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# Problem Solving in the COVID-19 ERT University Classroom

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## Abstract

This paper deals with pragmati c aspects of Emergency Remote Teaching adopted in an academic setti ng as a COVID-19 containment strategy. We consider an intensive introductory course in English Language and Linguisti cs taught at the University of Bologna by the author of this study (30 academic hours). Following university policy and Italian special COVID-19 laws, the fi rst half of the course was taught full distance, synchronically on Microsoft Teams, while the second part was administered live, with part of the audience present in the physical classroom, and the rest connected online from home.
Lessons were videorecorded and transcribed using Microsoft Stream, and subsequently stored on the Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014) to create a fully POS-tagged and lemmati sed corpus in English. As the study is methodologically grounded in corpus pragmati cs (Aijmer/Rühlemann 2015), both corpus fi ndings and videorecordings are analysed pragmati cally for metacommunicati ve expressions (Bazzanella 2002, 2010), and metadiscursively for markers of interacti vity (Hyland 2005: 49). The results show that the root cause of most pragmati c accidents (as revealed, in corpus data, by the frequency of hesitati ons, apologies, and other expressions of uncertainty and doubt) is a contextual mismatch arising from the fact that the same lecture is administered simultaneously to students on campus and online. Despite some positi ves, e.g., more interacti vity (Luporini 2020) in comparison with the fully in-person version of the course that was taught prepandemically (Fusari 2021), it is therefore suggested that hybrid teaching should be much more carefully planned if it is to conti nue aft er the pandemic.

## Keywords

corpus linguisti cs, COVID-19, e-learning, emergency remote teaching (ERT), English for academic purposes (EAP)