An Investigation into Teacher Preparedness for Emergency Remote Teaching in the Context of Vietnam

INTERACTIVE ARTICLE COVER

About the Journal

Journal DOI	https://dx.doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha
Journal Home	www.rupkatha.com ↗
Indexed by	Scopus ↗ Web of Science: Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) ↗ DOAJ ↗
Journal Metrics	CiteScore 2020: 0.2	SJR 2020: 0.162	SNIP 2020: 0.193	JCI 2020: 0.50

About the Issue

Issue	Vol. 14, No. 4, 2022	"Global Anxieties in Times of Current Crises"
Editor	Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay
Affiliation	Universidad de Guanajuato
Issue DOI	https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v14n4
TOC	https://rupkatha.com/v14n4.php ↗

About the Article

Title	**An Investigation into Teacher Preparedness for Emergency Remote Teaching in the Context of Vietnam**
Author/s	**Dao Nguyen Anh Duc**
Affiliation	Ho Chi Minh City University of Banking, Vietnam
Article DOI	**https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v14n4.17** **Pages:** 1-16
Abstract	https://rupkatha.com/v14n417 ↗
Full-text PDF	https://rupkatha.com/V14/n4/v14n417.pdf ↗
Article History	**First Published: 26 December 2022**
Article Impact	**Check Dynamic Impact** ↗
Copyright	Aesthetics Media Services ↗
Licensing	Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 ↗

An Investigation into Teacher Preparedness for Emergency Remote Teaching in the Context of Vietnam

Dao Nguyen Anh Duc
Ho Chi Minh City University of Banking, Vietnam
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6349-8190. Email id: ducdna@hub.edu.vn

Abstract

This study examined the preparation English teachers in Vietnam had for Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, it investigated the levels of confidence teachers had about their pedagogical and technological knowledge. It also looked at their attitudinal readiness and the institutional support offered to them. Ninety-seven teachers of English in the southern areas of the country, which were severely hit by the fourth wave of the pandemic from May to September 2021, were invited to complete an online survey. The responses were analyzed descriptively, and item-level means were calculated to identify teachers' greatest challenges and the instructional aspects they found most confident about during ERT. Cross tabulations were also employed to compare different groups of teachers' readiness to teach online. The results showed that English teachers in the affected areas perceived themselves to be relatively prepared for the swift transition to online teaching and substantially positive about their pedagogical approach to lesson delivery in the virtual environment. Regarding technological know-how, they exploited various ready-made resources but were unknowledgeable about authoring software and uncertain of how to use technological tools effectively. They also reported receiving little support from their superiors and authorities.

Keywords: teacher preparedness, teacher readiness, ERT, pedagogical knowledge, technological knowledge

Introduction

As a result of the Covid-19 epidemic, as of July 2020, school closures had affected 94 percent of learners worldwide, ranging from preschool to higher education (United Nations, 2020). The strict social distancing and forced isolation mandated the use of technology in education so that teaching and learning could be continued. However, this transition from face-to-face to online teaching in a short time, referred to by Hodges et al. (2020) as emergency remote teaching (ERT), did not occur without challenges and concerns.

In their Language Trends 2021 study, the British Council found that "the Covid-19 pandemic … pervaded every facet of language teaching" (Ian, 2021, p. 23). One important finding reported by this study is that the students found it harder to learn languages online than in other subjects. To add to this, Ferri et al. (2020) claimed that in contrast to preplanned teaching that is designed to be shared online, the quick approach to language teaching during the pandemic may have reduced the quality of courses offered. In this context, the extent to which expected learning outcomes during ERT are achieved largely depends on teachers' preparedness to deliver instruction.

Vietnam was severely hit by the fourth COVID-19 wave in 2021, resulting in school closures in many regions. Classes from K-12 to tertiary levels were halted for a few days and then moved online. Hodges et al. (2020) insisted that "it will be impossible for every faculty member to suddenly become an expert in online teaching and learning" within a few weeks (p. 5). Though the use of technology in the language classroom had become a trend in the country, the complete dependence on technology to deliver instruction, organize learning activities, monitor the learning process, and conduct assessments in the virtual environment was quite stressful for teachers.

Accepting this, this study aimed to examine the preparation English teachers in Vietnam had for ERT during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, it investigated how much confident the teachers felt about their pedagogical and technological knowledge. It also explored their attitudinal readiness and the institutional support that was offered to them. In line with the objectives, two questions were addressed:

1. How much pedagogical, technological, and attitudinal preparedness did English teachers in Vietnam perceive to have for ERT?

2. How did the teachers perceive being supported during the period of ERT?

Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) versus Online Teaching

According to Sawyer (2014), a learning environment comprises four elements: the people, technology, the physical setting (the room), and the social and cultural context. When ERT and online teaching are compared, they have a lot in common: the people involved in the teaching and learning process, the technology employed to deliver teaching content, create interaction, conduct learning activities, and administer assessment tasks. and the learning environment. This description, however, might lead to a misconception that ERT is equivalent to online teaching.

Hodges et al. (2020) claimed that there is a contrast between ERT and high-quality online education, which may largely originate from the different social contexts of the two instructional modes. According to these researchers, ERT is a condition in which instructional delivery has to temporarily switch to an alternate mode in response to a crisis. In contrast to preplanned teaching designed to be shared online, ERT seeks to offer instruction promptly and reliably, with minimum resources and scant time. However, this rapid approach may reduce the quality of the courses due to technological, pedagogical, and social challenges (Ferri et al., 2020).

Teacher Preparedness for ERT

According to Scherer et al. (2021) when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, a rapid transition to online teaching and learning took place [...] regardless of teacher readiness. More importantly, the transition to the virtual environment because of the crisis triggered changes in the conventional, longstanding perceptions of teacher preparation and readiness. The crisis necessitates an investigation into the extent to which teachers believed they were prepared to teach online. However, Cutri et al. (2020) reported that it is not common for course organizers to examine teacher preparedness for online teaching before implementing the course.

The few existing studies on teacher preparedness reveal that the concept has been examined from different perspectives. Suryanti et al. (2021) defined preparedness as the readiness to provide online learning content and successfully integrate technology for e-learning. More specifically,

they assessed teacher preparedness by looking at the extent to which a teacher could complete course content and the confidence level they perceived themselves to be on the technological and pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) self-efficacy scale. Scherer et al. (2021) also used this TPACK scale but combined it with an investigation into teachers' online teaching presence and the institutional support they received. Using a different approach, Junus et al. (2021) and Paliwal & Singh (2021) measured the readiness of university lecturers by looking at four dimensions: basic technical skills, their experience in using a learning management system, course planning, time management, and communication skills, as well as course design ability.

Teachers are a heterogenous group, and the factors affecting one group may differ from another. Past studies on teacher preparedness for ERT were conducted primarily in higher education contexts; thus little is known about how well-prepared K-12 teachers felt they were when asked to move online in a brief time. Also, within the topic of ERT, language teachers' preparedness has been very much under-researched. Finally, in the context of Vietnam, apart from Dau's (2022) study, which explored practices adopted by primary English teachers and their views of the challenges they encountered during the pandemic, none has been done on the degree of readiness English teachers of all levels felt they had for the transition to the virtual setting. All these issues have created the need for the study reported in this paper.

It was proposed in this study that teacher preparedness for ERT could be indicated by teachers' knowledge of the available technological tools and their potential use in the virtual language classroom, their knowledge of pedagogical approaches that should be used for online teaching, the amount and type of support they receive, and their attitudes toward the transition. Besides, it is necessary to consider other factors such as the type of school (public or private) they work for, the region (cities or provinces) they reside in, and the educational levels they teach.

Methodology

This cross-sectional quantitative study utilized a non-experimental method to collect and analyze primary data.

Instruments

A structured questionnaire that consisted of four constructs was used to collect the data. The first one investigated the teachers' confidence in their pedagogical knowledge. A four-point Likert scale was used, and there were six items addressing teachers' confidence about their ability to plan online lessons, understand online learner interaction, design online assessment tasks, enhance virtual learning autonomy, provide feedback, and create a constructive learning environment. The respondents were asked to choose *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree,* or *Strongly Disagree* for each question.

The second construct examined the teachers' knowledge of the five tools available for language teaching, namely video conferencing, authoring, collaboration, games and assessment, and language resources. The participants were asked to select whether they know *A lot*, *Some*, *A little*, or *Hardly anything* about the tools.

In the third section, the respondents were invited to express their feelings about the transition to the virtual classroom by reporting whether they would *Strongly agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree,* or

Strongly disagree with the given statements. There were four items exploring teachers' attitudes toward learning new knowledge, adapting lesson plans for ERT, learning new skills for ERT, and taking on challenges when switching online.

There were three sub-sections in the last part of the questionnaire. These investigated the types of facilities, and the sources and types of support the teachers had during ERT (For a list of items in the questionnaire, see the Appendix.)

The survey was administered online via Google forms due to the constraints in movement during the period of strict social distancing from May to September 2021. The internal consistency reliability of the survey was calculated using Cronbach's α. All four constructs' statistics were higher than 0.80, indicating good internal consistency. Table 1 below provides the reliability statistics for all constructs.

Table 1: Reliability statistics

Construct	n of items	Cronbach's α
Pedagogical knowledge	6	0.827
Technological knowledge	5	0.816
Attitudes towards transition	4	0.872
Facilities and support	8	0.806

Participants

The study used convenience sampling to collect the data. A call for participation in the study was posted on the researcher's Facebook page and was shared within her professional network. Data collection was completed within two weeks on a voluntary basis. Ninety-seven Vietnamese teachers of English in the southern areas of the country, which were severely affected during the fourth wave of the pandemic, completed the survey. Among the participants, 32 percent live in Ho Chi Minh City while the rest come from other provinces. Only 11 percent teach at private schools, and over 70 percent have taught English for more than ten years. Table 2 shows a breakdown of respondents by the levels of education they are teaching.

Table 2: Levels of education respondents are teaching

Level	n	%
High school	20	20.6
Primary school	34	35.1
Secondary school	15	15.5
Tertiary education	28	28.9

Results and Discussion

There are two sections in this part, each of which presents key findings addressing one research question.

Perceived Pedagogical, Technological, and Attitudinal Preparedness for ERT

First, regarding the pedagogical knowledge needed for ERT, as seen in Table 3 below, most respondents rated themselves to be around 3 out of 4 on the scale for all aspects, which is quite positive. This is an important finding, as Suryanti et al. (2021) insisted that pedagogical knowledge

is "the most important for online teaching readiness." (p. 4). Specifically, they were most confident about their understanding of learner engagement and interaction in the virtual setting. This type of awareness is vital in the transition as it can help them select appropriate methods to make students involved in and contribute to the lessons. In contrast, they reported being least confident about their ability to create autonomous learning (m = 2.81, SD = 0.601) and design reliable assessment tasks (m = 2.81, SD = 0.583). This is quite understandable as learners were also forced to work in unfamiliar conditions with limited time for adaptation and comfort, which may have hindered their autonomy. In addition, as Hodges et al. (2020) reported, unlike in fully online courses, in ERT, the faculty cannot become experts within a few weeks or even days, and learning assessment is one of the biggest concerns, taking into account the barriers that a virtual classroom may entail.

Table 3: Teachers' confidence in pedagogical knowledge across educational levels

Item	Primary		Secondary		High		Tertiary		Total	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Lesson planning	2.85	.500	2.87	.834	2.85	.587	3.18	.670	2.95	.635
Interaction	3.12	.640	3	.845	3.25	.444	3.43	.690	3.22	.665
Assessment	2.79	.479	2.87	.834	2.70	.571	2.89	.567	2.81	.583
Autonomy	2.71	.629	2.73	.704	2.70	.571	3.07	.466	2.81	.601
Feedback	2.88	.591	3.20	.775	2.85	.366	3.32	.476	3.05	.584
Environment	2.88	.769	3	.756	2.80	.523	3.29	.535	3	.677

A closer examination of participant grouping according to the educational levels they were teaching, their residential regions, and school types (shown in Tables 3 and 4) has yielded some important results. University lecturers seemed more confident about their pedagogy than any other colleagues. The teachers working at private schools rated their pedagogical preparedness higher than those working at public schools, while there were only very slight differences between those residing in the city and their counterparts in other provinces.

Table 4: Teachers' confidence in pedagogical knowledge across school types and regions

Item	Private		Public		HCMC		Provinces	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Lesson planning	3.18	.603	2.92	.636	3.10	.700	2.88	.595
Interaction	3.73	.467	3.15	.660	3.39	.667	3.14	.654
Assessment	3.09	.302	2.78	.602	2.87	.619	2.79	.569
Autonomy	3.18	.603	2.77	.588	2.84	.583	2.80	.613
Feedback	3.36	.674	3.01	.563	3.10	.597	3.03	.581
Environment	3.27	.647	2.97	.676	3.16	.688	2.92	.664

These discrepancies have triggered important discussion points. First, while general education serves a larger part of the population than higher education, and thus is vital to society, it may be of some concern that teaching staff at these levels (primary, secondary and high school) seemed less confident about their pedagogical approaches. Ferri et al. (2020) claimed that the quality of teaching and learning would be reduced during ERT, then the situation would be worse in the English language classes from primary to high school levels in the research context. Second, the teachers at private schools appeared to be readier for the transition due to the pressure to

maintain the enrolment rate, with more adequate investment in staff quality assurance and facility. However, the public school system provides education to the vast majority of the population, and it is expected that their teachers got better prepared for the crisis, which was not true in this study.

Secondly, in terms of the technical knowledge that English teachers need in order to teach online, the data from the survey indicated that, in general, the participants rated their technical knowledge to be lower than 3 out of 4 on the scale for all sorts of tools except for video conferencing (M = 3.20, SD = 0.656). More noticeably, authoring tools seemed to be a problem for all teachers, with nearly 80% reporting knowing little or hardly anything about this aspect (M = 1.71, SD = 0.803).

A breakdown of the participants based on their levels, residence, and school type show similar patterns to the pedagogical knowledge statistics, as seen in Tables 5 and 6. Higher education teachers of English seemed to be more technically prepared than those at lower levels while private school staff appeared to have more expertise with all types of educational technology than those in public schools. Regarding their residence, the faculty from Ho Chi Minh City exhibited higher levels of confidence about their technical knowledge than their colleagues living in other provinces, and the gaps between these two groups were shown to be much clearer than those in the aspect of pedagogy discussed above.

Table 5: Teachers' confidence in technical knowledge across educational levels

Item	Primary		Second.		High		Tertiary		Total	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Video conferencing	2.88	.591	3.13	.640	3.10	.641	3.68	.476	3.20	.656
Authoring tools	1.65	.812	1.87	.743	1.55	.759	1.82	.863	1.71	.803
Collaboration tools	2.56	.927	2.53	.990	2.45	.945	3.11	.916	2.69	.961
Games & assessment	2.85	.657	2.60	.986	2.60	.821	3.29	1.013	2.89	.888
Language resources	2.53	.825	2.73	1.033	2.60	.503	3.04	.793	2.72	.813

Compared to previous studies' findings, the teachers surveyed seemed less confident about their technical knowledge. For example, the faculty in Paliwal and Singh (2021) reported a high level of technical competency while technical skills were perceived to be as greatest strength by the lecturers in Junus et al. (2021). However, it should be noted that the technical skills discussed in the latter involve only performing basic tasks such as office and Internet applications, which are just part of the aspect researched in this study. Their confidence level might have been reduced if more complex technologies had also been included in the study.

Table 6: Teachers' confidence in technical knowledge across school types and regions

Item	Private		Public		HCMC		Provinces	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Video conferencing	3.36	.674	3.17	.654	3.52	.570	3.05	.643
Authoring tools	1.82	.751	1.70	.813	1.90	.870	1.62	.760
Collaboration tools	3	.775	2.65	.979	2.97	.948	2.56	.947
Games & assessment	3.18	.982	2.85	.875	3.19	.980	2.74	.810
Language resources	3.09	.539	2.67	.832	3.10	.746	2.55	.788

The biggest concern is that while authoring tools can help language teachers enhance the language content they present to learners (Başal, 2012), they remain quite unfamiliar to the teachers surveyed. Apart from popular presentation software like MS PowerPoint, other tools which can aid teachers in creating interactive contents may require substantial amounts of time and effort to learn to use. This may have discouraged the teachers from exploring and then using them more in the online classroom.

Thirdly, the investigation into how these English teachers reacted to the transition has revealed their considerably positive attitudes, as shown in Table 7. To be more specific, they claimed to be willing to try new tools (M = 3.23, SD = 0.568), learn new skills (M = 3.22, SD = 0.525), take on challenges (M = 3.23, SD = 0.568), as well as revise lesson plans (M = 3.15, SD = 0.565). They expressed concerns about the problems they encountered or might face, but the concerns (M = 2.80, SD = 0.759) received the lowest scores throughout.

Table 7: Teachers' attitudinal preparedness across school types and regions

Item	Private		Public		HCMC		Provinces	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Trying new tools	3.55	.522	3.19	.564	3.32	.599	3.18	.552
Revising plans	3.18	.603	3.15	.564	3.26	.631	3.11	.530
Learning new skills	3.36	.505	3.20	.527	3.29	.588	3.18	.493
Taking on challenges	3.45	.688	3.20	.549	3.35	.551	3.17	.571
Worrying	2.91	1.044	2.79	.721	2.81	.749	2.80	.769

In this aspect of preparedness, there are hardly any differences among the teachers at the four levels. Additionally, only very small discrepancies can be found between those from the city and those from other provinces, as well as between the private schools' staff and their colleagues at public schools. The clearest differences are in the willingness to apply new tools and take on challenges between the two groups of private and public school faculty.

In such a critical situation as the Covid-19 pandemic, the fact that the teachers surveyed felt positive about the duties they had to fulfill and the efforts they had to make must have helped them a lot in doing their jobs. This argument is supported by (Dau, 2022)'s study in which the primary teachers also expressed positive attitudes about the transition and believed that ERT "was a good way to ensure students' learning progress and the school's curriculum" (p. 16).

Perceived Support Received During the Period of ERT

Regarding the availability of facilities and resources, namely the time used for preparation and actual teaching, instructional materials, software and applications, and hardware, the data displayed in Table 8 below shows that around two-thirds of the participants considered them to be sufficient. However, time was still a concern for 30% of them. When educational levels were taken into account, the teachers in higher education appeared to feel more at ease, with nearly a quarter reporting having plenty of all types of facilities and resources. In contrast, their high school colleagues seemed to have the most problems with roughly half complaining about not having enough time and about one-third mentioning inadequate software and hardware.

Table 8: Perceived availability of facilities and resources across educational levels

Item	Primary			Second.			High			Tertiary			Total		
	I	S	P	I	S	P	I	S	P	I	S	P	I	S	P
Time	21	73	6	27	53	20	45	50	5	32	46	22	30	58	12
Materials	26	65	9	13	60	27	25	70	5	7	71	22	19	67	14
Software	30	59	11	7	60	33	30	55	15	11	64	25	21	60	19
Hardware	20	59	21	13	60	27	30	65	5	7	64	29	18	62	20

Note: I = Insufficient; S = Sufficient; P = Plenty

These findings have created an impression that university teachers of English had more advantages over others in doing their jobs during the crisis. What is of greater concern is that while high school is quite an important stage in the educational system of Vietnam, many teachers seemed to have worked in unfavorable conditions, which may have reduced the quality of teaching and learning, as only teachers who had all the required resources to meet their job demands were able to cope well with the new teaching environment (Sokal et al., 2020).

Unsurprisingly, the data from Table 9 reveals that apart from the time resource, English teachers from private schools or Ho Chi Minh City had better provision of materials, software, and hardware than their counterparts, probably because of financial advantages. For example, while around 20% of the public schools' teachers and 25% of those living in the provinces reported not having adequate teaching materials, software and apps, and devices to do their jobs, less than ten percent of those from private schools and the city made the same complaints.

Table 9: Perceived availability of facilities and resources across school types and regions

Item	Private			Public			HCMC			Provinces		
	I	S	P	I	S	P	I	S	P	I	S	P
Time	27	55	18	30	58	12	32	52	16	29	61	10
Materials	0	73	27	21	66	13	7	71	22	24	65	11
Software	9	64	27	22	60	18	10	61	29	26	59	15
Hardware	9	64	27	19	61	20	6	68	26	23	59	18

Note: I = Insufficient; S = Sufficient; P = Plenty

It is also important to examine the support sources these teachers have received since practical implications can be made in this aspect. As seen from Table 10 below, the participants seemed to have received less support from their superiors than their peers. Especially, the higher levels on the hierarchy, the less support was offered. More specifically, nearly half of the teachers claimed that they got little support from the Department of Education and Training (DoET), and one-third mentioned the same about the school managers. This finding is similar to the situation investigated by Kerres (2020), where educators 'have turned to digital technology with little or no organizational support.' (p.693)

Table 10: Perceived support from others across educational levels

Item	Primary			Second.			High			Tertiary			Total		
	Li	S	Lo	Li	S	Lo	Li	S	Lo	Li	S	Lo	Li	S	Lo
DoET	32	41	27	33	60	7	50	45	5	61	32	7	44	42	14
Managers	32	41	27	27	53	20	25	65	10	40	39	21	32	47	21
Aca. Head	27	47	26	27	60	13	40	50	10	25	54	21	29	51	20
Colleagues	18	44	38	7	67	26	10	70	20	7	39	54	11	52	37

Note: Li = Little; S = Some; Lo = A lot

In contrast, the academic heads and especially colleagues played an indispensable role during the crisis, giving help to about 70% and 90% of the participants, respectively. One possible explanation for this is that the actions taken by the top authorities may involve more policy-related matters and happen on a macro level, which may not be easily visible to the teachers. They may find their direct superior or peers more accessible to get help when in need.

A closer look at the different levels of education reveals a couple of interesting findings. First, the English teachers at high schools and universities appeared to have received little attention from the DoET, with 50% and 61% reporting having little support from this body of authority. The faculty in higher education also felt that they did not receive much help from the school managers. Second, colleagues were considered more helpful to primary and tertiary teachers than those at the other two levels, with 38% and 54% reporting getting a lot of support from them, respectively.

The data shown in Table 11 can offer some understanding of the educational system in Vietnam. Despite the more positive attitudes adopted by their teachers and the effort to provide better resources and facilities to staff, private schools seemed to lack attention from the Department, with 64% of the teachers from this type of school claiming they received little support from the DoET. Additionally, the DoET and school managers in small provinces appeared to stay closer to the teachers, giving them more support than their counterparts in Ho Chi Minh City.

Table 11: Perceived support from others across school types and regions

Item	Private			Public			HCMC			Provinces		
	Li	S	Lo	Li	S	Lo	Li	S	Lo	Li	S	Lo
DoET	64	18	18	42	45	13	58	36	6	38	46	16
Managers	46	36	18	30	49	21	39	39	22	29	51	20
Aca. Head	27	55	18	29	51	20	26	52	22	30	52	18
Colleagues	9	36	55	12	53	35	10	42	48	12	56	32

Note: Li = Little; S = Some; Lo = A lot

Finally, the study identified the type of support that was available to the English teachers during ERT. The respondents were asked to select all items that applied to them. The results in Table 12 show that a vast majority of them used the experience shared by others and the knowledge obtained from the training courses. About half of them also benefited from webinars and conferences. Only 21% and 13% got help with facilities and finances respectively. The results also indicated that high school teachers had less opportunity to participate in training courses than the others, at only 50%, while 93% of the secondary teachers received some training. In addition,

73% of secondary teachers and 79% of university lecturers attended webinars and conferences to upgrade their skills, much higher than those at the other two levels.

Table 12: Types of support perceived to receive across levels

Item	Primary		Second.		High		Tertiary		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Experience sharing	28	82	10	67	19	95	22	79	79	81
Training courses	24	71	14	93	10	50	21	75	69	71
Webinars, conferences	14	41	11	73	6	30	22	79	53	55
Provision of facilities	11	32	3	20	1	5	5	18	20	21
Financial support	6	18	3	20	0	0	4	14	13	13

The data from Table 13 illustrates some other differences between English teachers from different types of schools and regions. Private school teachers reported attending more training courses, webinars, and conferences than public schools, at 91% and 91% versus 69% and 50%, respectively. They were also provided with more facilities, with 55% compared with only 16 % from the public schools. In another respect, only 42% of the teachers from the provinces selected webinars and conferences as a type of support they received, while 80% of those from Ho Chi Minh city chose this option. The question is even when these events took place online, why did the teachers from small provinces not get access to them?

Table 13: Types of support perceived to receive across school types and regions

Item	Private		Public		HCMC		Provinces	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Experience sharing	10	91	69	80	26	84	53	80
Training courses	10	91	59	69	21	68	44	67
Webinars, conferences	10	91	43	50	25	80	28	42
Provision of facilities	6	55	14	16	6	19	14	21
Financial support	1	9	12	14	7	23	6	9

Conclusion

This study has identified the extent to which the teachers of English in southern Vietnam perceived to be pedagogically, technically, and attitudinally prepared for the transition to online teaching during the pandemic. Factors such as the educational levels the teachers were teaching, the type of school they were working at, and their residential regions were considered during the data analysis. The findings show that, in general, the teachers in the research context were relatively confident about their pedagogical approaches, though with some concerns about how to design reliable assessment tasks and create autonomous learning in the virtual environment. However, they were less confident about their technical knowledge, noticeably with little knowledge about authoring tools. Regarding their attitudes towards the shift to online teaching within a short time, they were considerably positive about changes, willing to try new tools, learn new skills and take on challenges.

Regarding the support they perceived to have received, the results indicated that time was the biggest concern. Tertiary level teachers and those from private schools seem to be more

comfortable doing their jobs with more time and better provision of facilities. One important finding is that the teachers perceived the role of the DoET quite negatively, with the majority reporting getting little support from these superiors. In contrast, colleagues were the participants' most popular sources of support. Finally, most of them reported receiving help through experience sharing, training courses, webinars, and conferences.

Several implications could be made based on the findings and discussions above. Firstly, it is obvious that during the unexpected transition to virtual teaching, teachers needed help with not only technological and informational resources but also advice on the implementation of their teaching tasks (Kumpikaitė-Valiūnienė et al., 2021). In this context, learner autonomy and learning assessment are among the most challenging tasks in second language teaching due to time and technical constraints. This is when experience sharing, training courses, webinars, and conferences can demonstrate their usefulness. However, organizers of these events must take a down-to-earth approach, including sharing and training content that can be readily applied to the language classroom and tailored to different educational levels. To add to this, authoring tools might be a useful topic, as the knowledge and skills about these tools will allow teachers to be more creative and independent in designing lessons suited to the virtual classroom.

The reference to webinars and conferences has led to another implication about their accessibility, which was questioned earlier. The fact that they are organized online does not guarantee they can reach a wide audience, especially those in small provinces who usually receive information late or do not receive the news. The DoET, school managers, and academic heads can be extremely helpful in this situation when they can network with the organizers, spread information, arrange times, and encourage the staff to attend the events.

Lastly, colleagues have been found to provide the most support and often do this via experience sharing, the most common type of support reported by the participants. This has emphasized the importance of building a professional community, a constant learning environment where teachers can network, learn new things, and share what they know with others. It is also important that this community be mentored or advised by experts, and that it liaises with school managers and academic heads to provide teachers with more practical and useful knowledge and skills.

This paper has provided insights into how English teachers in Vietnam were pedagogically, technically, and attitudinally prepared for ERT and the types of support they received. However, there are some limitations to the study. First, it was conducted during the lockdown on a small number of participants. For the findings to be more generalizable, similar research should be done with participants from other parts of the country, and with a larger sample size. Second, the study was conducted from the teachers' point of view; however, learner perception should also be taken into account as it is the learners who take responsibility for their success (Acton, 1984) and decide what and how they want to learn (Nunan, 1995). In other words, learners may evaluate teachers' efforts differently, so they may perceive teachers' readiness to be on a different level. Further research thus should be done so that a complete evaluation of teacher preparedness for ERT can be achieved.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest.

Acknowledgment

References

Acton, W. (1984). Changing fossilized pronunciation. *TESOL Quarterly*, *18*(1), 71. https://doi.org/10.2307/3586336

Başal, A. (2012). Authoring tools for developing the content in language education. *International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications*, *3*(4), 164–169.

Cutri, R. M., Mena, J., & Whiting, E. F. (2020). Faculty readiness for online crisis teaching: Transitioning to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *43*(4), 523–541. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1815702

Dau, T. T. L. (2022). Teachers' practices and perceptions. *AsiaCALL Online Journal*, *13*(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.11251/acoj.13.01.001

Ferri, F., Grifoni, P., & Guzzo, T. (2020). Online learning and emergency remote teaching: Opportunities and challenges in emergencies. *Societies*, *10*(4), 86–104. https://doi.org/10.3390/SOC10040086

Hodges, C., Moore, S., Lockee, B., Trust, T., & Bond, A. (2020). The difference between emergency remote teaching and online learning. *EduCause*, 1–23. https://er.educause.edu/articles/2020/3/the-difference-between-emergency-remote-teaching-and-

Ian, C. (2021). *Language trends 2021: Language teaching in primary and secondary schools in England*. https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/towards-national-languages-strategy-education-and-skills/

Junus, K., Santoso, H. B., Putra, P. O. H., Gandhi, A., & Siswantining, T. (2021). Lecturer readiness for online classes during the pandemic: A survey research. *Education Sciences*, *11*(3), 139. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11030139

Kerres, M. (2020). Against all odds: Education in Germany coping with Covid-19. *Postdigital Science and Education*, *2*(3), 690–694. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-020-00130-7

Kumpikaitė-Valiūnienė, V., Duobienė, J., Liubinienė, V., Kasperiūnienė, J., & Tandzegolskienė, I. (2021). Impact of institutional support on educators' subjective well-being during the transition to virtual work due to COVID-19 lockdown. *Journal of Management & Organization*, *27*(6), 1150–1168. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2021.60

Nunan, D. (1995). Closing the gap between learning and instruction. *TESOL Quarterly*, *29*(1), 133. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587808

Paliwal, M., & Singh, A. (2021). Teacher readiness for online teaching-learning during COVID – 19 outbreak: A study of Indian institutions of higher education. *Interactive Technology and Smart Education*, *18*(3), 403–421. https://doi.org/10.1108/ITSE-07-2020-0118

Sawyer, R. K. (2014). Introduction: The new science of learning. In R. K. Sawyer (Ed.), *The Cambridge*

Handbook of the Learning Sciences, Second Edition (2nd ed., pp. 1–18). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139519526.002

Scherer, R., Howard, S. K., Tondeur, J., & Siddiq, F. (2021). Profiling teachers' readiness for online teaching and learning in higher education: Who's ready? *Computers in Human Behavior*, *118*, 106675. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106675

Sokal, L. J., Trudel, L. G. E., & Babb, J. C. (2020). Supporting teachers in times of change: The job demands-resources model and teacher burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Contemporary Education*, *3*(2), 67. https://doi.org/10.11114/ijce.v3i2.4931

Suryanti, S., Sutaji, D., Nusantara, T., & Subanji. (2021). An assessment of teachers' readiness for online teaching. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, *1933*(1), 012117. https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1933/1/012117

United Nation. (2020). Education during COVID-19 and beyond. In *Education during COVID-19 and beyond*.

DAO, Nguyen Anh Duc has been teaching English for more than twenty years and is currently Head of Language Skills Division – Faculty of Foreign Languages at Banking University of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. She also works as a local trainer for Cambridge University Press. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Nottingham, UK. She holds an MA in TESOL Studies from the University of Queensland, Australia, and an MBA from Bolton University, UK. Her research interests are teaching methodology, L2 pronunciation teaching and learning, and teaching writing.

Appendix

PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Choose ONE answer.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I can confidently design lesson plans and learning activities that are suitable for online teaching.	○	○	○	○
I understand the differences between face-to-face teaching and online teaching with regard to learner engagement and interaction.	○	○	○	○
I can design assessment tasks that are valid and reliable when conducted online.	○	○	○	○
I know how to foster autonomous learning in the virtual environment.	○	○	○	○
I know how to give my students useful feedback when teaching online.	○	○	○	○
I can create an active, friendly and constructive learning environment when teaching online.	○	○	○	○

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

How much do you know about the following tools? Choose ONE answer.

	Hardly anything	A little	Some	A lot
Video conferencing tools, such as Google Meet, Zoom, MS Teams	○	○	○	○
Authoring tools, such as iSpring Suite, Lectora, Adobe Captivate, Camtasia	○	○	○	○
Collaboration tools, such as Google Docs, Padlet	○	○	○	○
Games and assessments, such as Quizziz, Kahoot, Quizlet	○	○	○	○
Language resources, such as language teaching and learning websites, corpora, graded readers	○	○	○	○

ATTITUDINAL PREPAREDNESS

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Choose ONE answer.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am excited about trying out new tools and new methods when teaching online.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I'm willing to work extra time to revise my lesson plans to suit ERT.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I'm willing to work extra time to learn new skills to provide ERT.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I'm ready to take on challenges when switching to online teaching.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am worried about the problems that nay happen when switching to teaching online.	◯	◯	◯	◯

FACILITIES AND SUPPORT

How much of the following facilities and resources do you have during ERT? Choose ONE answer.

	Insufficient	Sufficient	Plenty
Time (for planning, delivering the lessons and evaluating students)	◯	◯	◯
Teaching materials	◯	◯	◯
Software and applications	◯	◯	◯
Hardware (devices like personal computers, microphones, headphones, etc.)	◯	◯	◯

How much support have you got from the following people? Choose ONE answer.

	A little	Some	A lot
Department of Education and Training	◯	◯	◯
School managers	◯	◯	◯
Academic Head	◯	◯	◯
Colleagues	◯	◯	◯

What types of support have you received? Choose all that apply.

- [ ] Training courses
- [ ] Webinars, workshops, conferences
- [ ] Experience sharing
- [ ] Financial support
- [ ] Provision of facilities