

Online Language Teaching: A Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT

For decades, researchers have been researching online education. Numerous scholarly works have concentrated on online teaching and learning theories, as well as quality online learning and online course design assessment criteria. This is a bibliometric analysis. Online Language Teaching is the keyword is considered for the analysis. Publications taken from the Scopus database from 2006 to 2022. Only the English language articles are selected. The final database comprises 74 articles in this area of research. The objectives of the study are: (1) To examine the trend of publications related to “Online Language Teaching”; (2) To examine the highly cited authors related to “Online Language Teaching”; (3) To examine the highly cited sources related to “Online Language Teaching”; (4) To examine the highly cited countries related to “Online Language Teaching”; (5) To examine the frequently used keywords related to “Online Language Teaching”; (6) To recommend future research opportunities related to “Online Language Teaching”.

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KEYWORDS

Bibliometric Analysis; Online Language Teaching; Research Gaps.

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1. Introduction

Van der Ploeg & Blankinship, (2022) believe that the COVID-19 epidemic has caused an increase in online activities, including language learning activities. Zhen et al., (2023) and Al-Obaydi et al. (2023) state that People all across the world are taking private language classes online because the expansion of accessible, inexpensive broadband Internet. Zhen et al., (2023) further state that an important amount of online language tutoring occurs on platforms for online instruction. Modern technologies have transformed the process of writing, reading, publishing and handling books into new platforms that are different from the ordinary processes that culturally we are familiar with (Al-Obaydi & Iddagoda, 2022; Pikhart et al., 2022). Due to the spread of English over the globe, multilingual methods are quickly becoming the norm in language teaching and learning processes (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022). Paradowski & Jelińska (2023) point out that the long-term process of learning a foreign language necessitates perseverance and a desire to partake in activities that will foster communicative proficiency. According to Siebenhütter (2023) there is a motivation of speakers of Chinese, Spanish, English, Thai, Japanese, Korean, French, and German to teach their native tongue as a foreign language (FL) online. (Siebenhütter, 2023) in his study highlighted the fact that researchers should considers on both learner’s motivation as well teacher’s motivation. To investigate the meaning-making in an online English instructional video, Ho and Feng (2022) create a paradigm that combines multi-modality and trans-language. In their investigation on primary school teachers’ perceptions of multilingual language teaching and learning strategies, (Gartziarena et al., 2023) looked at how these perceptions align with the most recent views on multilingualism.

In parallel, Ho and Feng (2022) introduce a paradigm that combines multi-modality and trans-language to delve into the meaning-making aspects of online English instructional videos. This research approach sheds light on the nuanced dynamics of online language instruction, emphasizing the need for innovative methodologies.

Lastly, Gartziarena et al., (2023) exploration of primary school teachers’ perceptions of multilingual language teaching strategies adds a valuable dimension to the discussion. Aligning these perceptions with the most recent views on multilingualism underscores the ongoing dialogue within the educational community regarding effective language teaching methodologies.

In conclusion, the multifaceted exploration of online language learning presented in the text highlights the intersection of global events, technological advancements, and pedagogical considerations shaping the future of

language education. The interconnected themes of motivation, adaptability, and innovative research methodologies underscore the dynamic nature of this evolving educational landscape.

On the other hand, pedagogical actions and didactic decisions, instructors' ideas about language learning processes, curriculum topics, students, and themselves as educators are decisive and have a direct bearing is the view of Borg in 2015. The objectives of the study are: 1) To examine the trend of publications related to “Online Language Teaching”, 2) To examine the highly cited authors related to “Online Language Teaching”, 3) To examine the highly cited sources related to “Online Language Teaching”, 4) To examine the highly cited countries related to “Online Language Teaching”, 5) To examine the frequently used keywords related to “Online Language Teaching”, 6) To recommend future research opportunities related to “Online Language Teaching”.

Based on the analysis of the most cited articles research gap is identified. The identified research gap is that there is no empirical evidence of virtues, teacher commitment, learner commitment and language ability in virtual class rooms in State Universities in Sri Lanka, perhaps in the universities in worldwide.

2. Methodology

The articles used "Online Language Teaching" as a keyword is considered for the analysis. The first level search shows 78 articles meet this criterion. Next, only the English language articles are selected. The final database comprises 74 articles in this area of research.

The current study has used a variety of bibliometric analytic approaches, such as frequency tables on publications broken down by year, nation, author, etc. The most influential articles in this field of study are noted. The current field of research uses keyword analysis and thematic mapping to identify the prevailing topics.

3. Result and Discussion

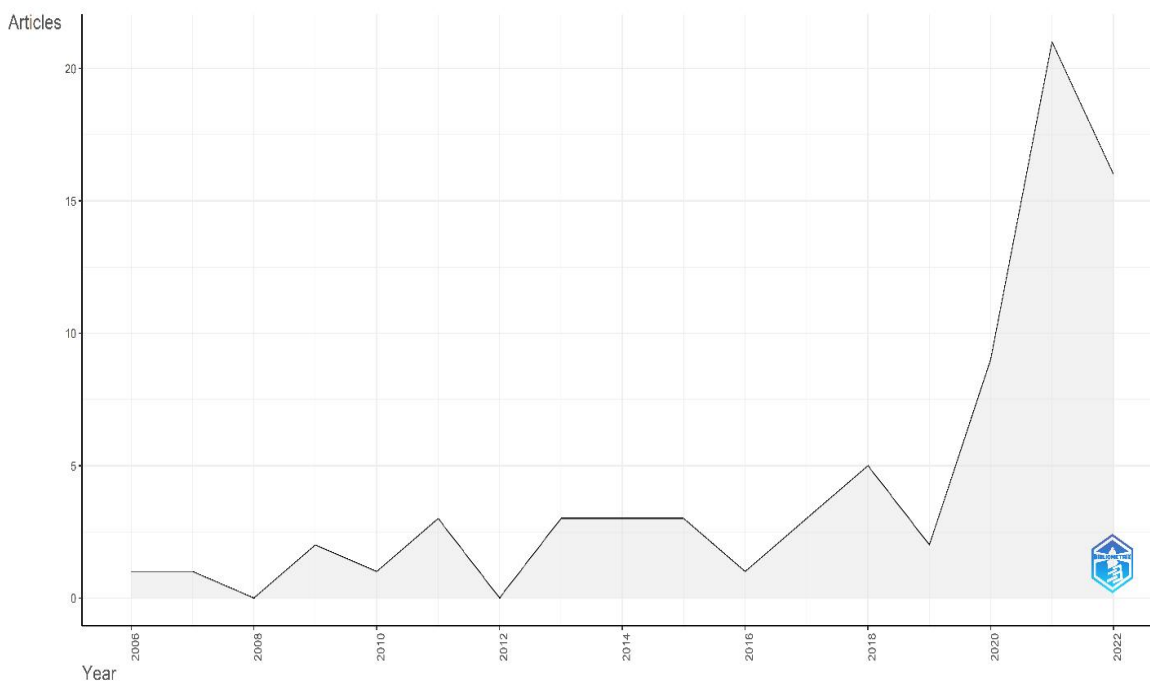


Figure 1. Year-wise Publications

Figure 1 depicts the publication trend in the research on “online language teaching” in the Scopus database from 2006 to 2022. The zero number of publications was documented in the year 2008 and 2012, and the highest number of publications in the years 2021 and 2022. Significantly, online language teaching is expected to play a pivotal role in language teaching with the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is drawing much attention from researchers.

Table 1. Country-Wise Publications

Country	TP	TC	Average Article Citations
USA	23	295	42.14
Canada	1	225	225.00
New Zealand	5	97	32.33
United Kingdom	22	53	13.25
Australia	14	34	5.67
China	13	33	6.60
Turkey	19	33	5.50
Norway	1	25	25.00
Korea	4	19	9.50
Hong Kong	1	16	8.00

This section analyzes the most productive and impact countries, publishing articles on ‘online language teaching’. Twenty-seven countries have made significant contributions in the last two decades. Table 1 reveals that the USA, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Australia are the top five developed countries with the highest citations. As the most productive country in this area of research, 23 articles were published in the USA and received the highest number of citations. However, the 225 citations from Canada, which has the second highest number of publications only published one article. The highest average article citations received by Canada was 225 citations for one document.

Table 2 Journal-Wise Publications

Element	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	NP	PY_start
SYSTEM	5	7	0.5	297	7	2013
Computer-Assisted Language Learning	3	3	0.214	160	3	2009
Foreign Language Annals	2	2	0.667	119	2	2020
Distance Education	2	2	0.222	70	2	2014
Recall	2	3	0.167	42	3	2011
Knowledge Management and E-Learning	1	1	0.083	33	1	2011
Language Teaching Research	1	1	0.059	25	1	2006
Calico Journal	2	3	0.2	24	3	2013
Sustainability (Switzerland)	2	2	1	19	2	2021
Innovation In Language Learning and Teaching	1	1	0.071	16	1	2009

The database contains 74 documents that were published in 57 sources. Table 2 highlights the top 10 journals with the highest citations for “online language teaching.” Out of the total publications, 44 per cent of the publications identified are published in these journals. System , published by Elsevier, has the most cited publications, with 297 citations for seven documents, followed by Computer-Assisted Language Learning, published by Cambridge University Press (160 citations). Both journals are ranked as Q1 journals by the SCIMAGO ranking. It indicates the research works on online language teaching are published in top-ranked journals worldwide; hence, these articles have influenced the subsequent literature.

Table 3. Author-Wise Publications

Element	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	NP	PY_start
Gregersen T	1	1	0.333	225	1	2020
Macintyre Pd	1	1	0.333	225	1	2020
Mercer S	1	1	0.333	225	1	2020
Compton Lkl	1	1	0.071	139	1	2009
Sun Syh	2	2	0.167	93	2	2011
Gacs A	1	1	0.333	84	1	2020
Goertler S	1	1	0.333	84	1	2020
Spasova S	1	1	0.333	84	1	2020
Stickler U	3	3	0.3	48	3	2013
González-Lloret M	1	1	0.333	35	1	2020

The top 10 authors publishing their research on ‘online language teaching’ are listed in Table 3. The findings reveal that Gregersen T, Macintyre PD, Mercer S and Compton LKL are the four authors who have received citations greater than 100. According to the number of publications highest number of articles published by Stickler U with 3 publications.

Table 4. Keyword Analysis

Words	Occurrences
online language teaching	12
covid-19	7
online teaching	7
online language learning	6
online learning	4
videoconferencing	3
adult education	2
chinese language	2
collaborative learning	2
computer-assisted language learning	2
covid-19 pandemic	2
distance education	2
e-learning	2
english as a foreign language	2
higher education	2
interpretative phenomenological analysis	2
language teacher education	2
language teaching	2

netnography	2
online education	2
online language teaching pedagogy	2
online learning community	2
perception	2
professional development	2
reflection	2

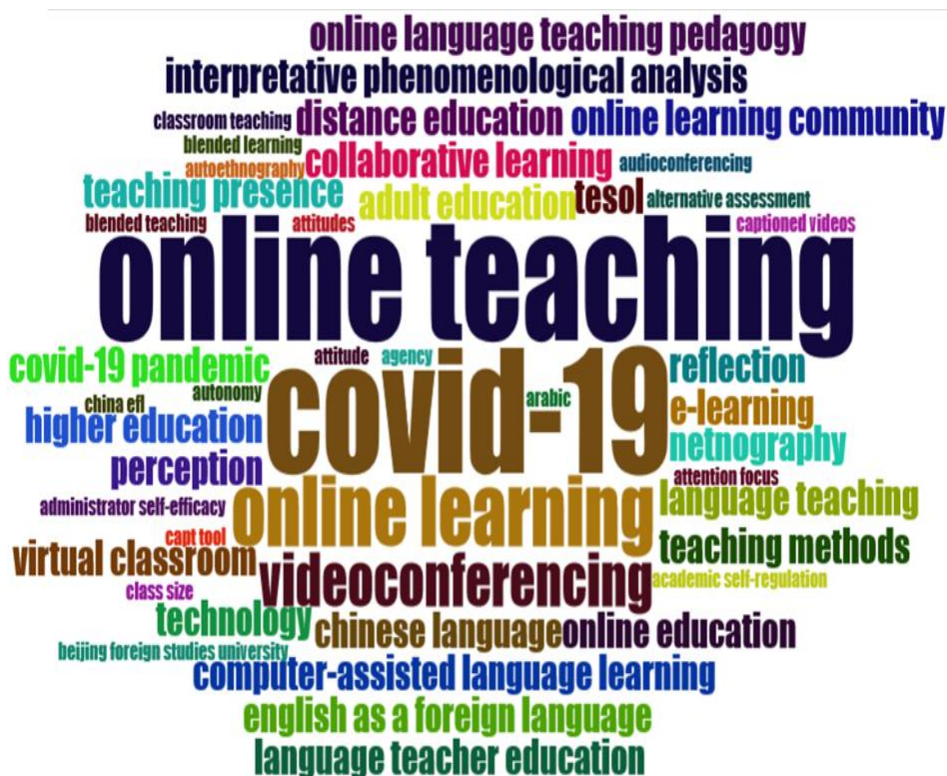


Figure 2. Word Cloud

Table 4 and Figure 2 present the keyword analysis using a frequency table and word cloud. Keyword analysis brings to light the antecedents of online language teaching. It indicates that online language teaching studies consider the COVID-19 situation, online language learning and video conferencing. In addition, collaborative learning, English as a second language, computer-assisted language training, collaborative learning, distance education and online learning community are highlighted keywords in the word cloud. Chinese language is also highlighted because of the fourth-highest number of articles published in the Chinese context and which are used as keywords.

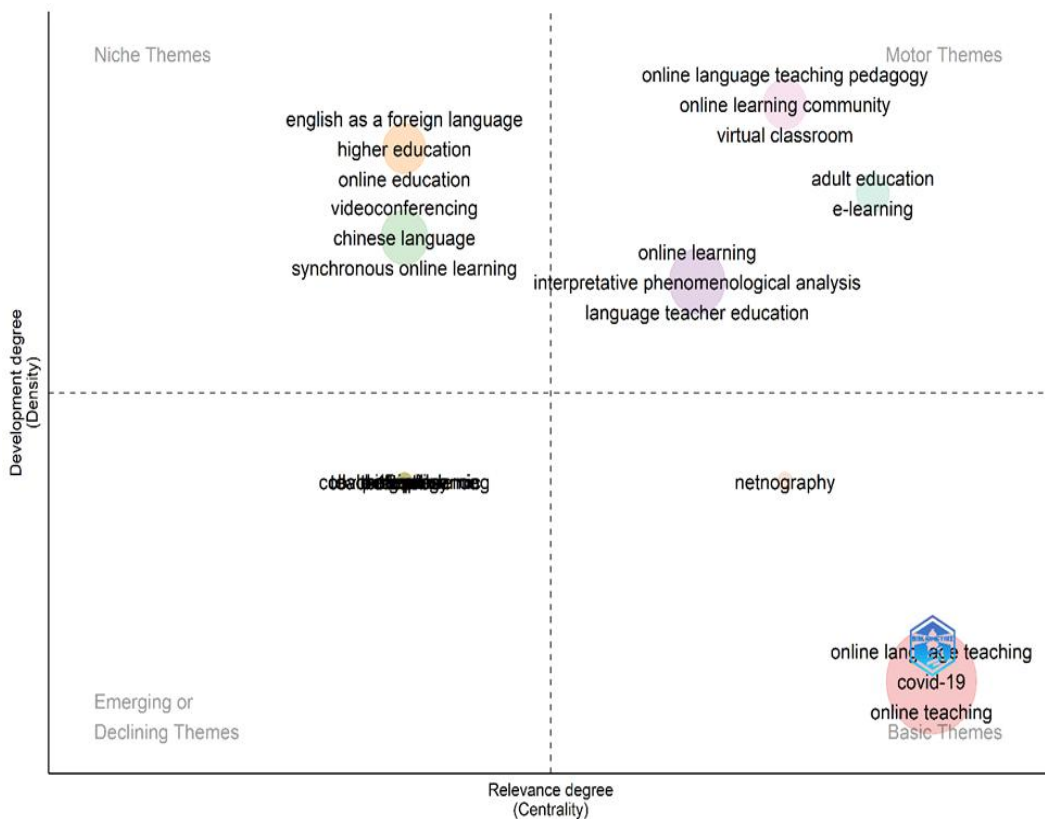


Figure 3. Thematic Map

Figure 3 exhibits the thematic map related to online language teaching. It provides a pictorial presentation of the trending themes in this area of research. Bottom-right part of the map shows the basic themes representing the well-established research issues in this area. The themes including netnography, online language teaching, COVID-19 and online teaching are considered as basic themes.

The themes gaining importance in the recent past are presented in the top-right part of the map. It mainly includes three research issues: online language teaching pedagogy, online learning community, virtual classroom, adult education, e-learning, online learning, interpretative phenomenological analysis and language teacher education. The top-left part shows the niche themes. This includes English as a foreign language, higher education, online education, video conferencing, Chinese language and synchronous online learning which future research needs to be further explored. Finally, “COVID-19” and “online learning” is classified as emerging theme/declining theme. It is mainly because most of the studies discussed these, and it is required to investigate these themes with different variants not the same as these keywords.

3.1. Analysis of most cited articles

In the field of education, teaching is the deliberate sharing of knowledge and experience, which is typically organized within a discipline and, more broadly, the act of another person stimulating a person's intellectual and psychological development. Teaching often listed as one of the most stressful professions in the view of MacIntyre, et al., in 2020. Yang (2014) states that the alternations can happens in teaching dynamics when a blended approach is adopted begins to change the role of the teacher. Yang (2014) further states that added to that, in on-site instruction, the teacher always controls the class. With the past experiences in the on-site teacher-centered courses, the language teacher starts to guide students towards having an active interaction with others or, in other words, blended teaching seems to necessitate learner- centered instruction and to focus on all language skills including writing and reading (Al-Obaydi et al., 2023).

According to MacIntyre et al., (2020) being a language teacher triggers its own unique challenges. Stickler & Shi (2013) mention that most western learners consider Chinese to be a difficult language to learn, but more and more people are learning it, and teaching is increasingly being delivered online. The view of Adnan in 2018 is that the professional development is critical for instructors who are adopting new roles and competencies in online teaching

environments. Yang (2014) mentions that through the online instruction, not only did the teacher have the opportunity to get involved in his students' learning process, but the students also made great progress by giving feedback and making comments to their peers. Yang (2014) further mentions that in addition to that, teachers could monitor students' learning progress through the log file in the online system. So with that, the teachers could constantly revise their curriculum design in order to meet the needs of students. Sun (2011) points out that the learner participation and interaction are crucial to successful language learning whether it is a face-to-face, blended, or fully online.

Sun (2014) states that many studies in the distance education literature do not make the distinction between blended and fully online learning and teaching. Sun (2014) states that there is even less appreciation of the fact that there exists yet another set of difficulties and challenges in fully online learning and teaching. According to Campton (2009) with advancements in communication technology, there has been an increase in demand for online language teaching. And that involves connections among learners, both synchronously and asynchronously, as well as an autonomous learning state. The transition from traditional face-to-face (F2F) to online methods and the adoption of them is somewhat unusual and novel and requires the adoption of new technologies and pedagogies is the view of Adnan in 2018. MacIntyre et al., (2020) point out that the online work-related activity disrupts the psychological boundaries that exist between school and home state. González-Lloret (2020) mention a community atmosphere and personal connections have to be carefully crafted in online environments, where common physical experiences, body language, gestures, and often even facial expressions are missing. Campton (2009) and Pikhart & Al-Obaydi (2023) point out that online language teachers need to acquire skills beyond technological competence in order to teach effectively in this online environment. Some skills are easy to learn, such as software-specific skills and technical skills, while other skills, such as community building and facilitating online socializing, can be more challenging. The author reflects on the pedagogical challenges and resultant changes made while teaching two fully online foreign language papers over a 4-year period is the view of Sun in 2011. Apart from that, online learners must have various perceptions, attitudes, and preferences toward certain settings, designs, or methods the author further states

This view of Gacs et al., (2020) is across the globe, most universities and many school systems have switched to a remote delivery format to ensure the safety of the community in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic noted. With the advent of COVID-19, the sources of teacher stress have multiplied. Teachers around the globe were suddenly forced to teach online, and learners were forced to learn online (Anggawirya et al., 2021; Sukmawaty et al., 2022; Yaumi et al., 2023). The workloads have been complicated by the rapid conversion to online delivery, for which many language teachers had not been prepared, as well as balancing personal and professional roles, which is a challenge for many teachers. Also, this crisis-prompted shift to remote language teaching is not comparable to carefully planned and well-designed online language teaching (MacIntyre, et al., 2020; Gacs, et al., 2020). Switching from face-to-face to online teaching necessitates new roles and competencies for instructors, regardless of discipline. According to Adnan (2017), well-planned, high-quality professional development is essential for improved and sustained quality in online learning and teaching, provided that it meets the academic and requirement instructions of online instructors. All teachers and students need to be instructed on how to use the Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) system to enhance the social interaction between the teacher and students and among students for improvement (Yang, 2014). (Campton, 2009), Online language tutors should learn strategies that facilitate online socialization and promote interaction at the same time so that they can develop learners' communicative competence. Knowledge of assessments, language theories, and task evaluations is not only important; it is also important for an online context in any language course. To promote social cohesion, meaningful communicative interaction skills are essential. Technology literacy, access, and infrastructure may have a significant impact, especially when lessons from early 2020 are considered. However, online language learning and teaching is dynamic and undergoes constant changes, just like technologies do. It is crucial that online teachers constantly review and reflect on their practice and remain committed to change. In times of pandemic, war, crisis, natural disaster, or extreme weather, however, online education may be the only option for continuing education (Sun, 2011;González-Lloret, 2020).

The traditional teacher-centered pedagogy has proven to be out dated and incompatible with online learners. Online teachers must adopt new approaches with learners at heart and should play many roles in online teaching environment (Tawafak, Al-Obaydi & Pikhart, 2023). The changing learner profile and the changed learner behaviors in online learning, and their far-reaching impacts on the way we traditionally teach, This will not only shed more light on distance learning but also help move this body of knowledge forward to include fully online learning (Sun, 2011; Sun, 2014). Most notably, by removing temporal and geographical obstacles, online education can reach a broader audience than face-to-face courses (González-Lloret, 2020).

4. Conclusion

In the rapidly evolving landscape of online language teaching, this bibliometric analysis spanning the years 2006 to 2022 sheds light on key trends and influential contributors. The surge in publications in recent years, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, underscores the field's increasing significance. Notably, authors such as Gregersen T, Macintyre PD, Mercer S, and Compton LKL have emerged as influential figures in this domain, while journals like "System" and "Computer-Assisted Language Learning" have played pivotal roles in shaping the discourse.

An empirical research gap was identified from the bibliometric analysis of online language teaching. Based on the analysis of the most cited articles research gap is identified. The identified research gap is that there is no empirical evidence of virtues, teacher commitment, learner commitment, and language ability in virtual classrooms in Universities in Sri Lanka, perhaps in universities worldwide. As the educational landscape continues to be reshaped by technology and global events, this analysis provides a valuable compass for navigating the evolving terrain of online language teaching.

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