more informed choice of teaching methods and approaches should be made that would ensure better learning outcomes also in the case of online teaching.

Keywords:
attitudes towards the use of digital tools, distance or online learning, Language for specific purposes (LSP), university students, teaching methods and approaches

University of Maribor Press

DOI https://doi.org/10.18690/um.fvv.6.2022.5
ISBN 978-961-286-674-7

1 Introduction

On Friday 13 March 2020, Slovenia went into a soft lockdown[1], and a ban on social gatherings was announced, which came into effect on Monday 16 March 2020. The term »lockdown« was and is widely used in all countries, not only in predominantly Anglo-Saxon ones, and would normally start with the closure of public life and in-presence work, which triggers the onset of distance work or working from home (Florjančič, 2021, p.12). Subsequently, teaching in schools, colleges and universities switched to online teaching, and restrictions on leisure activities, entertainment and religious activities were imposed. The effect of the global pandemic was that suddenly, more than 850 million people were forced to learn outside the classroom as of March 2020 (Johnson, Veletsianos & Seaman 2020). Although this kind of education was up until 2020 reserved only for institutions which conduct their teaching online, this kind of teaching did not occur for the first time. Johnson et al. (2020) reminded us of other instances in which pedagogical activities were conducted by means of distance teaching, mostly due to natural disasters or different political issues. That was the case of the hurricane Catrina, which struck the south of the USA in August 2005, the earthquake in New Zealand in 2011, or students' demonstrations in South Africa in 2015. Responses to such emergency conditions were nevertheless limited to a narrow geographical area, whereas the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic was such as to trigger a global switch from in-presence teaching and working to online work or some other distance work, a situation never to be seen in the history of mankind (Johnson et al., 2020).

Emergency conditions are unpredictable and so is the response to them, sudden and ill prepared. Although the teaching was conducted distantly, it could hardly be called distance teaching (or eLearning), for such form of teaching was not planned and prepared in advance. Hence the term »emergency remote teaching« was coined in the English-speaking countries, whereas at the same time in Slovenia, the term »šola/študij na daljavo« (English: distance teaching or distance schooling) appeared, some experts even called it »crisis education« (Univerza v Mariboru, 2020)[2], or crisis

[1] The expression »go into lockdown« is used to describe a ban on social gathering and social distancing, when the term fits the context. Slovenia did not go into a complete lockdown, as groceries, for example, remained opened (with restrictions) and people could still go outside their homes (but were temporarily limited to their municipalities at the beginning).
[2]For further information check https://it.um.si/novice/Strani/Podrobnosti-novice.aspx?nID=218.

distance teaching. The University of Primorska on, the other hand, set up a crisis teaching in emergency conditions and prepared an array of measures. Regardless of how the distance teaching was named, the fact remains that it was neither planned not well-prepared, with a lot of experimenting and many adjustments. This form of educations is, of course, a long way from a well-planned online education (Hodges et al., 2020).

What this meant for the entire pedagogical sector: stakeholders in the field had to abruptly (some more and some less) organise to operate in a mode that was significantly different from what teachers[3] had known before. The imposed restrictions and the subsequent school closure placed teachers in unprecedented situation, both in terms of working conditions and uncertainty about the potential personal risk of infection. This study was prepared and conducted after the first wave of the Covid-19[4] pandemic was over and in the winter months of 2021, during the second wave, which was officially over by 17 April 2021.

2 The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on foreign language (FL) distance learning and teaching

The World Health Organization (henceforth WHO) declared COVID-19 as a global public health emergency of international concern on 30 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). On 15 March 2020 the Government of the Republic of Slovenia issued a decree [5] on the nation-wide banning of the gathering of people in the educational and pedagogical facilities from preschool to higher education. The decree was extended to all organisations, including those, which offered informal education services. The

[3] The term »teacher« is used generically and represents every person who works in the field of education, be it pre-school, elementary, and secondary level as well as higher education and it refers to teaching staff of both sexes.
[4] The first wave of the pandemic was officially terminated 15 May 2020. The second wave was declared 18 October 2022 and was officially terminated 17 April 2021. (https://www.gov.si/novice/2020-10-19-vlada-razglasila-epidemijo-nalezljive-bolezni-covid-19-na-obmocju-republike-slovenije)
[5] For further information go to https://www.gov.si/novice/2020-03-15-posebno-obvestilo-ministrice-dr-simone-kustec-o-varstvu-otrok/

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 et al., 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 material 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 especificly 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 under preparedness 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 genuinely interested in virtual classes, which is specifically 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 hindered 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 distance learning during pandemics (Florjančič, 2021; Mailizar et al., 2020; Smajla & Podovšovnik, 2021). The authors of the studies 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.

It is important to note that during the Covid-19 pandemic a great body of research has focused on students' perspectives about the implementation of distance education in various educational settings. In the follow up, we turn the focus on the specificity of online foreign language learning in higher education and its challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The last decade has seen a significant expansion of online language courses, offered by educational institutions or by specificized platforms such as Mondly, Duolingo, Livemocha, Rosetta Stone and similar (Lin & Warschauer, 2015). In higher education, the benefits of implementing online FL teaching regarding both distance education and in-presence language teaching and learning have proven to be significant, specifically after the introduction of ICT-based synchronous or asynchronous activities (Maican & Cocoradă, 2021). Some researchers who have focused on full-time in-presence education have sustained that the online teaching makes language teaching and learning more flexible and individualized, based on authentic materials, which according to them may trigger an increase in attendance and student engagement (Gacs et al., 2020; Felix, 2008). While the benefits of online language education seem to be obvious, some studies showed that its positive effects may be hindered by technical and personal problems, such as students' and teachers' low self-efficacy for online learning or computer use (Artino, 2010), and by students' low active participation or dominant interventions (Hampel, 2003). On one hand, other recent research conducted on online education shows that during the pandemic students preferred teaching materials which could easily be found on the e-learning platforms for longer periods of time (such as pre-recorded video lectures) and which students can use on their own and whenever it suits them, thus meeting individual needs (Islam et al., 2020). Other recent studies (vanOostveen et al., 2018) have emphasised that online teaching is based on knowledge transmission and that teachers more or less consciously try to replicate the old teaching and learning, may not have the desired effect in the conditions triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, since the use of this approach in FL teaching may facilitate the compliance with the planned curriculum, but not overcome the students' mixed feelings towards the new learning environment or the difficulties encountered (Egbert, 2020). There are other aspects of distance or online teaching affecting students' learning. It has been pointed out that distance teaching offers positive opportunities for students to improve their knowledge and skills (Riggs, 2020). Further, it has also been reported

that students have more time to do their tasks and assignments (Evisen et al., 2020). The students are taught to become self-directed learners and take responsibility for their learning progress (Maison et al., 2021). Third, students learning at home feel safe from the spread of Covid-19 (Evisen et al., 2020). The pandemic has also enabled students to gain certain digital literacy skills and thus boosted their self-learning development (Boelens et al., 2017; Dziuban et al., 2018). Technology offers other benefits to education because of its flexibility in implementation (Bozkurt, 2019; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Mohammed et al., 2020). There have also been problems that have hampered online or distance learning, such as unstable internet connectivity and the lack of networking technology support (Agung et al., 2020; Alim et al., 2019; Pokhre & Chhetri, 2021). Some researchers (Nartiningrum & Nughoro, 2020) have reported a lack of students' motivation and engagement, students were even not willing to switch on their cameras so that teachers would face just blank screen with students' initials, which makes teachers' work slightly uncomfortable (Klimová, 2021). Other researchers (Smajla & Podovšovnik, 2021) have reported issues with the perceived access (or lack of it) of students with specific needs to the digital tools for online LSP course and the perceived adaptation of teaching methods by the lecturers in the LSP online course.

Based on the premises outlined above, the research objective focused on the attitudes of university students of criminal justice and security in the Republic of Slovenia towards the online FL learning. The following part of the paper 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 regarding the respondents' age and teaching method or approach in the LSP online course, hence, the following research questions were explored.

3 Research methodology

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 specific purposes during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research paradigm consists of a descriptive and causal-non-

experimental method of empirical pedagogical research, for which the appropriate research method is descriptive. Sagadin (1991, p. 29) described this method as an "investigation of the pedagogical field". To order to elicit data for the study, the students were asked to respond to a 17-item online questionnaire, of which 5 variables were nominal, 11 ordinal, and 1 proportional.

According to the literature review, the following research hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 1. The gender of respondents influences their attitudes towards technologies used for teaching online a foreign language for specific purposes.

Hypothesis 2. Students' self-evaluation of knowledge of technologies used for teaching online influences respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for teaching online a foreign language for specific purposes.

Hypothesis 3. Students' perception of teachers' knowledge of technologies used for online teaching influences respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for online teaching of foreign language for specific purposes.

Hypothesis 4. Students' perception of adaptation of online teaching (compared to non-online teaching) influences respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for teaching online a foreign language for specific purposes.

First, basic statistics (mean and standard deviation) were calculated and skewness and kurtosis coefficients were calculated to examine the normality of the distribution. Subsequently, linear regression was used to test research hypotheses.

3.2 Gathering of data and research sample

The questionnaire was drawn by Associate Professor Eva Podovšovnik, PhD, from the Faculty of Tourism Studies-Turistica, Portorož, 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 for three following months. 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 an LSP course at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security were encouraged to motivate their students to click on the survey and finish it. The sample of the university students from the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security amounted to 87. See Table 1 for the presentation of the gender of the respondents participating in the study.

Table 1: Gender of respondents.

Gender	f	f%
Male	43	50.0
Female	43	50.0

Source: own data.

In the sample, 43 were male (50 %) and 43 were female (50 %) students of criminal justice and security. 1 respondent did not report the gender and it was excluded from further statistical analysis.

In figure 1, the age of respondents is presented.

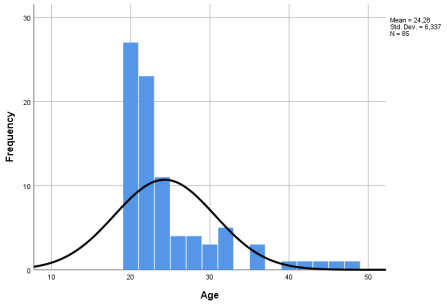

Figure 1: Age of respondents.
Source: own data.

2 respondents did not report their age. They were excluded from further statistical analysis. From figure 1 there can be seen that more than half (56.5 %) of respondents were aged 20 or 21. The mean age of respondents was 24.28 years, with standard deviation of 6.34 years.

3.3 Research instrument

An online questionnaire was used as a research instrument in this study. It is comprised of 17 items, five of which are nominal variables, 11 are ordinal, and one is a relational variable. The research instrument applied to measure the attitudes of university students of the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security 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 nationwide lockdown and subsequent schools' closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, a 16-item instrument (see Table 3 for the list of items) was drawn up and used in the online survey which aimed at university students' attitudes towards their technological know-how, perceived foreign language teaching methods and approaches used in the LSP online course. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is at $\alpha = 0.8$, which confirms the reliability of the research instrument. Pearsons' correlational coefficient (see Appendix 1) among pairs of statements about the attitudes towards LSP teaching methods show no multicollinearity ($r < 0.8$).

3.4 Data analysis

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

4 Results

In this section, results and testing of research hypotheses is presented. First, basic statistics of students' self-evaluation of technologies used for teaching online, students' perception of teachers' knowledge of technologies used for teaching online and students' perception of adaptation of online teaching (compared to non-online teaching) were calculated (see table 2). In all 3 cases, respondents were asked to evaluate their self-evaluation and perceptions on a scale from 1 (not at all true) to 10 (completely true).

Table 2: Self-evaluation and perception of knowledge and adaptation of online teaching.

	Students' self-evaluation of technologies used for teaching online	Students' perception of teachers' knowledge of technologies used for teaching online	Students' perception of adaptation of online teaching
N	84	82	82
Mean	7.20	8.39	7.43
Standard deviation	2.27	1.75	2.33
Skewness	-0.68	-1.08	-1.22
Kurtosis	-0.42	0.71	1.01

Source: own data.

The students of the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security who participated in the study perceive their knowledge of technologies used for online teaching as good (M = 7.2, SD = 2.27) but not as good as they perceive teachers' knowledge of technologies used for online teaching (M = 8.39, SD = 1.75). Respondents perceive the adaptation of online teaching (compared to non-online teaching) as good (M = 7.43, SD = 2.33). In all 3 cases, skewness (-1.22, -1.08, -0.68) and kurtosis (-0.42, 0,71, 1.01) show a distribution close to a normal one.

In order to measure respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for teaching online a foreign language for specific purposes, the following statements were included in the questionnaire:

Table 3: Labelling statements about respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for teaching online a foreign language for specific purposes.

Statement	Label
LSP online teaching tools can be adapted to any particular form, regardless of the typology and number of students.	A1
LSP online teaching tools' users are provided with help in case they run into trouble.	A2
LSP online teaching tools enable users to access different communication channels (audio, video, text).	A3
LSP online teaching tools enable a flexible use of their functions (the possibility of multiple tasking, access to different functions based on diversification).	A4
In my opinion all users can make use of LSP online teaching tools.	A5
In my opinion LSP teaching tools are accessible to students with specific needs.	A6
Even when offline, LSP online teaching tools retain their functionality as well as content.	A7
LSP online teaching tools have the capability of integrating learners by using synchronous and asynchronous communication.	A8
LSP online teaching tools are used by university professors to check upon their students' attendance.	A9
Most university professors seem familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.	A10
Most university professors seem to have basic knowledge of LSP online teaching tools.	A11
By using LSP online teaching tools university professors are able to actively control the learning process.	A12
Online teaching of LSP has modified my attitude towards my university professor.	A13
The choice of LSP online teaching methods and approaches has had a significant impact on my learning outcome.	A14
I am familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.	A15
I have basic technical/digital competencies with regard to dealing with LSP online teaching tools.	A16

Source: own.

In the following, basic statistics for respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for teaching online a foreign language for specific purposes are presented (see table 4). All statements were evaluated on a scale from 1 (do not agree at all) to 10 (completely agree).

Table 4: Respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for teaching online a foreign language for specific purposes.

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16
N	75	77	77	73	73	75	76	77	75	76	74	74	76	77	75	77
Mean	7.44	7.10	7.18	7.19	5.92	4.84	5.42	5.77	7.32	7.12	6.22	6.99	5.51	5.81	6.31	6.30
Standard deviation	1.85	2.09	2.04	1.83	2.54	2.55	2.06	1.95	2.33	2.11	2.17	2.06	2.74	2.57	2.39	2.35
Skewness	-0.41	-0.68	-0.61	-0.11	-0.10	0.36	0.16	0.21	-0.64	-0.38	-0.20	-0.30	-0.10	-0.01	-0.03	-0.01
Kurtosis	-0.66	-0.17	0.16	-0.71	-1.02	-0.84	0.46	0.23	-0.74	-0.83	-0.27	-0.68	-1.03	-1.18	-1.23	-1.11

Source: own data.

The students of the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security who participated in our study agree mostly with the statement that LSP online teaching tools can be adapted to any particular form, regardless of the typology and number of students (M = 7.44, SD = 1.85) and that LSP online teaching tools are used by university professors to check upon their students' attendance (M = 7.32, SD = 2.33). They also agree that LSP online teaching tools enable a flexible use of their functions (the possibility of multiple tasking, access to different functions based on diversification) (M = 7.19, SD = 1.83), that LSP online teaching tools enable users to access different communication channels (audio, video, text) (M = 7.18, SD = 2.04), that most university professors seem familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools (M = 7.12, SD = 2.11), that LSP online teaching tools' users are provided with help in case they run into trouble (M = 7.1, SD = 2.09), and that by using LSP online teaching tools university professors are able to actively control the learning process (M = 6.99, SD = 2.06). They agree less that they are familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools (M = 6.31, SD = 2.39), that they have basic technical/digital competencies with regard to dealing with LSP online teaching tools (M = 6.3, SD = 2.35), that most university professors seem to have basic knowledge of LSP online teaching tools (M = 6.22, SD = 2.17), that all users can make use of LSP online teaching tools (M = 5.92, SD = 2.54), that the choice of LSP online teaching methods and approaches has had a significant impact on my learning outcome (M = 5.81, SD = 2.57), and that LSP online teaching tools have the capability of integrating learners by using synchronous and asynchronous communication (M = 5.77, SD = 1.95).

They tend to slightly disagree that online teaching of LSP has modified my attitude towards my university professor (M = 5.51, SD = 2.4), that even when offline, LSP online teaching tools retain their functionality as well as content (M = 5.42, SD = 2.06), and that LSP teaching tools are accessible to students with specific needs (M = 4.84, SD = 2.55). In all cases, skewness (-0.68 < skewness < 0.36) and kurtosis (-1.23 < kurtosis < 0.46) show a distribution close to a normal one. All mentioned statements about respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for online teaching of an LSP course can be used in further statistical analysis.

Table 5 presents the differences in respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for online teaching of an LSP course, by students' gender, their self-evaluation of knowledge of technologies used for online teaching, their perception of teachers' knowledge of technologies used for online teaching and their perception of adaptation of online teaching. Linear regression (with ENTER method) was used in order to test our research hypotheses. In the proposed research models, respondents' gender, their self-evaluation of knowledge of technologies used for online teaching, their perception of teachers' knowledge of technologies used for online teaching and their perception of adaptation of online teaching, were used as independent variables, while statements about the respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for online teaching of an LSP course were, separately, used as dependent variables. Statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level are marked with bold.

Table 5: Respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for online teaching of an LSP course by students' gender, their self-evaluation of their knowledge of technologies used for online teaching, their perception of teachers' knowledge of technologies used for online teaching, and their perception of adaptation of online teaching.

S.	R^2	F-test		Gender			Self-evaluation of knowledge			Perception of teachers' knowledge			Adaptation of teaching			Constant		
		F	p	B	T	p	B	t	P	B	T	p	B	t	p	B	t	p
A1	0.49	**30.64**	**< 0.01**	0.09	0.28	0.78	-0.02	-0.26	0.80	**0.58**	**5.21**	**< 0.01**	**0.18**	**2.13**	**0.04**	1.19	1.09	0.28
A2	0.39	**31.18**	**< 0.01**	0.33	0.82	0.42	0.16	1.88	0.06	**0.40**	**2.97**	**< 0.01**	**0.29**	**2.73**	**0.01**	-0.10	-0.08	0.94
A3	0.16	**3.35**	**0.01**	0.41	0.89	0.38	0.17	1.71	0.09	0.06	0.36	0.72	**0.25**	**2.06**	**0.04**	2.99	1.95	0.06
A4	0.22	**4.60**	**< 0.01**	0.39	0.96	0.34	**0.20**	**2.28**	**0.03**	0.26	1.92	0.06	0.11	1.06	0.29	2.12	1.58	0.12
A5	0.17	**3.49**	**0.01**	0.65	1.10	0.27	**0.34**	**2.66**	**0.01**	0.04	0.19	0.85	0.25	1.54	0.13	0.35	0.18	0.86
A6	0.12	2.29	0.07	0.61	1.01	0.31	0.24	1.85	0.07	-0.28	-1.38	0.17	0.21	1.32	0.19	3.06	1.54	0.13
A7	0.24	**5.36**	**< 0.01**	**0.93**	**2.04**	**< 0.05**	0.19	1.95	0.06	-0.15	-0.96	0.34	**0.34**	**2.91**	**0.01**	1.42	0.95	0.35
A8	0.18	**3.77**	**0.01**	0.19	0.43	0.67	0.17	1.83	0.07	-0.09	-0.64	0.53	**0.32**	**2.74**	**0.01**	2.69	1.85	0.07
A9	0.24	**5.53**	**< 0.01**	0.75	1.45	0.15	0.21	1.91	0.06	0.22	1.31	0.20	**0.29**	**2.20**	**0.03**	0.68	0.40	0.69
A10	0.39	**11.01**	**< 0.01**	0.50	1.21	0.23	0.16	1.79	0.08	**0.57**	**4.12**	**< 0.01**	0.16	1.44	0.15	-0.74	-0.55	0.59
A11	0.08	1.43	0.23	**1.07**	**2.03**	**< 0.05**	0.07	0.59	0.56	0.22	1.25	0.22	-0.01	-0.10	0.92	2.41	1.39	0.17
A12	0.28	**6.71**	**< 0.01**	0.15	0.35	0.73	0.17	1.72	0.09	**0.43**	**2.92**	**0.01**	0.15	1.31	0.20	0.87	0.61	0.55
A13	0.02	0.39	0.82	0.01	0.01	0.99	-0.12	-0.81	0.42	-0.18	-0.81	0.42	0.17	1.00	0.32	**6.60**	**3.01**	**< 0.01**
A14	0.06	1.06	0.38	-0.03	-0.05	0.96	0.15	1.10	0.28	-0.04	-0.18	0.86	0.21	1.32	0.19	3.59	1.78	0.08
A15	0.47	**15.46**	**< 0.01**	0.34	0.79	0.43	**0.60**	**6.20**	**< 0.01**	-0.17	-1.14	0.26	**0.37**	**3.26**	**< 0.01**	0.14	0.10	0.92
A16	0.32	**8.27**	**< 0.01**	0.34	0.70	0.48	**0.35**	**3.34**	**< 0.01**	-0.20	-1.24	0.22	**0.46**	**3.66**	**< 0.01**	1.62	1.02	0.31

Legend: S.= statement; R^2 = determination coefficient
Source: own data.

Results shown in Table 5 allow a few interesting conclusions regarding the formulated research hypotheses. Firstly, the determination coefficient is lower than 0.2 (showing that less than 20 % of total variance explained using the included independent variables in the research model) in the cases of agreement with statements that online teaching of language for specific purposes has modified the students' attitude towards their university professor ($R^2 = 0.02$), that the choice of LSP online teaching methods and approaches has had a significant impact on their learning outcome ($R^2 = 0.06$), that most university professors seem to have

basic knowledge of LSP online teaching tools ($R^2 = 0.08$), that LSP teaching tools are accessible to students with specific needs ($R^2 = 0.12$), that LSP online teaching tools enable users to access different communication channels ($R^2 = 0.16$), that all users can make use of LSP online teaching tools ($R^2 = 0.17$), and that LSP online teaching tools have the capability of integrating learners by using synchronous and asynchronous communication ($R^2 = 0.18$). In all other research models, the determination coefficient is higher than 0.2; for agreement with the statement that LSP online teaching tools can be adapted to any particular form, regardless of the typology and number of students ($R^2 = 0.49$), and that they are familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools ($R^2 = 0.47$), the included independent variables explain up to almost half of the variance of the research model.

Secondly, in most cases, the regression model is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, showing adequately included independent variables for the explaining of respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for online teaching of LSP. The exceptions are agreements with regard to statements that online teaching of LSP has modified the students' attitude towards their university professor ($p = 0.82$), that the choice of LSP online teaching methods and approaches has had a significant impact on their learning outcome ($p = 0.38$), that most university professors seem to have basic knowledge of LSP online teaching tools ($p = 0.23$), and that LSP teaching tools are accessible to students with specific needs ($p = 0.07$). In these cases, more appropriate independent variables should be included in the regression model.

Regarding agreements with the statements about respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for online teaching of LSP, the following conclusions can be made. The students of the Faculty for Criminal Justice and Security who participated in the study and who perceive their teachers as having appropriate knowledge of technologies used for online teaching and those who perceive that their teachers have adapted more to online teaching, agree more that LSP online teaching tools can be adapted to any particular form, regardless of the typology and number of students, and that LSP online teaching tools' users are provided with help in case they run into trouble. Further, the students whose perception of their teachers having adapted more to online teaching, agree more with the statement that LSP online teaching tools enable users to access different communication channels, that LSP online teaching tools have the capability of integrating learners by using

synchronous and asynchronous communication, and that LSP online teaching tools are used by university professors to check upon their students' attendance. The students whose perception of their teachers having appropriate knowledge of technologies used for online teaching, agree more with the statement that most university professors seem familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools, and that by using LSP online teaching tools university professors can actively control the learning process. The students who evaluate their knowledge of technologies used for online teaching as more appropriate, agree more with the statement that LSP online teaching tools enable a flexible use of their functions, and that all users can make use of LSP online teaching tools. The students who evaluate their knowledge of technologies used for online teaching as more appropriate and who agree more that teachers have adapted to online teaching, agree more with the statement that they are familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools, and that they have basic technical/digital competencies regarding the dealing with LSP online teaching tools. The female students of the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security (henceforth female students) who agree more that teachers have adapted to online teaching, agree more with the statement that even when offline, LSP online teaching tools retain their functionality as well as content. The female students agree more with the statement that most university professors seem to have basic knowledge of LSP online teaching tools, compared to the male students of the same faculty who participated in the study.

5 Discussion and conclusions

Distance education (or e-learning, online learning) has proven to be one of the fastest developing educational methods of the last two decades. Developments in information technologies like satellite, television, optic fibre, computer, radio, internet, and others affect the structure and form of education. As Köprülü and Öznacar (2019) pointed out, online learning is regarded as an ideal system for education, because it fosters the student's active participation in the learning process. Theoretically speaking, all students can therefore have access to education under the same conditions and at the same level, which was unfortunately debunked during the lockdown months of the first pandemic year in Slovenia (in 2020) and elsewhere in the world. The technology was there, but the challenge of how to use it adequately and purposefully remained very much present.

Another issue is the acceptance of online teaching tools by the university lecturers. Back in 2011, Hu and McGrath reported that while at the beginning of the introduction of ICT into teaching, the lecturers seemed to be very keen on using those tools, but a combination of inadequate ICT skills along with the at the time still traditional pedagogical expertise proved to be a hindrance to the effort of a successful introduction of ICT tools into the classroom.

As far as RH1 is concerned, the results do not show a clear male or female divide among the attitudes towards technologies used for teaching online a foreign language for specific purposes based on their gender, which has some leverage only with regard to three statements, namely that university lecturers have adapted to online teaching, and they agree more with the statement that even when offline, LSP online teaching tools retain their functionality as well as content, the third statement being the female students agreeing more with the statement that most university professors seem to have basic knowledge of LSP online teaching tools, compared to the male students of the same faculty who participated in the study. Similarly, the results in the Köprülü and Öznacar study (2019) carried out in Turkey regarding the attitudes of university students towards distance learning in foreign language education report statistically significant differences in attitudes along the gender divide, with female students' attitudes towards distance learning being more positive compared to the male students' ones. On the other hand, other studies reported no gender differences in impacting learners' attitudes (Mahfouz & Salam, 2021). Based on the results from our study we cannot entirely reject RH1, which can be accepted merely regarding general attitudes to distance learning.

As far as RH2 concerning the students' self-evaluation of knowledge of technologies used for online teaching and how it influences respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for online teaching of an LSP course our study has come up with the following results: the hypothesis can only be confirmed with regard to four items, namely item 4 (LSP online teaching tools enable a flexible use of their functions (the possibility of multiple tasking, access to different functions based on diversification.), item 5 (In my opinion all users can make use of LSP online teaching tools.), item 15 (I am familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.), and item 16 (I have basic technical/digital competencies with regard to dealing with LSP online teaching tools.). For the remaining items RH2 could not be confirmed, which

in 'practice means that the students' attitudes regarding their knowledge of technologies used in online teaching of LSP they might have previously formed toward technologies used in online teaching do not influence the way they valuate the technologies used in online LSP teaching.

Regarding RH3 that dealt with the students' perception of their university teachers' knowledge of technologies used for online teaching and how it influenced the respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for the online teaching of a language for specific purposes course the results of our study show that only in cases of four statements the attitudes are statistically significant at the level lower than 0.05, namely in the case of the statement A1 (LSP online teaching tools can be adapted to any particular form, regardless of the typology and number of students.), A2 (LSP online teaching tools' users are provided with help in case they run into trouble.), A10 (Most university professors seem familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.), and lastly, A12 (By using LSP online teaching tools university professors are able to actively control the learning process.). Ever since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic researchers worldwide have been actively and diligently trying to get into the minds of teachers and students alike, they have been studying the effects of the rapid switch to online or distance teaching and learning. What has been brought to our specific attention is the study carried out by Virtič et al. (2021) who have investigated the attitudes of university students toward online learning and into the concept of the perceived ease of use. We all agree that more positive attitude toward ICT would result in a more efficient learning outcomes, which has been confirmed by Piccoli et al. (2001). One of the more important takeouts of the Virtič et al. (2021) research which has implications for our research as well is the finding regarding the students' attitudes toward online learning; it namely does not have statistically significant impact on satisfaction with distance online learning on one hand. On the other hand, Khoshima et al. (2018) suggested in their study of teachers' and learners' attitudes toward online teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) that poor internet connection, absence of a fix syllabus and filtered internet pages may have influences the attitudes toward online teaching of EFL. Nevertheless, the results regarding RH3, which can be only partly confirmed with four items, are somewhat discouraging, because they point to the fact that higher education teachers' ought to have been better trained in using distance teaching tools and that

they should place greater importance on the issue of adequate adaptation of teaching tools to the situation at hand.

As far as RH4 that investigated the students' perception of adaptation of online teaching (compared to non-online teaching) and how it influences the respondents' attitudes towards technologies used for online teaching of foreign language for specific purposes came up with interesting results. Namely, statistically significant differences at the level lower than 0.05 were reported with regard to 8 statements, i.e. in case of the statement A1 (LSP online teaching tools can be adapted to any particular form, regardless of the typology and number of students.), A2 (LSP online teaching tools' users are provided with help in case they run into trouble.), A3 (LSP online teaching tools enable users to access different communication channels (audio, video, text), A7 (Even when offline, LSP online teaching tools retain their functionality as well as content.), A8 (LSP online teaching tools have the capability of integrating learners by using synchronous and asynchronous communication.), A9 (LSP online teaching tools are used by university professors to check upon their students' attendance.), A15 (I am familiar with the use of LSP online teaching tools.), and lastly, with regard to A16 (I have basic technical/digital competencies with regard to dealing with LSP online teaching tools.). Students regard the adaptation of online teaching compared to non-online teaching in line with their expectations, which differ merely regarding the abovementioned items. We can therefore partly confirm RH4. Compared to our study, Sumardi and Nugrahani (2021) reported good adaptation of teachers and their teaching approaches to the emergency remote learning as they've called it, which in contrast was not the case with students' motivation and engagement, especificly in case of low-achievement students. Consequently, it has been suggested to teachers to find suitable approaches and ways of integrating all students into the pedagogical process, so that no one is left behind. In the case of our study and based on the abovementioned results LSP teachers seem to have made the right choices regarding their teaching approaches, but they might have done more in the field to educating their students on how LSP teaching methods and approaches function online, besides, it could also be suggested to try to engage the students more, specifically those with specific needs, low-achieving students and in general., better prepare the field for the next potential threat and eventual return to distance teaching on the national scale.

The outcome of most online-learning studies that dealt with attitudes conducted worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic has been largely positive (Agung et al., 2020; Coolican et al., 2020; Kalloo et al., 2020). Students and lecturers have, of course, encountered numerous obstacles, yet working on MS Teams, Zoom and some other platforms rather to face-to-face has been largely regarded as beneficial both globally (Agung et al., 2020; Coolican et al., 2020; Kalloo et al., 2020; König et al., 2020), but less positively nationally (Gradišek & Polak, 2021; Kodelja, 2020; Krecenbaher Mernik & Ploj Virtič, 2020; Kroflič, 2020; Medveš, 2020) to name just a few more relevant ones important for this study, which has focused mainly on students from The Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security. That might be considered a limitation, since the results obtained in the study cannot be generalised. Nevertheless, they offer an instructive insight into the attitudes regarding the online learning of language for specific purposes of one portion of the student body of Slovenia. Judging from the results of our study, more work should be done in the field of consolidating and explaining of the tools for distance teaching and learning of language for specific purposes. Besides, there ought to be a strategy of the appropriate usage of tools for distance teaching established at the national level for lecturers of languages for specific purpose on one hand, and a national strategy of enforcement of internet services in case of another lockdown and subsequent work from home.

Acknowledgement

The first author, Mrs. Eva Podovšovnik, PhD, is credited for a part of the abstract, statistical analyses, interpretation of results and part of the methodology, whereas the leading author, Mr. Tilen Smajla, PhD, is credited for a part of the abstract, the introduction, background of the study, discussion and final remarks as well as for the references. The authors wish to thank Mr. Alexander Guy Bristow for the proofreading of the paper.

Note

This research has not been funded by any organization or other entity nor is there a conflict of interests.

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Appendix 1. Correlations among agreement with statements about respondents' attitudes towards LSP teaching methods.

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15	A16
A1	1	.51**	.07	-.15	-.20*	-.08	-.05	.09	.08	.17	.05	.19	-.04	-.02	-.19	-.06
A2	.51**	1	.44**	-.08	.01	.12	.09	.25**	.22*	.23*	.19*	.20*	.04	.16	.18	.20*
A3	.07	.44**	1	.31**	.39**	.37**	.19	.22*	.11	-.05	.27**	.08	.14	.17	.47**	.49**
A$	-.15	-.08	.31**	1	.49**	.35**	.32**	.33**	.07	-.10	.18	.22*	.24*	.07	.33**	.28**
A5	-.20*	.01	.39**	.49**	1	.63**	.24*	.33**	.14	-.18	.47**	.04	.18	.16	.46**	.45**
A6	-.08	.12	.37**	.35**	.63**	1	.37**	.38**	.08	-.10	.42**	.08	.13	.14	.41**	.42**
A7	-.05	.09	.19	.32**	.24*	.37**	1	.61**	.19*	.14	.15	.32**	.09	.07	.48**	.47**
A8	.09	.25**	.22*	.33**	.33**	.38**	.61**	1	.31**	.15	.05	.22*	.08	.14	.40**	.38**
A9	.08	.22*	.11	.07	.14	.08	.19*	.31**	1	.46**	-.17	.46**	.03	.08	.25*	.25**
A1	.17	.23*	-.05	-.10	-.18	-.10	.14	,15	.46**	1	-.04	.21*	-.02	.10	-.06	-.06
A1	.05	.19*	.27**	.18	.47**	.42**	,15	.05	-,17	-.04	1	-.01	.00	.09	.17	,25**
A1	.19	.20*	.08	.22*	.04	.08	.32**	.22*	.46**	.21*	-.01	1	.01	-.12	.32**	.26**
A1	-.04	.04	.14	.24*	.18	.13	.09	.08	.03	-.02	.00	.01	1	.36**	.03	.08
A1	-.02	.16	.17	.07	.16	.14	.07	.14	.08	.10	.09	-.12	.36**	1	.24*	.24*
A1	-.19	.18	.47**	.33**	.46**	.41**	.48**	.40**	.25*	-.06	.17	.32**	.03	.24*	1	.80**
A1	-.06	.20*	.49**	.28**	.45**	.42**	.47**	.38**	.25**	-.06	.25**	.26**	.08	.24*	.80**	1