

# A Scoping Review of Scopus-Indexed Free- and Open-Access English Teaching and Learning Publications in the COVID-19 Era

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## ABSTRACT

This scoping review explores the trend of technology use in the teaching and learning of English during the Covid-19 pandemic. The materials included in the systematic scoping review were Scopus-indexed research-based articles published in 2021 and 2022 exploring and/or examining technology utilized for the teaching and learning of English during the Covid-19 pandemic. The criteria of inclusion applied were (1) Scopus-indexed articles; (2) Research-based publication; (3) published in 2021 and 2022; (4) free- and/or open-access article; and (5) focus on the utilization of technology in TEFL during Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, this scoping review also reveals the methodological trend applied by publications in the mentioned years of publication. The result shows that the most popularly utilized technology in TEFL during COVID-19 pandemic are respectively video-conferencing applications, website and learning management systems (LMS), instant messaging application, social media, and video-sharing platform. In terms of the focus of studies, affective aspect and cognitive aspect become the mostly researched topics. Furthermore, studies on the utilization of technology in TEFL during Covid-19 pandemic are dominated by respectively quantitative studies, qualitative studies, and mixed method. Worldwide practice of teaching English through technology during Covid-19 pandemic is expected to inspire educational practitioners, further researchers, and instructional learning designers and developers about the potential of technologies to be adopted, adapted, and developed for teaching and learning purposes in post-Covid-19 pandemic.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In December 2019, COVID-19, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 or also known as SARS-CoV-2 (Ciotti et al., 2020), was detected and reported as a dangerous disease by WHO (Gössling et al., 2021). By WHO, Covid-19 was declared as a highly transmittable and pathogenic viral infection causing global pandemic (Shereen et al., 2020). The effects of Covid-19 is found not only dangerous for human's physical health rapidly transmitted by inhalation with

infected droplets (Singhal, 2020). A point that makes Covid-19 even more dangerous is that it also negatively affects mental and psychological health (Liddell et al., 2021; S. X. Zhang et al., 2022). In a publication outlining Covid-19 as one of its research variables, it is found that the psychological consequences of stressors related to COVID-19 encompass a broad spectrum of symptoms and are more intense compared to those arising from other sources of stress (Olf et al., 2021). Not only restricted to its effects on human physical and mental health, Covid-19 also affects various spheres of life including economy, industries, global market, agriculture, human health, and health care (Kumar & Nayar, 2021), including the domain of education, more specifically the domain the teaching and learning of English – provable through the significant amount of studies and publications outlining Covid-19 and English education as research variables (Kundra et al., 2023; Kupolati et al., 2021; Mirhosseini, 2022; Ockey, 2021; Ockey et al., 2021). In scenario where face to face meeting is not allowed for any reason, moving to virtual delivery mode became the only way to continue the practice of education (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020).

It seems reasonable that educational domain was moved into the virtual mode of delivery. In addition to virtual platforms being the only one option left due to the prohibition of in-person meetings in any form and for any reason, the reliability of virtual modes has also been scientifically tested in delivering effective learning processes. Long before the Covid-19 pandemic, numerous studies had explored and examined the reliability of virtual learning mode of delivery and the general findings mainly point towards positive conclusion.

Although Covid-19 has been stated as epidemic and under control in 2022, it still becomes interesting to study how education was executed during Covid-19 pandemic for at least one reason – Covid-19 pandemic brought sudden change to education and forced all institutions to be ready for something which may never have been practiced before. In addition, what has been practiced in education during Covid-19 pandemic can be treated as learning point that predicts the future of online distance learning in post-Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, studying how education dealt with pedagogical methods, strategies, and approaches that had not been scientifically validated due to rapid change caused by Covid-19 pandemic becomes an interesting issue to be explored.

To learn how educational practice was run during Covid-19 pandemic, research-based articles can be a reliable resource. This study systematically reviews free and open access Scopus-indexed research-based articles published in 2021 and 2022. Free and open access Scopus-indexed is chosen because it is considered as the best representation of good quality indexer which receives and publishes only good quality articles. Furthermore, articles published in 2021 and 2022 are applied as parameter because Covid-19 pandemic took its peak during the mentioned period of time.

This scoping review aims at systematically and scientifically explore and analyze the Scopus-indexed free- and open-access publications in the field of English teaching and learning published within the COVID-19 era. By synthesizing existing literature, this review seeks to provide insights into the diverse strategies, methodologies, and technologies employed to address the unique challenges posed by the pandemic under the domain of English education. Through a comprehensive examination of relevant publications, this study seeks to identify emerging trends, gaps in knowledge, and areas for future research, ultimately contributing to the ongoing discourse on effective pedagogical approaches in the context of global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **2. METHOD**

This study applied systematic scoping review which technically refers to an approach to reviewing literature by synthesizing studies applying different types of research designs (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Furthermore, the term so called systematic emphasizes that this study opens opportunity to address of the state of knowledge in a field, from which future research priorities can

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be identified (Page et al., 2021). In addition, scoping review was chosen as the mode of review due to materials explored and examined were broad and general in nature.

Scoping review has been applied by many researchers around the world. Some examples are study reviewing the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on maternal and perinatal health (Kotlar et al., 2021), the investigation of information on social media during Covid-19 pandemic (Tsao et al., 2021), the investigation of lockdown effect on dietary habits (Bennett et al., 2021), and the investigation of Covid-19 infection during pregnancy and childbirth (Elshafeey et al., 2020). The most widely used steps in applying scoping are (1) identification of research questions; (2) identification of relevant studies; (3) selection of study; (4) data charting; and (5) summarization of results. Various methodological approaches applied in scoping review are (Davis et al., 2009):

**Table 1.** Methodological Approach in Scoping Review

No.	Methodological Approach in Scoping
1.	Review and analysis of the literature. Literature review Literature review plus stakeholder/key informant type consultancy Literature review, policy and related documentary analysis plus stakeholder/key informant type consultancy
2.	Combination of one or more dimensions from Category 1 plus other qualitative research elements.
3.	Primary research elements presented as scoping Questionnaire surveys. Literature review and questionnaire survey Questionnaire survey, interviews and focus groups Workshop focus groups, questionnaires and pilot evaluation of training Focus groups, interviews and secondary data review

In this study, the total of 34 articles Scopus-indexed publications published in 2021 and 2022 were systematically scoping-reviewed. An online service so called Publish or Perish was applied to generate articles for review. The keywords written in the Publish or Perish were “English Teaching Covid” (n=34) and “English Learning Covid” (n=38). In selecting articles included in this scoping review, the following criteria were applied.

**Table 2.** Criteria of Inclusion

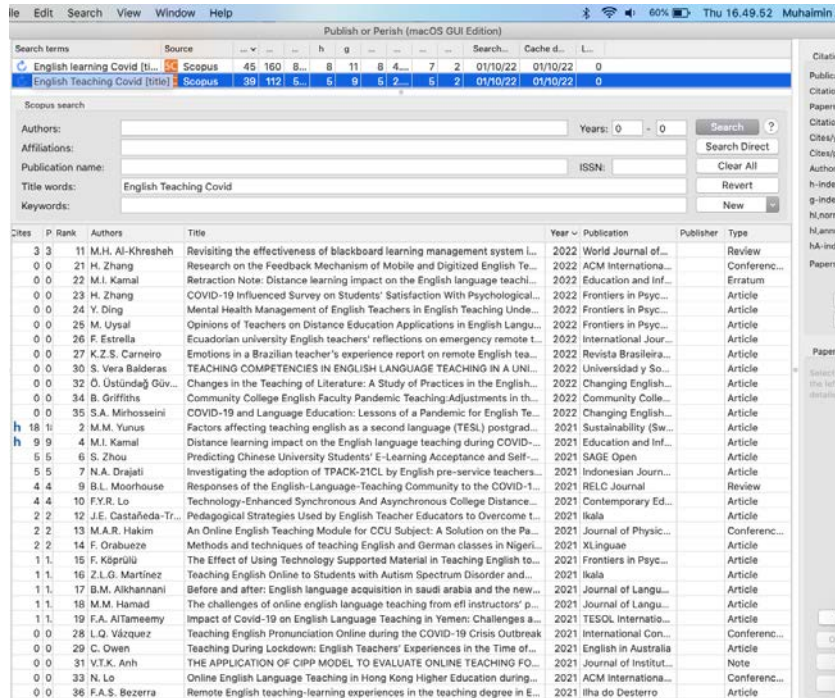
No.	Criteria	Reason
1.	Scopus-indexed articles	To ensure the quality of content and language of publication.
2.	Research-based articles	To be specific only on findings generated through research-based articles.
3.	Free access	To ensure that the articles included are cross-checkable.
4.	Focus on technology in teaching and learning of English during Covid-19 pandemic	To know what recently-published publications explore and examine technology in TEFL during Covid-19.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the previously mentioned criteria as presented in Table 2, Publish or Perish recommended the total of 72 publications. The total of 72 documents were generated from two parameters, first using keyword “English Teaching Covid” and second using keyword “English Learning Covid”.

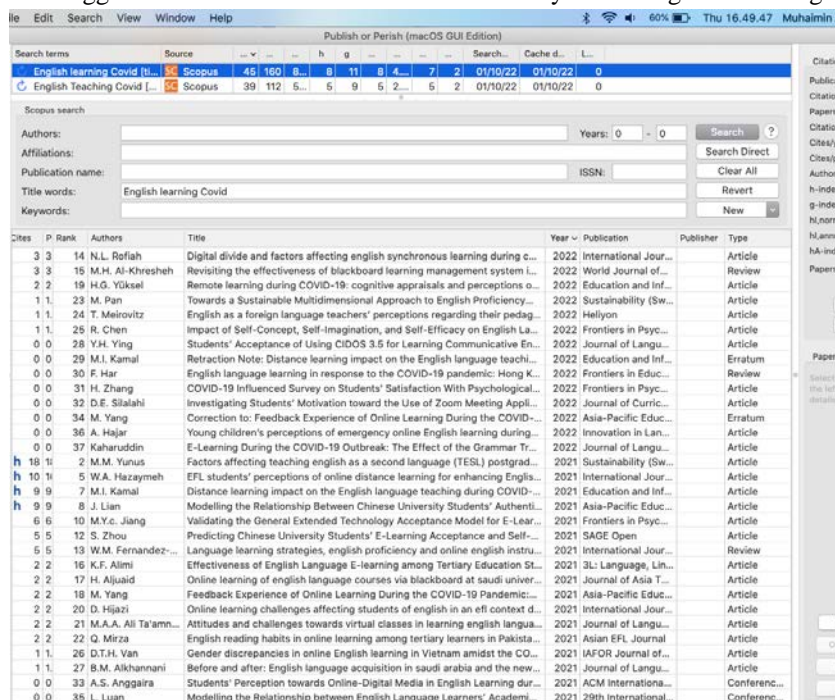
The first parameter was “English Teaching Covid”. The result showed the total of 34 publications – 24 research-based articles 6 conference articles, 2 reviews, 1 note, 1 erratum. Figure 1 illustrates the scientifically-generated documents suggested in Publish or Perish.

Figure 1. The Suggested Documents Based on Keyword “English Teaching Covid”



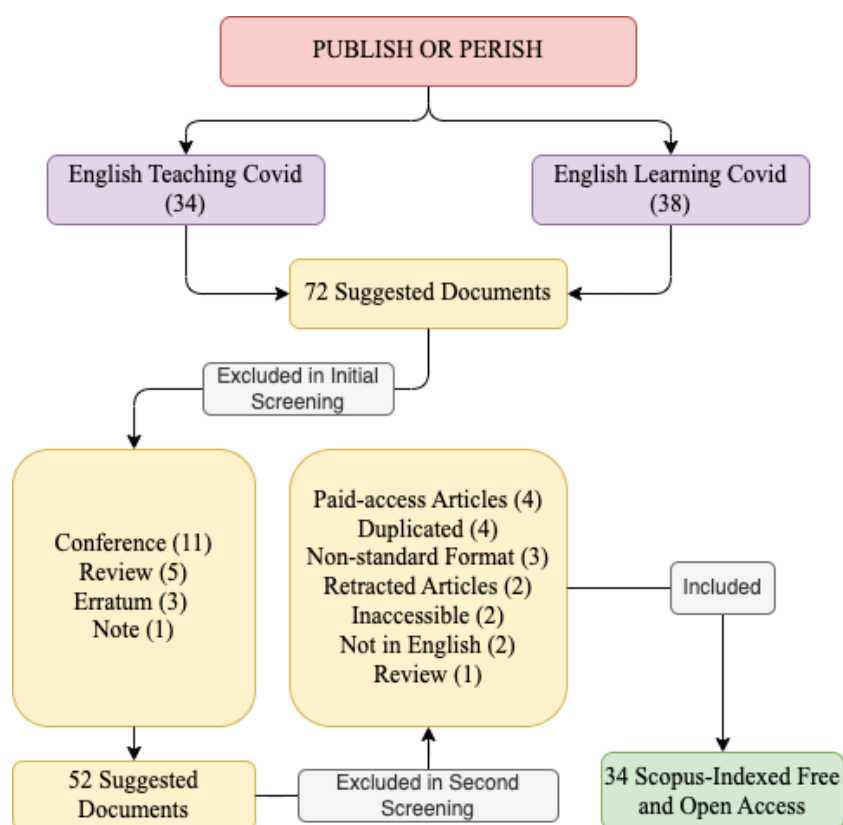
The second parameter was “English Learning Covid”. The results showed the total of 38 scientifically-published documents – 28 research-based articles, 5 conference articles, 3 review articles and 2 erratum articles. The following table illustrates the articles included in this study.

Figure 2. Suggested Documents Generated Based on Keyword “English Learning Covid”



In the initial screening of this scoping review, 34 articles were included and 38 articles were excluded. The excluded articles were 11 conference articles, 5 review articles, 3 erratum articles, and 1 note article were excluded ( $n = 20$ ). The rest of the publications (52 articles) were research-based articles and those were screened again to filter articles met the criteria of inclusion.

**Figure 3.** Inclusion and Exclusion of Articles



In the second screening, 17 research-based articles were excluded for various reasons. These included 4 paid articles, 4 duplicated articles, 3 articles with non-standard IMRD format, 2 retracted articles, 2 inaccessible articles, and 2 non-English articles. The screening yielded a total of 34 research-based articles.

This study finds that technology applied during Covid-19 pandemic in English teaching and learning as appeared in open access Scopus-indexed research-based articles published in 2021 and 2022 are dominantly approached through quantitative lens with the frequency of 18 (52.94%) studies, 10 (29.41%) qualitative-based studies, and 6 (17.65%) mixed method studies.

Furthermore, this study finds that the most widely researched theme is users experience which in this study is termed as affective aspect. Studies reviewed covering users' experience are conducted by the total of 22 studies including (Alanya-Beltran & Panduro-Ramirez, 2021; Alimi et al., 2021; Bezliudna et al., 2021; Castañeda-Trujillo & Jaime Osorio, 2021; Chen et al., 2022; Estrella, 2022; Hamad et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2021; Lian et al., 2021; Md Yunus et al., 2021; Meirovitz et al., 2022; Mirza, 2021; Orabueze et al., 2021; Rofiah et al., 2022; Ta'amneh, 2021; Uysal & Çağanağa, 2022; Van & Thi, 2021; M. Yang et al., 2021; Ying et al., 2022; Yüksel, 2022; H. Zhang & Li, 2022; Zhou et al., 2021). The trend is followed by studies focused on cognitive aspect which covers learning enhancement and achievement. Almost all research-based articles included in this scoping review agree that the application of technology in the teaching and learning of English

during Covid-19 pandemic is beneficial for both educators and students. Some of the conclusions are participants improves their English learning achievement and self-regulation skills on English through the application of multiple stimuli and approaches (Giraldo Martinez & Ramos Carvajal, 2021), students enhance their English achievement score (Lymar & Storozhuk, 2021), and students improve their English competence through video-conferencing application (Kaharuddin, 2022).

Although the utilization of technology is beneficial in terms of pedagogy, some studies report some problems and/or potential problems of online distance learning. Some of these are insufficient training on the use of technology applied for teaching, internet shortage and lack of hardware (Carneiro & Lima, 2022; Uysal & Çağanağa, 2022), anxiety in executing online learning (Estrella, 2022), limited teachers' support (Rofiah et al., 2022), poor internet connection, server stability, and device technical specification (AlTameemy & Alrefaee, 2021), instructors' less-familiarity with technology (Hijazi & AlNatour, 2021), students' cheating (Hamad et al., 2021), and cost in performing online distance learning (Van & Thi, 2021).

Some other articles examine supporting teaching instruments including study exploring the implementation of online English proficiency test (Pan & Tao, 2022), the application of bipartite graph convolutional network (BGCN) to measure teachers' mental health (Ding & Wang, 2022), and the adoption of TPACK-21CL in teaching (Drajati et al., 2021).

**Figure 4.** English as Foreign Language Teaching and Learning during Covid-19 Pandemic as Informed in Free and Open Access Scopus-based Articles

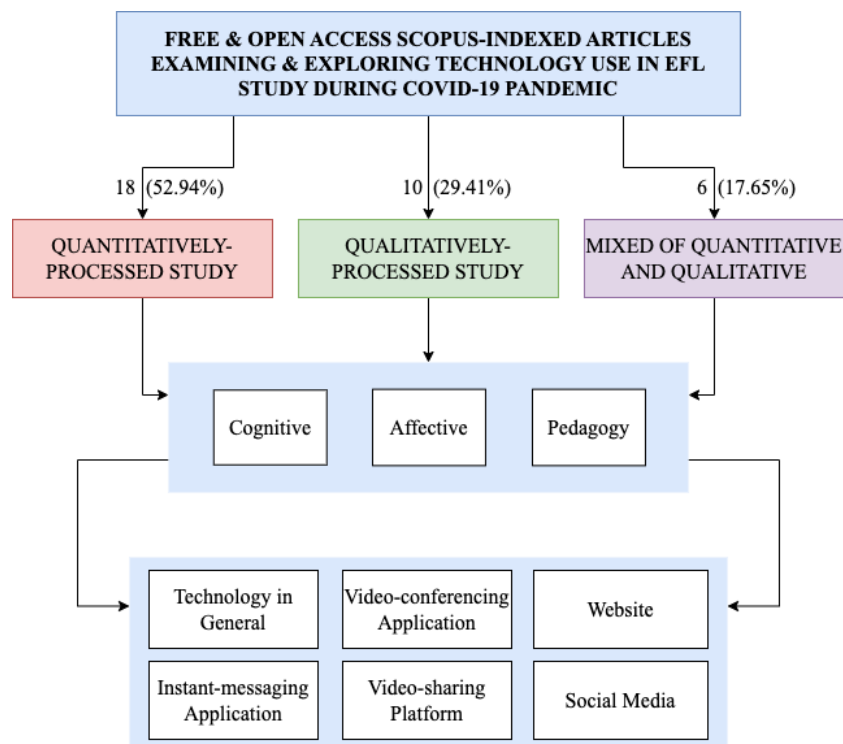


Figure 4 above illustrates the focuses of research studies on the utilization of technology in TEFL as published in 2021 and 2022 free-accessed Scopus-based articles. From the visual, it can be concluded that the free and open access Scopus-indexed research-based articles published in 2021 and 2022 fall into 3 major categories – affective aspect including perception, reflection and experience of the utilization of technology in the teaching and learning of English; cognitive aspect

which mainly covers learning achievement as the result of learning treatment; and pedagogy which covers how teaching and learning are conducted during Covid-19 pandemic.

With regard to technology explored and/or examined, most of studies included in this scoping review do not specifically refer to particular technology instead of mentioning technology in general with the frequency of 18 (52.94%) articles. Furthermore, 3 (8.82%) articles apply learning management system; and 2 (5.89%) article applies website. The rest of articles (11 (32.35%)) report the utilization of multiple platforms including video-conferencing applications, video-sharing platform, instant messaging application, and social media.

It is not surprising that majority of studies exploring and examining the application of technology in the teaching and learning of English during Covid-19 pandemic fall into positive conclusion since internet technology has been popularly applied prior to Covid-19 pandemic. The fact that technologies prior to Covid-19 pandemic has become less expensive and various forms of multimedia have been increasingly accessible makes online learning environments becomes the preferred mode of delivery for teaching and learning purposes (Z. Zhang & Kenny, 2010). During Covid-19 pandemic, the ability of online distance learning to prevent crowds becomes the top reason of why technology is preferred in teaching and learning during Covid-19 pandemic (H. Zhang & Li, 2022).

Based on the findings of this scoping review, it can be inferred that the trend of studies on the teaching and learning of English during Covid-19 pandemic do not exclusively focus on what is applied but on how it affects teaching and learning. It proves that the essence of the utilization of technology in teaching and learning is to help institution, educators, and students to reach the objective of course which does not guarantee the successfulness of teaching and learning. In other words, technology in education should be merely treated as medium which eases the teaching and learning process that never replaces educators' role in classroom (Abdullah, 2018).

In this scoping review, the total of 11 articles applying the combination of video-conferencing application, instant-messaging application, video-sharing platform, and social media as media of delivery during the restriction of physical meeting confirm the potential of those media of delivery for the teaching and learning of English. The potential of those media to help both educators in teaching and students in learning are also confirmed by significant number of Scopus-indexed articles. The potential of video-conferencing application in learning English has also been confirmed for language exchange purposes (Arellano-Soto & Parks, 2021) and for the learning of translation (Ro, 2022), the potential of video-sharing platform (Albahiri & Alhaj, 2020; Elangovan et al., 2021; Simbolon & Febrianti, 2020), instant messaging application (Y.-T. C. Yang et al., 2012), social media (Rezaul Karim et al., 2022). Some number of articles also apply website and learning management system (Abdullah, 2018; Alizadeh, 2019; Yanto, 2020).

As the 2021 and 2022 free and open access Scopus-indexed research-based articles reviewed in this manuscript reported the capability of technology in handling the teaching and learning of English in distance, it is predicted that such technology mentioned in this study will still be adopted and/or adapted in post-pandemic (Murphy, 2020). However, some researchers warn the need for comprehensive view of the pedagogy of online education that integrates technology to support teaching and learning (Carrillo & Flores, 2020).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The comprehensive examination of free and open access Scopus-indexed research-based articles published between 2021 and 2022 underscores a pervasive emphasis on the utilization of technology within the teaching and learning of English. The articles reviewed in this scoping review employ a variety of methodological approaches, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed

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methods, reflecting the multifaceted nature of research in this domain. Notably, the exploration of technology in TEFL extends across multiple dimensions, with affective, cognitive, and pedagogical aspects emerging as focal points of inquiry. Within the affective dimension, studies delve into learners' perceptions and experiences regarding the integration of technology into language learning environments. Cognitive inquiries mainly center the focus on the effectiveness of technology in enhancing learning outcomes and academic achievement. Additionally, the pedagogical dimension encompasses investigations into various teaching and learning techniques, methods, strategies, and approaches facilitated by technological tools and resources.

The analysis reveals a discernible trend towards the broad application of technology in English language education beyond the confines of TEFL-specific contexts. Many scoping-reviewed articles extend their purview to encompass the broader landscape of technology-enhanced language learning, encompassing diverse platforms and digital resources. Notably, a significant subset of articles focuses on the utilization of websites and learning management systems (LMS) as integral components of language instruction and curriculum delivery. Moreover, the exploration of technology-mediated language learning extends to encompass a diverse array of digital platforms, including video-conferencing applications, video-sharing platforms, instant messaging apps, and social media networks. These platforms serve as conduits for innovative pedagogical practices that facilitate interactive communication, collaborative learning experiences and cultural exchange among language learners and educators.

This study acknowledges some limitations. The most obvious limitation is on the source of articles explored and examined which is only from Scopus. In fact, there are other popular article's indexers such as Web of Science, SINTA, etc. In addition, the year of publication set as the criteria of this systematic review study, which is restricted to only those published in 2022, is also considered as limitation of this study for the fact that Covid-19 was around the globe since 2019. Another limitation may come from the keywords applied in finding the articles.

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