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5 REN: PERSPECTIVES AND TRAJECTORIES OF THE LANGUAGE TEACHER IN THE 21ST CENTURY (TPLANG21)

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5.1 Recent events and publications.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has forced many language teachers across the world to conduct their face-to-face teaching in online spaces. In these times, the research of the TPLang21 Research Network (ReN), which explores the beliefs and underlying ideals which inform the training and self-training of language teachers and seeks to ascertain trajectories of professional development, provides valuable insights into the background against which these changes have happened.

In a first step the ReN investigated to what extent Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have affected notions of the “ideal” language teacher, perceptions of language training needs and actual models of language teacher training. This study, which received 285 responses from language educators, showed that although language teachers seem to be at least partly satisfied with the training received, some aspects of teacher training, such as hands-on practice, do not meet their demands (Karamifar et al., 2018). Participants also affirmed the relationship between technology and excellence in language teaching but rarely included the use of technology in their definition of the ‘ideal’ language teacher (Karamifar et al., 2019).

Building on this research, TPLang21 is currently preparing a new study which seeks to explore language teachers' views regarding (their) language teaching in the future. The ReN originally planned to launch the study in spring 2020 but decided to postpone the launch to September 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, TPLang21 has invested considerable time and effort in preparing a symposium with internationally renowned experts and innovative methods for the AILA conference. The convenors will now seek to retain and strengthen the network ties to ensure that the symposium will take place as planned at the AILA2021 conference.

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Karamifar, B., Germain-Rutherford, A., Heiser, S., Emke, M., Hopkins, J., Ernest, P., Stickler, U., & Hampel, R. (2019). Language teachers and their trajectories across technology-enhanced language teaching: Needs and beliefs of ESL/EFL teachers. *TESL Canada Journal*, 36(3), 55– 81.

5.2 Reflections on research practice change inspired by COVID

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the convenors of TPLang21 have designed and facilitated three webinars for language teachers to support them in their transitioning towards online teaching. The webinars were offered in English, French and German and were facilitated in collaboration with the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML). About 2,800 language teachers participated in the three webinars, and the recordings have received over 15,000 views by the end of May. The webinars are available on YouTube on the following links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Lt1gqzMBv0&feature=youtu.be> (English).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrM13-eqonE&feature=youtu.be> (French).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCDi4Uh9MFE&feature=youtu.be> (German).

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