

Research-based projects and reflective journals to promote student engagement in a remote online English Linguistics course for Professional Business Communication

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ABSTRACT

EN The Covid-19 pandemic spurred research on the strategies and tools used in remote online teaching to support student engagement. The present study aims to contribute to this research strand by illustrating how two tools that were implemented for this purpose, i.e. research-based projects and reflective journals, were integrated in a remote online English Linguistics course for Professional Business Communication during the pandemic. A content analysis of students' perceptions was conducted through the N-Vivo software programme and feedback on the course was examined. Results indicated that projects and journals positively impacted on students' skills, knowledge and attitudes by enhancing interest and reducing the sense of isolation resulting from the lockdowns. It is therefore suggested that research-based projects and journals potentially support student engagement in learning settings which may negatively affect engagement, such as remote online courses.

Key words: TEACHING OF ENGLISH LINGUISTICS; RESEARCH-BASED LEARNING; REFLECTIVE JOURNALS; REMOTE ONLINE LEARNING; STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

ES La pandemia del Covid-19 impulsó la investigación sobre las estrategias y herramientas que se utilizan en la enseñanza virtual a distancia para apoyar la participación de los estudiantes. El presente estudio fue llevado a cabo durante la pandemia y tiene como objetivo contribuir a esta línea de investigación ilustrando cómo se integraron en un curso virtual a distancia de lingüística inglesa para la comunicación profesional empresarial dos herramientas que fueron implementadas con este propósito, proyectos basados en investigación y diarios de reflexión. Se llevó a cabo un análisis de contenido de las percepciones de los estudiantes a través del programa de software N-Vivo, y se examinó la valoración sobre el curso. Los resultados mostraron que los proyectos y diarios tuvieron un impacto positivo en las habilidades, conocimientos y actitudes de los estudiantes al mejorar su interés y reducir la sensación de aislamiento que resultaba de los confinamientos. Por tanto, se sugiere que los proyectos y diarios basados en investigación apoyan de forma potencial la participación de los estudiantes en entornos de aprendizaje que pueden afectar de forma negativa dicha participación, como son los cursos a distancia impartidos de manera virtual.

Palabras clave: ENSEÑANZA DE LINGÜÍSTICA INGLESA; APRENDIZAJE BASADO EN INVESTIGACIÓN; DIARIOS DE REFLEXIÓN; APRENDIZAJE REMOTO EN LÍNEA; PARTICIPACIÓN ESTUDIANTIL

IT L'avvento della pandemia di Covid-19 ha dato origine a un filone di ricerca sulle strategie e sugli strumenti utilizzati per l'apprendimento da remoto, a supporto del coinvolgimento dello studente a distanza. Questo studio si pone lo scopo di contribuire a tale filone, illustrando il modo in cui i progetti basati sulla ricerca e i diari di riflessione sono stati integrati nell'insegnamento da remoto di Linguistica inglese, per il corso di Comunicazione Professionale per l'impresa. Facendo uso del programma software N-Vivo, è stata condotta un'analisi delle impressioni degli/delle apprendenti e dei feedback in merito al corso. I risultati mostrano come questi progetti e diari abbiano un impatto positivo sulle abilità, atteggiamenti e conoscenze degli e delle apprendenti, rafforzando l'interesse e riducendo la sensazione di isolamento indotta dal lockdown. Lo studio suggerisce, quindi che i progetti basati sulla ricerca e i diari di riflessione possano essere di supporto per il coinvolgimento dell'apprendente, in circostanze di apprendimento che potrebbero invece incidere in negativo, come nel caso dei corsi online da remoto.

Parole chiave: INSEGNAMENTO DELLA LINGUISTICA INGLESE; APPRENDIMENTO BASATO SULLA RICERCA; DIARI DI RIFLESSIONE; APPRENDIMENTO ONLINE DA REMOTO; COINVOLGIMENTO DELL'APPRENDENTE

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1. Introduction

As is well known, following the outbreak of Covid-19, in-person teaching was suddenly replaced by remote online teaching, i.e. teaching accessible exclusively through the Internet (Radić et al., 2021), which involved major changes in higher education (hereafter HE) courses. In addition to illustrating these changes, research on the teaching of languages, translation and linguistics in HE stimulated reflection on contents, as well as on teaching strategies and tools. In various cases, learner-centred strategies promoting student engagement (e.g. Collaço, 2017; Kuh, 2009; Tight, 2020; Trowler & Trowler, 2010) were used, for example, the flipped-classroom (Atabekova et al., 2021; Luporini, 2020; Radić, 2021; Schmied, 2021; Zhang & Chen, 2021) and project-based learning (Freddi, 2021; Zhang & Chen, 2021), thus showing how these strategies may be adapted to remote online teaching.

In in-person teaching, research-based projects (hereafter RBPs) and reflective journals (hereafter RJs) were used to support engagement in various disciplines, including the teaching of linguistics (e.g. Chisholm & Godley, 2011; Erlinda, 2018; Filimonova, 2020; Wyatt & Pasamar Márquez, 2015; Voorhees & Vorobel, 2021 on RBPs; Ghaouar, 2012; Fang & Reng, 2018 on RJ). However, to the best of my knowledge, the implementation of these tools has not yet been investigated in remote online linguistics courses, which could negatively affect student engagement. During the Covid-19 pandemic, student engagement was further threatened because not only were courses taught remotely, but opportunities to socialise were drastically reduced due to the lockdowns.

The present study aims to illustrate how RBPs and RJs were integrated in a remote online course of English Linguistics for Professional Business Communication which was held during the Covid-19 pandemic and targeted third year bachelor students of the faculty of *Linguistic Sciences and Foreign Literatures* at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, as will be further described in Section 5.1. To investigate whether RBPs and RJs were effective in supporting learning in terms of student engagement at a time characterised by markedly reduced socialisation, a content analysis of the students' RBPs and RJs was conducted using the *N-Vivo* software programme. The students' preferences regarding the course topics were examined to obtain feedback on the course.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 focuses on RBPs, while Section 3 addresses RJs. The research questions and the methodology are presented in Section 4 and 5, respectively. Section 6 illustrates the organisation of the course of English Linguistics which is the object of the present study and explains how RBPs and RJs were integrated in the course. Section 7 analyses the advantages and difficulties of writing a RBP or keeping a RJ as perceived by the students and Section 8 examines students' preferences in terms of course topics. Section 9 concludes the study.

2. Research-based projects

The present section addresses the teaching/research nexus, i.e. the rationale which underlies RBPs and related approaches (Sub-section 2.1), and illustrates how the nexus may be implemented in teaching practice (Sub-section 2.2). Sub-section 3 deals with RBLs with specific regard to the teaching of linguistics.

2.1. The teaching/research nexus

The teaching/research nexus, which shapes much of the identity of HE teachers, should be integrated in students' HE. According to Healey's (2005) framework, which is expounded in many of his works (e.g. Healey & Jenkins, 2009a, 2009b, 2021; Jenkins & Healey, 2005, 2009; Jenkins et al., 2007), there are four approaches through which the teaching/research nexus may be implemented and which differ with respect to content and degree of students' involvement. Regarding content, *research-led* teaching and *research-tutored* teaching emphasise content disciplinary knowledge rather than the research methodologies through which disciplinary knowledge is gained. While *research-led* teaching generally consists in the traditional, teacher-focused transmission of knowledge, *research-tutored* teaching is student-focused: students are therefore guided through published research and engage in critical discussion of the findings (Healey, 2005; Healey & Jenkins, 2021). On the contrary, *research-oriented* teaching and *research-based* teaching emphasise the methodologies by which knowledge is produced. While *research-oriented* teaching is teacher-focused, *research-based* teaching is student-focused. In Healey and Jenkins' words: "[*Research-based* teaching] require[s] students to undertake research and inquiry. [...]. This means that students become producers of knowledge not just consumers". (Healey & Jenkins, 2021, p. 6)

Various terms are interchangeably used to refer to the *research-based* teaching approach: *research-based learning (RBL)* (Zeschel, 2010), *inquiry-based learning (IBL)*, *guided inquiry*, *teaching research links/nexus*, *discovery learning*, *inductive teaching and learning* (Spronken-Smith et al. 2007), *inquiry* and *undergraduate research* (Healey & Jenkins 2021, p. 12; Spronken-Smith et al. 2007). *Problem-based learning (PBL)*, which refers to investigating “complex, real-world problems with more than one solution” (Filimonova, 2020, p. e2), is related to *inquiry-based learning (IBL)* in a way that Spronken-Smith et al. (2007, p. 3) call “contentious”. Indeed, *IBL* and *PBL* are generally regarded as overlapping terms. However, unlike *IBL*, the term *PBL* is often applied to questions to which answers already exist, usually takes place in collaborative groups, and covers a shorter span of time, ranging from a class to a few weeks (Dale et al., 2003).

As the terms suggest, in all the above approaches students take some responsibility for establishing contents, identifying and using resources, as well as assessing their learning, while the teacher acts as a facilitator (Spronken-Smith et al., 2007). Thus, students will understand the subject matter more deeply (Healey, 2005, p. 1) and develop their research skills.

The benefits of *RBL* for students were effectively summed up by Erlinda (2018, p. 1220):

having clear ideas how learning, teaching and research might be more meaningfully integrated; learning how to conduct literature searches, collecting and analyzing data, starting thinking like a specialist or scientist, achieving more sophisticated level of intellectual development, promoting the acquisition of research knowledge and skills, understanding scientific findings, analysing literature critically, speaking effectively and acting as a leader with clear career goal.

Filimonova (2020, pp. e3-e4) reported that, as compared to lecture instruction, *PBL* results in enhanced motivation, better retention and application of knowledge, as well as improved mastery of transferable skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration. Other benefits are increased ability to design a product, preparation for real work, sense of accomplishment and overall satisfaction (Filimonova, 2020, pp. e3-e4).

Despite their differences, there is agreement that *RBL*, *IBL* and *PBL* are all forms of active learning (e.g. Healey, 2005; Healey & Jenkins, 2009b; Erlinda, 2018; Filimonova, 2020), grounded in constructivism, where students build their learning in interaction with others and with the environment. The benefits of active learning are, among others, improved academic achievement and better interpersonal relationships among the students. Learners generally also perceive greater social support and increased self-esteem (Filimonova, 2020).

2.2. The teaching/research nexus in teaching practice

In teaching practice, the difference between *research-led*, *research-tutored*, *research-oriented* and *research-based* teaching is generally not clear-cut. As claimed by Zeschel (2010, p. 5), “[a]ctual teaching [...] often combines elements of more than one of these idealised types”. Similarly, Jenkins and Healey (2005, p. 21) stated that “[m]any teaching and learning activities may involve a mixture of the four approaches”. However, at least to some extent, it is important for university students to experience research-based activities (Healey & Jenkins, 2009b) so as to develop skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving. One of the strategies for linking teaching and research in courses and curricula consists in progressively developing students’ understanding of research processes, by incorporating *research-based teaching* – or *inquiry-based-learning* – to various extents in activities and courses (Jenkins et al., 2007). As explained by Spronken-Smith et al. (2007, p. 3),

[i]nquiry-based learning can go from a rather structured and guided activity, particularly at lower levels (where the teacher may pose the questions and give guidance in how to solve the problem) through to independent research where the students generate the questions and determine how to research them.

Since, as shown in Section 2.1, *RBL* is a form of active learning, some of the activities indicated in Healey and Jenkins (2021) as building the teaching/research nexus unsurprisingly coincide with those which promote student engagement, e.g. instructor-guided discussions (Williams & Villaneuva, 2011), Team-Based Learning (Marss, 2011), undergraduate research (Holmes & Beins, 2011) and reflective journaling (Fritson et al., 2011).

2.3. Research-based learning in teaching linguistics

In a recent study, Filimonova (2020) claimed that, because of its scientific rigour, linguistics is ideal for implementing research-based learning. In her words:

Because linguistics is a data-driven, research-based, and highly analytical discipline, it offers many opportunities for development of higher-order thinking skills, including critical thinking, scientific reasoning, and interdisciplinary research and reporting. (Filimonova, 2020, p. e1)

Research shows how *RBL* and related approaches were implemented in various courses in linguistics. For example, Chisholm and Godley (2013) reported on inquiry-based activities aimed to raise awareness of dialect, prejudice and power in a high school. In HE, Wyatt and Pasamar Márquez (2015) dealt with qualitative research in a ‘Starting Language Research’ course, while Voorhees and Vorobel (2021) showed how undergraduate research was integrated in a ‘Language and Culture’ course serving as an introduction to linguistics, with a focus on ethnographic and case studies research methods. Erlinda (2018) illustrated the research-based activities in a pragmatics course, while Filimonova (2020) illustrated the *PBL* component of an ‘Introduction to Linguistics’ course. Surprisingly, although spanning across several disciplines as diverse as Engineering, Medicine, Business, Sport and Tourism, Education, Geography, Archeology, Arts and English as native language, Healey and Jenkins (2021) did not contain any case-study in linguistics.

Besides illustrating the course contents and organisation, some studies also provided an insight into the students’ perceptions of *RBL* and related approaches. For example, Wyatt and Pasamar Márquez (2015) relied on student RJs and student interviews to obtain general feedback on the proposed activities. Instead, Erlinda (2018) and Filimonova (2020) conducted a content analysis, respectively of open-ended questionnaires, and of student end-of-year reflections and self-evaluations, by coding and counting the emergent themes.

Students reported better understanding of research methods (Wyatt & Pasamar Márquez, 2015), enhanced research skills and critical thinking skills, as well as increased responsibility and motivation (Erlinda, 2018). Filimonova (2020) found other benefits, such as application of knowledge gained in the course to real life, increased motivation and attention to detail. Issues regarded time management (Erlinda, 2018; Wyatt & Pasamar Márquez, 2015) and the difficulty of the assignments (Filimonova, 2020). For a few students, group work was also an issue: they reported, for example, lack of organisation and lack of leadership in the groups (Wyatt & Pasamar Márquez, 2015).

3. Reflective journals

According to Rivera and colleagues (2020, p.1), reflection supports self-directed learning and is “crucial” for learning from experience. Grounded in students’ discovery (Kessler & Lund, 2004, p. 20), reflective learning is the opposite of assimilative learning, which implies accepting beliefs as true without challenging them (Hubbs & Brand, 2005). Although reflective practice can take an “infinite number” of forms (Rivera et al., 2020, p. 2), the most popular one is the RJ (Rivera et al. 2020, p. 1). In journals, students are offered stimuli and are asked to link them to their pre-existing knowledge or experience by recording their thoughts and feelings about their academic and professional achievements (Muncy, 2014; Park, 2003). Reflection may consist in mere observation, in integrating theory with practice or in connecting experiences (Rivera et al., 2020, p. 4). As a genre, the journal “falls roughly between the diary and the log” (Park, 2003, p. 184). A journal may be written by an individual student and is referred to as a *learning journal*, *personal journal*, *student journal*, *learning log*, or simply a *journal* (Park, 2003, p. 184). However, a journal may also be written by multiple authors and, in that case, it is called *collaborative* (Liuoliene & Metiūniene, 2009, p. 33) or *team journal* (Hubbs & Brand, 2005: 66).

Research on RJ regards disciplines which are strongly practice-oriented and require self-reflection, such as clinical education (e.g. Fortson & Sisk, 2007; Jarvis & Baloyi, 2020; Lasater & Nielsen, 2009; Ruiz-López et al., 2015;) and language teaching. In the latter field, RJs were used, for example, with student teachers (e.g. Biria & Haghghi Irani, 2015; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2001; Munalim, 2017; Schulze & Ittner, 2021) and with learners of English (e.g. Jafarigohar & Mortazavi, 2013), also to support reflection on cultural diversity while abroad (e.g. Mynard, 2008; Prikhodko, 2014). Applications of journaling to the teaching of linguistics appear scant. Ghaouar (2012) reported on using journals during lessons to enhance content understanding, while Fang

and Reng (2018) showed how journals were incorporated into a university optional course of Global Englishes to help students reflect on their attitudes to the type of English spoken by non-natives.

The benefits of journaling consist in encouraging independent learning, learning from experience, supporting the integration of new and old information, helping students identify what they do not understand and understand their learning processes (Liuolienė & Metiūnienė, 2009; Park, 2003). Journaling also enhances students' transferable skills, such as problem-solving, creativity and group interaction. Students reported that journaling increased memorisation of concepts (Bouldin et al., 2006), ability to link theory with practice (Bouldin et al., 2006; Watson, 2010) and enhanced critical thinking skills (Kessler & Lund, 2004, p. 20). Students transitioning to work were also helped to reflect on their behaviour (Edgar et al., 2013; Lutz & Paretti, 2019). Research also showed that learners got better marks when keeping a journal (Fritson et al., 2016).

4. Research questions

The present study focuses on the use of RBPs and RJs in a course of English Linguistics for Professional Business Communication held during the Covid-19 pandemic and aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1) How were the RBPs and RJs integrated into the remote online course of English Linguistics for Professional Business Communication?

RQ 2) What were the advantages and difficulties of doing a RBP / keeping a RJ as perceived by students?

RQ 3) What were the students' preferred topics?

The answer to RQ 1 intends to contribute to the literature on RBPs and RJs by showing an example of use of these tools in a course of English linguistics. The answer to the RQ 2 aims to examine whether students perceived RBPs and RJs as useful tools for supporting their engagement in a remote online course, an aspect that is currently unexplored in the literature. The answer to RQ 3 may provide useful indications for future editions of the course while, more generally, revealing topics and areas that deserve more attention in similar courses.

5. Methodology

Sub-section 5.1 provides background information about the course which is the object of the present study, while Sub-section 5.2 outlines the instruments and procedures adopted to answer the research questions illustrated in Section 4.

5.1. Context and participants

The course in English Linguistics for Professional Business Communication, which has been taught by the Author of the present study since the academic year 2007/08, targets third year bachelor students of the *Languages for Companies* degree programme of the faculty of *Linguistic Sciences and Foreign Literatures* at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan. The degree programme aims to train students to become professionals who can manage business relations in different countries and includes a compulsory internship in a company or other organisation, e.g. an embassy or a hotel. The study of two languages for three years – which the students choose among English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese – and the study of business disciplines such as business economics, marketing and business finance lie at the core of the students' curriculum.

The study of all languages is organised as follows. Each year, students attend practical language classes (120 hours in each language) taught by language instructors (Collaboratori Esperti Linguistici). At the end of the year, the students' communicative competence is tested through an oral and a written exam. The practical language classes are complemented by a 30-hour institutional linguistics course in each language. The focus is on phonological features (first year), lexico-grammatical features (second year) and professional business communication (third year). Given their large number, students of English in each year are divided into two groups (A-K and L-Z), respectively attending the course in October-December and February-May.

The present study deals with the two editions of the course held in the academic year 2020/21. In that year, a total of 360 students took the final exam. Due to the spread of Covid-19, staff were allowed to opt for online synchronous teaching or dual-mode teaching – i.e. with some of the students in class and others

attending the online synchronous classes from home. Since in dual-mode teaching the teacher is supposed to interact with the students in class as well as with those attending from home, who may intervene live or via chat, managing dual-mode courses is particularly difficult. Therefore, it was decided to hold the two editions of the course remotely. Incidentally, due to governmental regulations prohibiting in-person teaching, dual-mode classes had to be changed into remote online ones twice during the academic year. All remote online courses at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore took place via Blackboard¹, the university learning platform.

5.2. Instruments and procedures of analysis

The contents and teaching methods of the English Linguistics course for Professional Business Communication (Section 6) result from the Author's reflective account of the activities performed in the academic year 2020/21 and provide an answer to RQ 1. To answer RQ 2 (Section 7), a content analysis was performed on the students' perceptions of the advantages and difficulties in doing a RBP or keeping a RJ in time of lockdown or restricted mobility. Content analysis was chosen since it was adopted in previous studies regarding students' perceptions on the use of journals, in order to identify emergent themes (e.g. Biria & Haghghi Irani, 2015; Craig et al., 2016; Mynard, 2008; Ruiz-López et al., 2015; Sage & Sele, 2015), and offer the students' experience "in [...] [their] words and voices" (Craig et al., 2016, p. 181). To answer RQ 3 (Section 8), all the submitted RBPs and RJs were manually scanned for students' content preferences and responses to the topics were qualitatively investigated.

6. The English Linguistics course for Professional Business Communication: an outline

The present Section answers RQ 1, i.e. How were the RBPs and RJs integrated into the remote online course of English Linguistics for Professional Business Communication? Sub-section 6.1 illustrates the teaching approach and the contents of the course, while Sub-section 6.2 shows how RBPs and RJs were related to course. Sub-section 6.3 addresses how the students' knowledge and skills were assessed at the end of the course. Sub-section 6.4 details the number of RBPs and RJs produced by the students and analysed in Sections 7 and 8.

6.1. Teaching approach and disciplinary contents

With reference to Section 2.2, the approach adopted in the remote online course is *research-oriented* (Healey, 2005), i.e. it is teacher-focused and has an emphasis on research methodologies, as well as on course contents. In the specific case, the teacher emphasised the research methods and models used in English linguistics. However, the course had some *research-oriented* (Healey, 2005) elements, i.e. the emphasis on research methodologies was, at least in part, student-focused, since students were invited to consider texts from a researcher's perspective. For example, Blackboard wikis, which enable students to collaboratively write texts, were set up for students to analyse texts, which were later discussed and corrected in the remote online sessions.

The aim of the course was to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to interact effectively and write appropriate texts in professional situations. To reach this aim, selected constructs and methodologies for the analysis of spoken and written discourse were illustrated and students were guided in their application to different business genres. In terms of course contents, the BELF (Business English as a Lingua Franca) paradigm was introduced at the beginning of the course (Kankaanranta, 2008; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005) and it was stressed that the paradigm was formulated on the basis of surveys and the analysis of authentic texts. These revealed that business texts written by non-native speakers often contain grammatical and lexical inaccuracies which do not hinder communication. Therefore, effectiveness is considered more important than correctness within the BELF paradigm.

Students were then guided to reflect on some of the features which make texts effective: appropriateness to the situational and cultural context, politeness and conformity to generic norms. More specifically, students were guided to identify the elements which affect the degree of formality of texts and were then introduced to Halliday and Hasan's (1989) model, which enables one to analyse the environment in which a text is set with reference to the purpose of the text, the participants, and the role played by language. The context of culture was tackled with reference to Hall and Reed Hall (1990) and Hofstede (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010), who devised models for comparing national differences across countries. In

¹ <https://www.anthology.com/products/teaching-and-learning/learning-effectiveness/blackboard>.

linguistics, the two cultural models may be used for cross-cultural comparison. Hofstede's model was applied to illustrate an example of cross-cultural analysis of website texts, drawing on (Cucchi (2010). Since appropriateness also implies conformity to generic norms, reference was made to Bhatia's (1993) genre analysis.

Since contextual parameters may affect the degree of (in)formality and (in)directness which is perceived as appropriate, the main features of spoken discourse (Carter & McCarthy, 2006) and the basics of politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) were studied within a sample of authentic texts, taken for example from the meetings and negotiations offered in Koester (2004). The basics of conversation analysis (Sacks et al., 1974) were also introduced, so that students may use the conventions which conversationalists rely on as yardsticks against which to compare workplace communication. The textbooks used in the course were Cucchi (2016) and Cucchi and Murphy (2011).

6.2. Research-based project and reflective journals

Students could choose whether they wanted to produce a written assignment, which they would submit for assessment at the end of the course. If they decided to produce the assignment, they could choose either a RBP or a RJ. Both assignments could be written individually or in pairs. Some students asked for permission to write the assignments in groups of three. Given the sense of isolation which characterised the lockdowns during the Covid-19 pandemic, the permission was granted. No specific word limit was indicated for the assignments, and students were asked to write about ten pages.

The RBP consisted in a written paper in which the students were asked to apply the methodological tools which they had acquired in the course to texts/experiences of their own choice. Figure 1 shows an outline of the instructions given to the students and explained in a remote online session.

Analyse TWO topics of your choice with reference to the content of the course.

Which aspects shall I analyse?

Examples are:

features of English as Business English as a Lingua Franca;
cultural differences;
relation between text and context;
informal features;
politeness strategies;
generic moves.

What type of data shall I collect?

authentic written texts (e.g. job application letters, sales promotion letters, for your information letters, e-mails, ads, signs, pictures, sections from corporate websites);
transcriptions of oral authentic texts or of oral texts in films (e.g. job interviews, phone calls, meetings, presentations);
interviews to people;
personal experiences, reported in writing.

Where can I take the data from?

your internship (e.g. company, hotel, language school, embassy);
other companies or organisations (e.g. language school, embassy);
your travels, relations with foreigners, texts in English in your city/town;
the Internet - the least interesting option.

How shall I analyse the data?

This depends on the type of data and on what you want to find out.

Your analysis may be focused on:

a single text;
more texts of the same type (e.g. job application letters).

Your analysis may be cross-cultural

you can compare:
 a text in English with its Italian counterpart;
 a text in native English with an equivalent in non-native English.

Figure 1. Instructions for RBPs.

RBPs had been introduced as an obligatory requirement in the course in the academic year 2017/18. After the outbreak of Covid-19 in February 2020, RBPs were made optional. At the same time, RJs were introduced as an alternative to RBPs, since it was thought that students might find it difficult, in time of lockdown or restricted mobility, to collect the authentic texts and experiences which were at the core of RBPs. In their RJs, students were asked to record the activities which they were requested to perform (Figure 2).

In your RJ, please record:

- when you did the activity;
- your partner (colleague) in the activity, if any;
- the title of the activity;
- your doubts about the information you collected, if any.
- your achievements;
- your impressions.

Figure 2. Instructions for RJs.

RJs aimed to enhance the students' motivation, by keeping them engaged in the course, and to help them critically reflect on the topics and on their own learning by keeping a written account of their tasks as well as of their doubts and their learning preferences.

6.3. Assessment of the research-based projects and of the reflective journals

At the end of the course, students' knowledge of the course contents and their ability to apply them to short texts was assessed through a Blackboard test (20 items), which consisted of 18 or 19 fill-in-the-blanks items, with one or two multiple choice or true-or-false items². The test was administered remotely, with randomised questions and no possibility of backtracking. The set time to complete the test was 25 minutes. A raw score of 8 was fixed to correspond to 18/30, while 20 corresponded to 30/30³. In optional RBPs and RJs students had the opportunity to further demonstrate their understanding of the course topics and their skill in applying them. RBPs and RJs were collected through the 'Assignment' Blackboard facility, which enables the examiner to download all the assignments with a single click. Assignments were worth a maximum of three points, which were added to the mark which the students obtained in the test. The assignment score was based on detailed assessment of one topic chosen by the students, following the indications in Figure 3.

In your RBP/RJ, choose the topic you think you dealt with best and explain the reasons why you chose it.
 Explain advantages and difficulties in doing a RBP / keeping a RJ in time of lockdown or restricted mobility.
 If you worked in pairs, state your impressions about your collaboration.

Figure 3. Instructions for the submission of RBPs and RJs.

² The 'Test' Blackboard function enables the instructor to choose among various formats. It was decided to include mainly fill-in-the-blank items in the test because, in this format, students were required to understand what type of word is needed, instead of recognising it, and write the word correctly.

³ Since Blackboard provides scores on the basis of the answers fed into the system by the examiner, the answers considered wrong by the system were manually checked. When considered correct, points were added to the test score.

6.4. Research-based projects and reflective journals as data for analysis

A total of 85 assignments, comprising 60 RBPs and 25 RJs, were submitted for assessment and analysed in the present study. Tables 1 and 2 detail whether the assignments were written individually, in pairs, or in threes.

Table 1.
Composition of the RBP data set

Research-Based-Projects	N.
individual	17
in pairs	32
in threes	11
Total	60

Table 2.
Composition of the RJ data set

Reflective Journals	N.
individual	10
in pairs	9
in threes	6
Total	25

7. Advantages and difficulties in research-based projects and reflective journals

The present section answers RQ 2, i.e. What were the advantages and difficulties of doing a RBP / keeping a RJ as perceived by students? Sub-section 7.1 explains the nature of the coding procedures followed to guarantee a rigorous analysis of the data. The students' perceptions of the advantages and difficulties in writing a RBP or a RJ are examined in Section 7.2.

7.1. Coding and data analysis

Coding is "a major approach to qualitative data analysis" (Cohen et al. 2018, p. 668) which consists in "the ascription of a category label to a piece of data, decided in advance or in response to the data that have been collected". Like all qualitative research, the coding process is inherently subjective. Dörnyei (2007, p. 38), for example, pointed out that qualitative research is "essentially interpretive", i.e. "the research outcome is ultimately the product of a researcher's subjective interpretation of the data". In addition, "qualitative research is concerned with the subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38). For these reasons, the quality criteria of validity and reliability, which originated in quantitative research, were substituted, in the qualitative research paradigm, by alternative notions such as 'trustworthiness', 'authenticity', and 'rigour' (Dörnyei 2007, p. 49). It is therefore crucial that the researcher provides a detailed account of the procedures s/he followed and presents the findings in "rich-contextualised detail" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 49).

To answer RQ 2), a *Word* document which contained the students' observations on the advantages and difficulties in doing a RBP or keeping a RJ was created for analysis and elicited through the instructions provided in Figure 3. The students' observations were coded by the Author following the rigorous procedures suggested in Cohen et al. (2018). As explained by the Authors, to perform coding "the researcher goes through the text, marking it with codes (labels) that describe that text" (Cohen et al., p. 668). To decide the codes of analysis, two opposite procedures may be used. According to the original Grounded Theory model (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), qualitative research should be entirely based on data observation and should not start with literature reviews, since these may bias the researcher's observation of the data (Cohen et al., 2018, pp. 714-16). On the contrary, the revised model (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 2014), which was adopted in the present

study, includes deduction and the testing of hypotheses. Consequently, in the present study literature reviews were considered as important sources of hypothesis generation for the creation of codes.

To decide the codes of analysis, students' observations were read multiple times to familiarise with the contents and decide the labels to identify the themes mentioned by the students. First, the sentences in the document, which represented the coding units, were annotated using open-coding⁴. The codes were in part derived from the data and in part from the literature reviews, in a fruitful interplay between inductive and deductive processes, which ensured that "the complexity and comprehensiveness of the data" (Cohen et al., p. 669) was retained. Axial codes⁵ were later identified. To code the texts, the content analysis software programme *N-Vivo*⁶, which also counts the number of mentions of the identified themes, was used. At times, the same unit was coded using more than one category, which is considered "desirable since it maintains the richness of the data" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 677)⁷.

7.2. Findings: The students' perceptions

The present section illustrates the results of the qualitative analysis of the emergent themes in the students' perceptions, by providing excerpts from their assignments. The excerpts are in their original form and may contain lexico-grammatical mistakes. Permission was granted by students to use their assignments for research purposes. Table 3 supports the qualitative analysis, showing the emergent themes and the number of their mentions in the students' assignments. The themes were identified in the students' RBPs and RJs, in response to the stimulus "Explain advantages and difficulties in doing a RBP / keeping a RJ in this time of lockdown or restricted mobility. If you worked in pairs, state your impressions about your collaboration"⁸. In the examples, *RBP* and *RJ* indicate the type of assignment. Initials of the students who completed the assignment are provided in parentheses, thus also indicating whether the assignment was carried out individually, in pairs, or in threes.

Table 3.
Advantages and difficulties in doing a RBP/keeping a RJ in time of lockdown/restricted mobility.

Themes	N. of mentions
skills	84
learning	50
feelings of well-being	39
means of communication	36
pandemic	35
internship	9
lessons	3

Regarding the 'skills' they acquired, students mentioned collaboration (N=37), organisation and time management (N=26) and research skills (N=21). Regarding collaboration, which was mentioned in the wording of the assignment, the students positively regarded various aspects linked to teamwork, such as the greater chances of interacting, finding new ideas, comparing multiple perspectives, linking ideas, learning from each other, increasing creativity, solving problems and completing tasks. Some of these aspects are represented in

⁴ An open code is "simply a new label that the researcher attaches to a piece of text to describe and categorise that piece of text" (Cohen et al. 2018, p. 671).

⁵ An axial code is "a category label ascribed to a group of codes whose referents (the phenomena being described) are similar in meaning (e.g. concern the same concept)" (Cohen et al. 2018, p. 671).

⁶ <https://lumivero.com/products/nvivo/>

⁷ Dörnyei (2007, p. 61) mentions peer checking as a possible strategy to obtain feedback on coding, but stresses that "it is often difficult to find someone who is both competent and ready to engage in this time-consuming activity".

⁸ The type of assignment chosen by the students, as well as their decision to work individually or in collaboration, may have impacted on the emergent themes. However, the present analysis does not intend to quantitatively investigate the distribution of these themes across the two variables, also considering that the size of the RBP and of the RJ data sets is markedly different.

(1). Students who focused on the difficulties involved in collaboration stated that they successfully dealt with them (2).

- 1) We decided to do this assignment together because working in team increases collaboration and allows brainstorming. [...] [O]thers in a team can help you to see things from a different point of view. Three people are always better than one for solving problems, finishing off difficult tasks, and increasing creativity. (RBP - A.L., G.M., S.M.)
- 2) The fact that we had to work in three, at first has been kind of difficult, only because at first we had to compare our answers trying to reach a common point of view. After a while though, we managed to work very well together and we are satisfied of what we had achieved. (RJ - F.F., G.G., G.M.)

The students reported positive feelings of well-being: enjoyment and interest (N=17), sense of achievement (N=14) and social support (N=8). For some students, interest (3), sense of achievement (4) and increased social support (5) derived from their collaboration.

- 3) it was interesting to create a project together because we had the possibility to discuss our ideas and compare the final results. (RBP - M.M., M.S.)
- 4) we were able to collaborate, supporting each other in case of doubts, and we couldn't be more satisfied of the final result! (RBP - S.B., M.G.B.)
- 5) Despite all the difficulties we faced for the realization of this project caused by the measures of social distancing, we felt closer than ever in writing the project because we felt really involved in our assignment. (RBP - A.C., N.M.F.)

However, interest (6), sense of achievement (7) and even increased social support (8) were also reported by students who wrote their assignments individually

- 6) It was a really good activity for me, very stimulating. I worked alone because due to the Corona virus pandemic I couldn't meet with my friends, so I decided to do it by myself. Again, this decision made it more stimulating and interesting. (RJ - C.F.)
- 7) if I had to find a downside, I would say that keeping a RJ is not as easy as it seems to be, because it took me time to do all the task. But it was worth it! (RJ - C.L.)
- 8) I believe that writing a RJ gave me the opportunity to explain what I had learned, and which were the most difficult parts to understand. In a way the RJ was a kind of "friend", studying the same subject, to whom I could explain all my doubts and certainty about this subject. (RJ - L.G.)

While some students perceived collaborating in distant mode as difficult (9), others did not mention problems and, on the contrary, appreciated the role of technology (10). As illustrated in Tables 1 and 2 (Section 6.4), some students decided to work on their own. In this case, there were very few mentions of the reasons (11).

- 9) It was very difficult to get together to do this project. In fact we had to do everything via chat and video calls, we adapted to this tough time of the pandemic. (RBP - I.D., E.F.)
- 10) Working together was not demanding, and organising work from home was quite feasible. (RBP - S.B., M.G.B.)
- 11) I decided to do it alone and I would probably do the same choice even if I was at university. Indeed, I do not like working in team very much, even if I know that it is important to share ideas and opinions. (RJ - C.L.)

The second most frequently mentioned skill after 'collaboration' was 'organisation'. Students very frequently mentioned the means of communication which enabled them to work collaboratively in distant mode (12). In this respect, there were mentions of the fact that that working from home helped students save time (13). Occasionally, reference was made to work management, in particular to task distribution (14). However, organisation skills were also required when working individually (15).

- 12) We used apps such as Skype, Teams and Facetime to make video-calls, in order to interact live and coordinate the job. (RBP – M.M., E.S.)
- 13) the pro of working with technology is that we waste less time because we don't need to use public transport to get to our destination, for this reason we have more time to study since we go back to what we were doing as soon as we close the call. Other than this we can also organize things last minute because we only need to turn on our computers. (RBP – D.A., S.A.)
- 14) We divided the found materials and we discussed them together. (RBP – N.C., A.R., F.S.)
- 15) the only disadvantage I could find in keeping a RJ is that it needs to be completed constantly and therefore it requires much time and effort. However, I believe that to reach every goal time and effort need to be invested. (RJ – L.G.)

A few mentions regarded research stages – data collection (N=8), deciding content of the assignment (N=6), data analysis (N=4), organisation of the findings (N=3) – which pointed to the fact that some students realised that they were practising their research skills. At times, students specified how they chose the topics and organised the findings (16) or how they managed to collect the authentic texts to be analysed (17). There were very few mentions of the process of analysis: one student, however, made an interesting comment on the enhancement of her analytical skills (18).

- 16) Based on our internships and experiences, we decided the structure of the project and defined the most relevant aspects to be analysed. (RBP - S.B., M.G.B.)
- 17) This project was really interesting, because gave me the opportunity to discover and analyze the communication in the work field. I did not find it difficult, because I collected the material by asking my family and friends. (RBP – C.C.)
- 18) In composing the RJ, the hardest part for me was to observe every little detail and then write them out. At the very same time, this is also an advantage, because after practicing all along, I became more attentive, so that's also why I put it in one of my most precious achievements. (RJ – S.L.)

Regarding 'learning', mentions mainly regarded 'enhancing knowledge' (N=40). (19) shows a mention of enlarging knowledge (N=15) and (20) of deepening knowledge (N=11).

- 19) When I started writing this project I had no idea how many things could be learned through conversation analysis. (RJ – A.C.)
- 20) we particularly enjoyed doing the RJ since it has enabled us to better understand the topics and to get interested into the subject. (RJ – V.A., M.G.B.)

There were a few mentions (N=9) of the chance to link theory and practice, labelled 'application of knowledge' (21), and of the chance to observe the type of communication used in the workplace (N=5), labelled as 'workplace' (22).

- 21) doing a task every week helped me better understand topics and it also made me realize that studying theoretical concepts does not mean knowing how to put them into practice. (RJ – E.B.)

- 22) we really enjoyed working on actual emails and challenging ourselves getting into the real professional world. (RBP – S.M.R., V.T., B.V.)

Another category which emerged from the data was ‘revising’ (N=10): it was felt that assignments were a chance to revise content, test skills and correct mistakes (23).

- 23) I believe that writing a RJ gave me the opportunity to explain what I had learned, and which were the most difficult parts to understand. (RJ – L.G.)

The ‘pandemic’ category revealed how the students felt during the lockdown. Generally, working remotely was perceived as more difficult (24) and students wished they could have worked in-person (25).

- 24) Working during a pandemic was challenging, because the restrictions didn't allow us to meet freely. (RBP – G.B., M.C., V.E.)

- 25) since we are facing a difficult time of our lives with various restrictions, it was not possible to meet as much as we desired despite living close to each other. (RBP – B.M., G.F.)

However, a few students reported that technological devices enabled them to work in a way which they were already familiar with (26). The ‘means of communication’ category gave an insight into the wide variety of tools which students who worked collaboratively used to replace face-to-face meetings: e-mails, WhatsApp, Skype, Teams, Zoom and Facetime.

- 26) Working together during this quarantine has not been so difficult as one might think. I was able to video call my partner and, as we already had done this before during normal classes at university (we both are far from XXX [city name]), we didn't have much difficulties. (RJ – C.P., C.L.)

The ‘internship’ category revealed that, at least for some students, it had a key role for the choice of the topics in their research-based projects (27). Few mentions regarded the lessons (28).

- 27) after doing my first internship in a firm, I decided to write down my impressions and integrate what I have studied to what I was doing. The best way to do so was to write this project. (RBP – F.O.)

- 28) in this course I had the chance to interact with other people and with [...] [the professor], who allowed us to take the floor many times in order to express our opinions about some topics we dealt with during our lessons. I really appreciated the fact of talking and having some kind of debates with our professor, because in such a way the lessons were very productive. Moreover, [...] [the professor] offered us another means of communication, the so-called wikis, which are collaborative papers that we can use to work together on a given topic. These wikis have been the main source for the writing of my essay. (RJ – A.B.)

8. The students' preferred topics

The present section answers RQ 3, i.e. What were the students' preferred topics? A *Word* document which contained a list of the topics which students had chosen for assessment in their RBPs and RJs and their comments on their choice was created for analysis in response to the instructions provided in Figure 3 (Section 6.4). This prompted the students to think critically about their work. Table 4 shows the number of students' assignments in which each topic or methodology was mentioned.

Table 4.
Topics chosen by students in RBPs and RJs.

Topic	N. of students' assignments in which the topic is mentioned
e-mails	17
spoken feature	15
websites	15
culture	13
sales promotion letters/e-mails	4
BELF	3
job application letters	3
context of situation	2
interview on the use of English in companies	2
genre analysis	1
meetings	1
negotiations	1
phone calls	1
politeness theory	1
Total	79

A few assignments contained no indications regarding the students' preferred topic, while in other cases more than one topic was mentioned; for this reason the total number of mentions in Table 4 (i.e. 79) does not match the total number of assignments in Tables 1 and 2 in Section 6.4 (i.e. 85). In addition, some assignments contained no explanation of the reasons why specific topics were chosen. Further, in a few cases students mentioned more than one topic, explaining that they had analysed specific texts from multiple perspectives (29). The mention of more than one topic generally pointed to high awareness of the methodologies, as well as of the genres tackled in the course.

- 29) I decided to analyze [...] BELF and the features of informality in email communication. This choice was guided by my personal interest of the topics. I chose [...] BELF [...] for a funny reason. I don't even remember how many times, I made fun of my father because of the weird English he speaks and during the second lesson of the course, I discovered that it was, somehow, a recognized language. As soon as he got home, I told him about the existence of BELF and he was surprised just like me that the language that he and his clients use in emails is not so wrong as we thought it was. And for this reason, I decided to put it first, because it reminds me of my father and something that we've always joked about, but, unfortunately, I can no longer do because it is a language in its own right. (RJ – A.B.)

As shown in Table 2, the students' favourite genres were e-mails and websites. The students' choices were based on the perceived centrality of these genres in their everyday lives and in the business domain (30). Moreover, students felt that the importance of both genres had increased during the Covid-19 pandemic (31-32).

- 30) I think that studying how to write an appropriate and correct business email will help me in the future, when working in a company and having to relate with colleagues, employers, clients, and suppliers. (RBP – S.B., M.G.B.)

- 31) since the beginning of our university experience we have been sending emails very frequently in order to communicate with professors and companies (above all now thanks to our curricular internship experience). Such email exchanges with companies and professors started to be even more frequent since the outbreak of the pandemic. (RBP – M.B.)
- 32) during this pandemic, corporate websites have become very important to present companies and sell their products and services online. (RBP – G.L., I.M.)

Other topics which attracted the students' attention were the features of spoken discourse and culture. The analysis of spoken features was seen as a chance to reflect about what is generally taken for granted in conversation (33), as well as of closely examining the language used in films and TV series (34), one of the main sources of informal contact with English (Pavesi & Ghia, 2020).

- 33) The topic I liked the most during the course is the analysis of spoken features. I found it very interesting, since I have never thought about the fact that a simple telephone conversation with a friend could have so many technical aspects that we are used to using, even if we are not aware of them. In fact, I had already studied the features of written texts before, during other courses, but none of my teachers focused on the importance of spoken discourse in our life. (RJ – C.L.)
- 34) We decided to analyze a portion of a script from one of our favorite TV series: 'How to get away with murder'. Our decision is purely based on the fact that we find it very interesting to be able to closely analyze the sentences spoken by the characters. (RBP – L.F., B.C.)

Students felt that cultural models could contribute to their understanding of the cultures of the people who use English as a lingua franca (35), of their native culture (36), of the cultures linked to the languages they study and of the cultures which they got to know during their internship (37).

- 35) [Culture] is an essential issue [...] regarding the business field, because the world is more and more globalized and, even if the language used to communicate is English (BELF), in most cases, culture influences how English is spoken. (RJ – A.B.)
- 36) The topic analyzed is Romanian and Italian cultures. The reasons why I chose Romanian culture and Italian culture are: for first I was born in Romania, and I grew up there studying, so I understood the differences between these two cultures. (RBP – B.C.)
- 37) I had the opportunity to work for two months for XXX, an Italian company operating in the industrial sector. [...] decided to focus my analysis on three countries that are considered to be the most important for the company in terms of turnover and number of orders: these are the Netherlands, Germany, and Czech Republic. (RBP – G.G.)

Albeit much less frequent, comments on other topics were found. (38) refers to the context of situation, while (39) is related to politeness.

- 38) [The context of situation] [...] should be considered fundamental as it is mirrored in the language we use (and vice versa) [...]. [...] the context is necessary for both translation and comprehension. We were amazed by its significance since it is something that we usually do not even notice [...]. [...] [O]nce we have studied it, we could not do without it. [...] we decided to examine in depth this topic and to consider it as one of the most valuable learnings acquired during our studies. (RJ – M.O., S.Z.)
- 39) The concept of positive and negative face was a new topic for us: in studying positive and negative politeness strategies we learnt how to express ourselves and to mitigate the so called "face threatening acts" during everyday and business conversations. (RJ – C.M., C.V., D.V.)

9. Discussion and conclusions

The present study has shown how RBPs and RJs were integrated into a remote online university course grounded in linguistics, a topic which was given limited attention in the literature. The use of these pedagogic tools may be adapted to similar HE courses, both in-person and online. This study has also explored whether RBPs and RJs were successful in supporting student engagement in a remote online course, which is an aspect which had not been investigated in previous literature. The content analysis of the students' perceptions has shown that RBPs and RJs supported student engagement during the Covid-19 pandemic, at a time when opportunities to socialise were drastically reduced. Overall, the positive results mentioned in the literature regarding in-person teaching have been confirmed. In particular, students stated that RBPs and RJs had a major influence on the skill of collaborating, thus confirming Filimonova's findings (2020) regarding the teaching of linguistics. Many other aspects mentioned in the literature emerged from the students' writings. With respect to skills, beside collaboration, the students mentioned organisation and time management (Filimonova, 2020) as well as research skills (Erlinda, 2018; Filimonova, 2020). Moreover, the students perceived that their learning was positively affected in terms of breadth and depth (Healey, 2005) and considered the assignment as a chance to apply acquired knowledge (Bouldin et al., 2006; Filimonova, 2020: pp. e3-e4; Park, 2003: p. 185; Rivera et al., 2020, p. 4; Watson, 2010) and to link theory and practice (Bouldin et al., 2006; Watson, 2010). Thus, it was confirmed that "the act of writing is associated with learning or the enhancement of learning" (Liuolienė & Metiūnienė, 2009: 33). Finally, students reported that completing the assignment improved their well-being by enhancing their interest (Erlinda, 2018; Filimonova, 2020) and their sense of achievement, as well as their perception of greater social support (Filimonova, 2020). These positive results suggest that RBPs and RJs may be used to support engagement even in remote online learning.

Given the positive effects of RBPs and RJs on students' skills, knowledge and attitudes, an issue to be considered when using them is whether to make assignments, which were optional in the present case, an obligatory part of the final assessment, so that all the students are required to engage in RBPs or RJs and may benefit from them. A further issue to be considered is whether to use the assignments for formative assessment, therefore providing feedback to the students during the course, since the feedback provided in this form was found to lead to better outcomes (Jafarigohar & Mortazavi, 2013). In the course that was illustrated in this study, time constraints linked to the high number of students unfortunately make these solutions unviable.

The study also aimed to analyse the students' preferred topics, in order to obtain possible indications about future editions of the course as well as, more generally, about students' interests. E-mails and websites were shown to be the favourite course topics, i.e. students preferred the genres which are closer to their everyday experience and whose importance grew during the pandemic. These were followed by spoken features and culture. Research methodologies, such as genre analysis and politeness, were very rarely mentioned. This may point to the greater interest, on the students' part, in research outcomes rather than in research methodologies. This result also suggests that methodological aspects are probably harder for students to grasp and should be paid special attention.

The study also has a documentary character: it provided insights into the difficulties experienced by students while learning remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic and showed the key role played by various means of communication – e-mails, WhatsApp, Skype, Teams, Zoom and Facetime – which enabled students to quickly adapt to the new circumstances, thus collaborating and breaking the isolation characterising the lockdowns.

Regarding the limitations of the study, it should be considered that comments on collaboration were invited in the wording of the assignments, and this may have affected the indication of this skill as the most positively affected by RBPs and RJs. In addition, a desire to please the teacher may have led the students to focus on positive results. However, this latter limitation is shared by previous studies based on the students' views (e.g. Biria & Haghighi Irani, 2015; Bouldin et al., 2006; Craig et al., 2016; Mynard, 2008; Ruiz-López et al., 2015; Sage & Sele, 2015). Future studies may provide accounts of other pedagogic tools for enhancing student engagement in courses grounded in linguistics and illustrate the students' responses, in in-person, blended or remote online learning. Studies may also contrast the use of the tools investigated in the present paper or other tools promoting engagement across two or more different learning settings, i.e. in-person, blended and remote online.

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