English Learning Experience During Covid-19

Zara Nathalia Montero Suárez
Magister in English Dydactics
Universidad de Caldas
zara.11719236730@ucaldas.edu.co

Margarita María López Pinzón
Magister in English Dydactics
Universidad de Caldas
 margarita.lopez@ucaldas.edu.co

Students' English Learning Experience during Covid-19 in Public High Schools in Manizales

Resumen   Este artículo reporta un estudio sobre la experiencia de aprendizaje del inglés de estudiantes de colegios públicos durante la pandemia de Covid-19 en Manizales. La investigación tuvo como objetivo explorar las percepciones, emociones y prácticas de 2391 estudiantes utilizando el Método de Investigación por Encuesta que arrojó resultados cuantitativos y cualitativos. Para la obtención de los datos se utilizaron encuestas que incluían preguntas cerradas y abiertas. Los resultados revelaron las percepciones de los estudiantes acerca de las adaptaciones en las clases, las prácticas en el entorno remoto y el impacto de los factores afectivos que influyeron en su experiencia. En conclusión, la clase de inglés remota fue un gran desafío tanto para los profesores como para los estudiantes; sin embargo, se presentó la oportunidad de aprovechar la tecnología para expandir el proceso de enseñanza dentro de una clase presencial y fomentar la implementación activa de la tecnología como base de las prácticas actuales de enseñanza de idiomas.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje del Idioma Inglés Durante el Covid-19, Aprendizaje Remoto de Emergencia, Experiencia del Aprendizaje Remoto del Idioma Inglés.

Abstract   This paper reports a study on the experience of public high school students' English learning during the Covid-19 pandemic in Manizales. The research aimed to explore the perceptions, feelings, and practices of 2391 students using a Survey Research Method that provided quantitative and qualitative results. Surveys that included closed and open-ended questions were used to obtain the data. Results revealed the students' perceptions of the class adaptations, practices in the remote setting, and the impact of the affective factors that were involved during their experience. In conclusion, the remote English class was a big challenge for teachers and students; however, it released the opportunity to take advantage of technology to expand the teaching process within an on-site class and forward thinking on the active implementation of technology as the foundation of current language teaching practices.

Keywords: Emergency Remote Learning, English Language Learning During Covid-19, Remote English Language Learning Experience.

1. Introduction

At the end of 2019, Wuhan, a city in China, reported the first cases of Covid-19; months later, this virus caused a global outbreak that triggered an unexpected crisis in all areas. Education was indeed affected dramatically by this circumstance. Many countries around the world had to search for alternatives to cope with the measures and transition to a modality that teachers and students did not plan to adopt (Gillis & Krull, 2020). In Colombia, principals and teachers arranged the design and implementation of pedagogical strategies to work from home by employing guides, worksheets, and digital resources (MEN, 2020). The objective was for every student to continue learning, but schools in Colombia were not ready to assume this change as many of them did not have access to a device to join classes. In the English teaching and learning practices, methodologies and strategies' adaptations occurred, but the teachers' inexperience and unpreparedness facing this transition brought contransting experiences from their pupils.

Therefore, this article aims to report the overall experience of learning English under a remote modality, identify the advantages of this way of learning, and determine the impact Covid-19 had in the English learners. Moreover, to report information that included perceptions and emotions, a Survey Research methodology (Cozby, 2008) was used to present information that expands the literature on this subject matter. The findings revealed that the Covid-19 pandemic affected English Language Teaching (ELT) and learning regarding time, language use, methodology, materials, skills, and assessment procedures. Besides, affective factors influenced the students' perceptions and feelings. However, there were positive insights from the experience that will contribute for forward-thinking in the English practices. For instance, blended methodologies using technology and the development of digital skills gave rise to the students' online active learning. Hence, the strategies and resources that worked during Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) represent current practices that should continue to be implemented in on-site classes.

This article is divided in four parts: First, there is the theoretical framework that supports this study. Then, the methododological process that this inquiry followed. Next, the findings that are reported into three categories: 1) perceptions of the class adaptations, 2) practices in the remote setting, and 3) affective factors in remote learning. Finally, there are the conclusions on the experience of English learning during the pandemic and some reflections on future teaching practices.

2. Theoretical Framework

This section will explore three concepts that were the foundations of the study. 1) Remote learning, 2) Digital competencies, and 3) Affective factors in remote learning during the pandemic.

2.1 Remote Learning

According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, Remote Learning (RL) is "a system of education in which students study at home and communicate with their teachers over the internet". That is to say, online environments become the place for instruction and learning. Consequently, authors like Pavlik (2015) define RL as a schooling alternative where the digital interface represents the context for interaction. The tools consist of platforms, applications, and websites where teachers deliver instruction and share materials and activities. However, this modality seems not to be encouraged in Colombia for regular school classes as a way to deliver complete lessons nor as a complementary teaching strategy before the pandemic. In this sense, authors like Hodges (2020) hold up the concept of "Emergency Remote Teaching" (ERT) to describe the modality used as an alternative way of instruction during circumstances such as the ones lived during the Covid-19 outbreak. In this context, it is possible to say that students experience an Emergency Remote Learning (ERL) modality where their performance and role adapt to build a correlation between the online setting and the class participants to work towards their learning goals without being physically present in the classroom. Therefore, allowing synchronous or asynchronous sessions through varied strategies that serve as the virtual school setting where students could join and find materials, send homework, and get feedback.

On the one hand, synchronous remote learning refers to the simultaneous development of the process through electronic means. As a first perspective, Perveen (2016) suggests that synchronous remote learning is a form of learning that takes place through electronic means in which students and teachers can interact in real-time, making the learning process more social. The second perspective, as discussed by Hsiao (2019), acknowledges the advantages of synchronous remote learning in terms of fostering interaction between teachers and students. However, it also highlights a potential disadvantage, which is the limited time flexibility due to the fixed schedule of the synchronous classes. While the limited time flexibility of synchronous remote learning is a concern in general, it may have additional implications in the Colombian context. This is because in Colombia, many students have limited access to high-quality internet and technology, which can make it difficult for them to participate in synchronous remote classes at the scheduled times. As a result, the inflexibility of synchronous remote learning may disproportionately affect certain students and limit their access to education under an ERT modality.

On the other hand, asynchronous remote learning involves independent work and flexible time, "supporting relationships among participants even when they are not online simultaneously" (Hrastinski, 2008, p.55). Hence, students must become more independent and accountable for their learning achievements as it allows students to access course materials and complete assignments at their own pace, which can be particularly beneficial for students who face time constraints or have other responsibilities. However, in Colombia, asynchronous online learning can present certain challenges. For instance, it may lead to less interaction between students and teachers, as well as among students themselves. This reduced interaction can have negative effects on language learning, as language is a social activity that requires frequent interaction and communication. Additionally, it may over-focus on reading and writing activities, which can limit opportunities for students to practice their listening and speaking skills (Boling, 2012). Therefore, while asynchronous online learning can provide flexibility, it is important to be mindful of these potential challenges and address them through effective instructional design and implementation.

The use of technology in remote learning for English language teaching has been the subject of numerous studies in the field of language education. For example, Warschauer and Matuchniak (2010) argued that technology could support ELT by providing opportunities for students to engage with authentic materials, communicate with native speakers, and collaborate with peers. Therefore, the internet and digital tools have created new possibilities for language learners to connect with teachers and peers in virtual classrooms, regardless of their location. As technology continues to advance and remote learning becomes more prevalent after the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers are increasingly turning to digital tools to deliver high-quality language instruction. In the Colombian context, the use of technology in remote learning for ELT has also become increasingly relevant. Many schools and

language institutes have shifted to online and hybrid models of instruction, relying on digital tools such as video conferencing software, educational apps, and learning management systems to deliver language instruction remotely (Marín-López, Lopera-Castaño, & Jiménez-Osorio, 2021; Ortiz-Rojas, Quintero-Barrera, & Jiménez-Millán, 2021). Nevertheless, incorporating technology into language education comes with its own set of difficulties, particularly in ensuring equitable access to technology and digital resources (Gómez-Montero & López-Gil, 2021). Moreover, effective implementation of technology in language learning requires careful consideration of pedagogical approaches and teacher training to ensure that technology is used to its fullest potential (Ballesteros-Romero & García-Peñalvo, 2019).

2.2 Digital Competencies

Authors such as Ferrari (2012) believe that students should develop a set of skills to perform in a remote environment while making use of technology. They include information management, collaboration, communication and sharing, creation of content and knowledge, ethics and responsibility, problem-solving and technical operations. These abilities would enable students to face situations such as the shift to an ERL. Similarly, the International Society for Technology in Education, ISTE (2016), set up seven standards that help learners perform in an advanced world where technology management is necessary to accomplish learning objectives (See table 1).

Table 1.
Standards for learners to perform in an advanced world (ISTE, 2016).

Standard	Description
1. Empowered learner	Adopts an active role and shows competency in managing technologies to achieve learning goals. Improves and builds connections through feedback.
2. Digital citizen	Recognizes the responsibilities and rights when entering the digital world respecting legal features.
3. Knowledge constructor	Takes part in daily situations using research methods to build new knowledge.
4. Innovative designer	Are creative and critical when designing new solutions to daily-life problems using technologies.
5. Computational thinker	Makes advantageous use of the technology to solve a problem by comprehending complex systems and automation.
6. Creative communicator	Uses experience as a base to produce new content when combining digital tools for different audiences.
7. Global collaborator	Works cooperatively with technology to identify global issues and develop possible solutions by communicating with people around the world.

As a result, Table 1 provides a valuable framework for incorporating technology into ELT in Colombia. These standards emphasize the development of digital literacy skills, such as the ability to navigate digital resources, create digital media, and communicate effectively using digital tools. The implementation of these standards can help English language learners to become proficient in both the language and the technology that is necessary for success in a globalized world.

2.3 Affective Factors in English Learning during the Pandemic

In the "Affective Filter Hypothesis" Krashen (1982) highlighted some factors that function as a filter that prevents learners from absorbing the available input when learning a foreign language, including motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. Gardner (1985) suggests that the effort and work put in by a learner are essential components for achieving their language learning goals and feeling satisfied with their progress. This motivation is not solely dependent on external factors, such as teacher expectations or grades, but also on the individual's personal goals and desires to learn a language. Moreover, Dornyei (2005) affirms that "lack of confidence is a sensitive area in school learning as they are in the developmental age and doubts and worries about themselves are more common feelings than confidence or pride" (p. 87). Conversely, according to Ni (2012), high self-confidence is reflected in a person who takes risks to gain knowledge and learn, increasing their willingness to try new things to succeed. Consequently, in the context of RL, lack of motivations and confidence can be even more pronounced due to the distance and the lack of face-to-face interaction with teachers and peers. Finally, regarding anxiety, Bao & Liu (2021) explain that it "is inversely proportional to language acquisition: the less anxious, the more acquisition, or the more anxious, the less acquisition" (p. 466). That is to say, learners who feel calm and comfortable in the classroom and with the teacher will be more likely to participate and volunteer. On the contrary, if they feel uneasy, tense, and stressed, the practices will seem incomplete and inadequate (Krashen, 1981).

The sudden shift to online learning and the lack of face-to-face interaction due to the emergency may have disrupted students' routines and sense of normalcy, which could have further influenced their confidence, motivation, and anxiety levels. In this sense, English teachers should provide opportunities for students to be in a supportive and encouraging environment by creating a safe space where they feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of judgment, providing regular feedback and praise, and incorporating engaging and innovative activities that build communication and interaction.

In conclusion, the literature review made evident that some theories and concepts recognize how the Remote Learning modality develops. However, instruction during the Covid-19 pandemic awakened new elements to explore, practice, and research about. ERT and ERL along with digital competencies and affective factors are still units of interest. Therefore, the results of the study allowed recognizing and expanding the knowledge on the learners' experience in the transition to remote English classes, the adaptations, and their feelings.

3. Method

The research was developed with 2391 students and 67 middle and high school English teachers from 27 high schools in Manizales. Most schools (90%) were urban, and a small amount (10%) were rural. The students who participated were 1047 males and 1179 females, whose ages ranged from 13 to 15 years old. They belonged to 9th, 10th, and 11th grade, and had studied English for 6 to 10 years. Besides, the English teachers who took part were 20 males and 47 females, whose ages ranged from 31 to 50 years old (77, 6%), and most had an experience of 11 to 20 years teaching in high school.

This study followed the stages of Survey Research to gather and report information about perceptions and feelings (Cozby, 2008). First, in the survey design, as units of analysis students and teachers were selected because they were the ones exposed to the transition to ERT. Due to the limitations of the pandemic, the surveys were carried out on the online platform Quia.com, to make it accessible for participants to take it at any time using a device with an Internet connection.

Four sections were considered in the development of the instrument: 1) Demographic information; 2) Perceptions and experiences of learning remotely; 3) The English class before and during the pandemic, and 4) Students' feelings, emotions, recommendations about studying English during the pandemic, and preference between in-person or remote modality. The surveys were piloted with four students from two institutions to detect ambiguous questions and inconsistencies in the students' survey. Besides, participants were not asked to identify themselves. The surveys were administered over a period of four months. Finally, in data analysis,

frequencies and percentages arouse for the quantitative data (Brown & Rodgers 2002), and codes and categories for the qualitative data (Saldaña, 2016; Creswell, 2016).

4. Results

During the analysis of the results, it was possible to identify the students' experience during the remote classes, their perceptions of the class adaptations, the practices with technology, and the role of affective factors in remote learning.

4.1 Perceptions of the class adaptations

Regarding the development of the class, students highlighted three aspects: English use and class time, class methodology, and language performance. To begin, students affirmed that they had less hours of class during the pandemic. As shown in Table 2, almost 70% of them studied English for 1 to 3 hours every week, representing most of the students. Conversely, before the emergency, 50% had this time of classes, narrowly followed by those who studied 4 to 6 hours. (See table 2). This means that during the pandemic, the allotted time for English class was significantly affected.

Table 2.

Hours of English Class Before and During the Pandemic

Hours per week	Before	During
1 - 3	50%	69%
4 - 6	46%	23%
Seven or more	4%	3%
No English class	0%	5%

Moreover, some students perceived that the teacher reduced the percentage of English used to deliver the class. As evidenced in Figure 1, most of the students noticed that before the pandemic, the teacher's use of the target language was among 50% to 100% of the lesson. In contrast, along the emergency, students observed that this English use decreased to 50% or less. That is to say that the average use of the target language by the teacher went from 64% to 58% of the class time.

Figure 1.

Students' Perception on the Teachers' use of English in Class Before and During the Pandemic
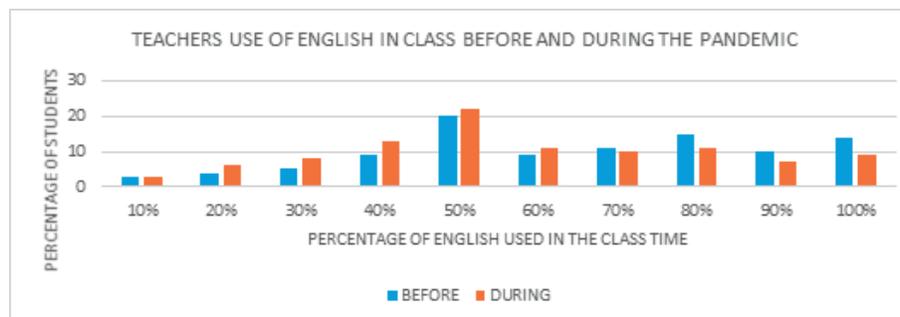
Besides, regarding the communication means, 88% of students indicated they used computers and smartphones to study. Conferencing platforms, WhatsApp, email, among others were the prevailing tools for the class development, in contrast to worksheets and textbooks that were barely implemented. (See Table 3)

Table 3.
*Communication Means used During the Pandemic*

Communication Means	Percentage
Conferencing platforms (Zoom, Google Meet, Google Hangouts)	47%
WhatsApp	25%
Email	12%
Google Classroom	10%
Worksheets and Textbooks	5%
Others	1%

Furthermore, in the transition to Emergency Remote Teaching, students experimented with adaptations because of the new environment. Teachers had to plan how to replace the strategies they used back on-site and make them work in remote instruction. Regarding the type of tasks and the frequency of development, results revealed that during the pandemic, reading and speaking activities were less frequently done in comparison to on-site lessons. (See Figure 2)

Figure 2.
Frequency of Skills Practice before and During the Pandemic

Furthermore, in the transition to Emergency Remote Teaching, students experimented with adaptations because of the new environment. Teachers had to plan how to replace the strategies they used back on-site and make them work in remote instruction. Regarding the type of tasks and the frequency of development, results revealed that during the pandemic, reading and speaking activities were less frequently done in comparison to on-site lessons. (See Figure 2)

Figure 3.

Language Elicitation Strategies Used During the Pandemic

The frequency of all these tasks decreased especially presentations, dialogues, videos, games, and songs, which most students believed were rarely developed. However, vocabulary exercises practically maintained a high frequency in both moments. In addition, students perceived a decrease in the use of dictionaries, textbooks, worksheets, games, and flashcards.

Results showed that the resources related to technology increased during RL. For example, videos went from 55% to 68%, audios from 51% to 64%, interactive games from 20% to 38%, the use of apps increased significantly going from 15% to 51%, and smartphones 19% to 66%. Other materials provided by the Ministry of Education like TV shows, and slides did not have a significant change. In brief, technological materials replaced the typical resources used in the classroom. Finally, concerning the assessment strategies, most students agreed that these were less practiced during the pandemic, with a decrease of 13% in their implementation during ERT. Learners perceived a slight difference in both moments in the implementation of two assessment techniques: written exercises (tests, quizzes, and workshops), and in-class exercises (oral presentations, games, role plays, mini-projects, songs, video forums, and posters and handicrafts). The results verified that during ERT, written exercises were only 3% used more than in-class exercises.

Finally, concerning language performance, as shown in Figure 4, most students felt their performance improved; some others thought that it stayed the same, and very few believed that it decreased. Listening and vocabulary seemed to be the ones that most students agreed they improved. Besides, the results showed that grammar stayed the same. During ERT, they had more practice in listening and vocabulary; nevertheless, many of the students felt that the remote environment did not affect their performance.

Figure 4.

*Students' Performance in the EFL Skills during the Pandemic*
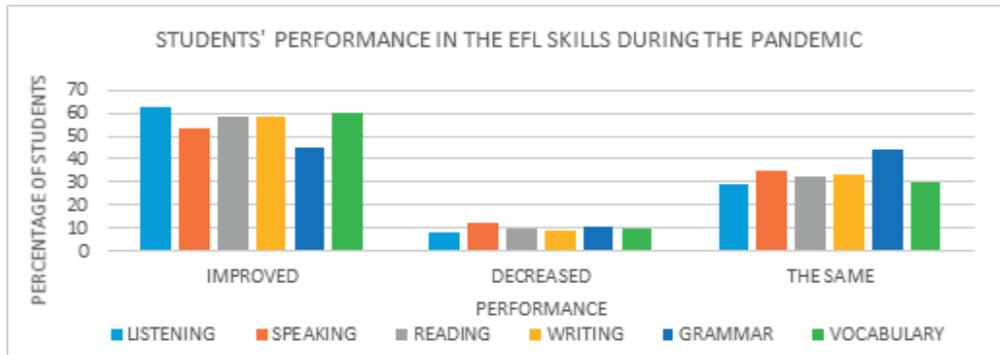
4.2 Practices in the Remote Setting

Students indicated the level of difficulty they perceived themselves in six aspects facing remote learning.

Figure 5.

Percentage of Students Describing their Abilities Studying Remotely
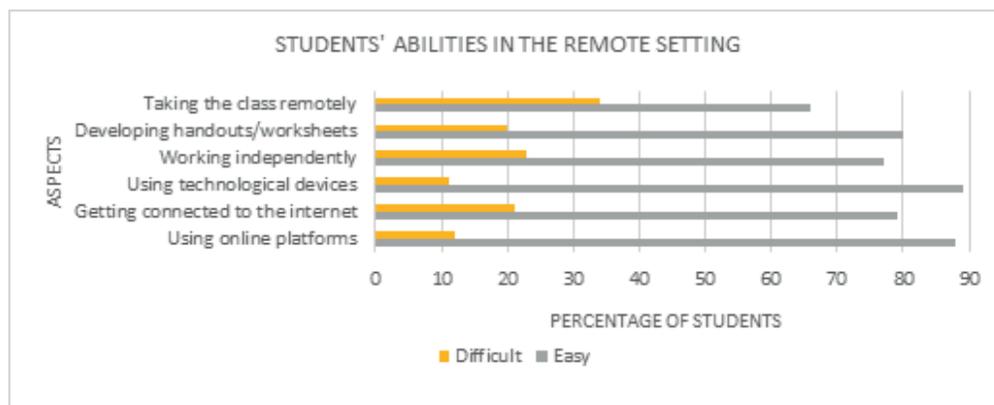
According to Figure 5, 66% of students perceived taking the class from home as easy. Besides, 80% agreed that working on the assigned handouts or worksheets was not difficult, and 77% believed that working independently did not represent a concern. Finally, 89% used the devices effortlessly, 79% could get connected easily, and 88% of students did not consider joining online platforms as challenging. However, it is noticeable that taking the class remotely was the item with most students believing it was difficult.

4.3 Affective Factors during Remote Learning

According to the students' feelings, they did not have a significant change, but it is clear that the pandemic had an impact on this aspect. To begin, 67% of students expressed feeling motivated during the pandemic, while 74% said the opposite. Similarly, 73% of the indicated that their disposition was high during, while before, they were 80%. Additionally, 62% reported having higher participation in class before, while 53% thought they actively participated during RL. Moreover, 79% of students perceived themselves to be highly interested, while before, they were 71%. Finally, 76% felt committed during, while before, they were 82%.

Regarding their emotions, they perceived themselves with positive feelings and emotions facing remote classes during the pandemic (See Figure 6). It can be seen that 29% of students felt happy and calm, while 23% were stressed and confused. However, around 21% were relaxed and oriented and 14% felt anxious, unsatisfied, and sad studying English in isolation.

Figure 6.
Students' Perceptions of Their Feelings and Emotions during the Pandemic
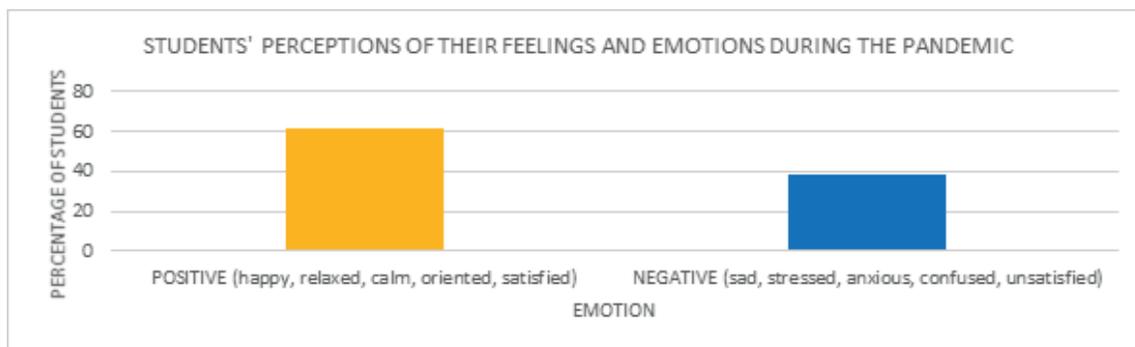
To sum up, the questions and categories in which the survey was segmented, led to the recognition of three main dimensions of the students' experience. Regarding their perceptions of the class adaptations, the main effects had to do with (1) less English use and class time, (2) changes in the methodologies with the integration of technology, and (3) feelings and emotions under remote ELT.

5. Findings

The results from the survey research previously described, reflected three major dimensions from their experience with the English class remotely: (1) the perceptions of the class adaptations, (2) the practices in the remote setting, and (3) the affective factors during remote learning. In this section, the results will be analyzed based on the open-ended answers provided by the participants in the last section of the survey.

5.1 Perceptions of the Class Adaptations

First, in the adaptation of the Emergency Remote Teaching modality implemented to endure the pandemic circumstances (Hodges, 2020), the time to study English and the contact with the language was reduced for most students. They had fewer hours every week and the instructors reduced the percentage of English used in the class. Authors like Al-Zoubi (2018) state that "exposure can directly improve a target language so that language proficiency may be a result of social interaction" (p. 153). That is to say, the most time learners are in contact with the target language, the more they will try to use it to communicate. However, in the ERT context, time diminished affecting the students' learning process. Related to this part, some students affirmed:

- *"During the virtual sessions we have the teacher's support to develop the worksheets, however, it is necessary to practice more and especially have more class hours to get better English learning."*[1]

- *"Autonomous learning is not so frequent; therefore, having a few hours of English makes it difficult to improve independently."* [2]

This finding relates to the potential disadvantage that Hasio (2019) remarks in synchronous remote learning about the limited time flexibility due to the fixed schedules that constrain the frequency of the language practice, and therefore, influencing the students' English performance during ERT.

Concerning the materials and resources, teachers replaced printed dictionaries, guiding texts, games, and posters with videos, interactive games, apps, and smartphones, enriching remote class planning. As a result, technology became essential in the class due to the new conditions, replacing most traditional on-site strategies and materials. Regarding these resources, a student recommended:

- *"I think they should be a little more dynamic, we are not experts in English, and if we did it based on motivation, and with something that we like, it could be speaking about our favorite part of a movie in English and understanding the context, interviews, or something related, we could feel more motivated."* [3]

Based on these recommendations, it is crucial to consider what Gómez-Montero and López-Gil (2021) claimed about the effective implementation of technology in language learning relies on the careful consideration of pedagogical approaches. In other words, it is not enough to simply introduce technology into the classroom; it must be used in a way that aligns with pedagogical principles to ensure that technology is used in a way that enhances rather than detracts from the learning experience.

Similarly, in terms of the assessment strategies, students identified fewer possibilities to demonstrate their progress in the subject being workshops, written exercises, and video forums the most employed, different from songs, role-plays, posters, oral presentations, tests, and quizzes that were less included. Nonetheless, some students affirmed that they felt they improved their listening skill and their range of lexicon. Most believed that studying remotely did not influence their performance negatively. On the contrary, the adapted methodologies benefited them. Some of them expressed:

- *As I adapted to the virtual classes, I improved one or another aspect, in terms of speaking, it remains the same since there is not much oral interaction."* [4]

- *I have improved my speaking, reading, and vocabulary since they play songs in class and I paid more attention to their words and pronunciation, listening has worsened since I cannot concentrate."* [5]

This finding suggests that the use of technology in language learning can be beneficial for students. Specifically, it supports the argument made by Warschauer and Matuchniak (2010) that technology can provide various opportunities for language learners to engage with the language in authentic ways. For example, technology can provide access to authentic materials such as videos, articles, and podcasts in the target language, which can help pupils, develop their comprehension and vocabulary skills.

5.2 Practices in the Remote Setting

During ERT, students transitioned to synchronous and asynchronous classes using technology as their means of communication and instruction delivery. They had to be connected to the Internet and use devices, applications, and websites to join the class and hand out their tasks, a practice that brought advantages and disadvantages. Although these devices allowed instruction and communication, using or not the cameras and micropho-

---

[1] "Durante las sesiones virtuales tenemos el acompañamiento del docente para el desarrollo de las guías, sin embargo falta practicar más y sobre todo más horas de clase para un mejor aprendizaje en inglés."

[2] "El aprendizaje autónomo es muy poco frecuente por lo tanto al contar con pocas horas de inglés es difícil mejorarte independientemente."

[3] Pienso que deberían ser un poco más didácticas, nosotros no somos expertos en Inglés, y si lo hiciéramos con base a una motivación, y con algo que nos guste, ya sea hablar nuestra parte favorita de una película en Inglés y entender el contexto, entrevistas, o algo relacionado podríamos sentirnos más motivados."

[4] "A medida queme adapte a las clases virtuales fui mejorando uno que otro aspecto,en cuanto al habla sigue igual ya que no hay mucha interaccion oral."

[5] "He mejorado mi habla, lectura y vocabulario ya que en clase ponen canciones y prestó más atención a sus palabras y pronunciación, la escucha ha empeorado ya que no me logro concentrar."

nes gave students the freedom to do other things and not necessarily pay attention to the class. Additionally, those who did not have the means to continue with school remotely were significantly affected, causing dropouts and a lack of motivation to continue with the academic process as teachers tried to comply with these limitations with isolated workshops and handouts. However, Gillis and Krull (2020) predict this unpreparedness as teachers had to transition to Emergency Remote Teaching without having a clear plan on how to perform under the characteristics and limitations of this setting, and without knowing how to adapt those practices that work better to their remote classes.

Nonetheless, in terms of the practices done in the remote setting, most students reported being skilled in managing online applications, which could be the result of their constant use of social media and other smartphone applications that are daily used by them, considering that they are teenagers born in a digitalized era. The majority reported having good access to the Internet and the ability to be connected and could develop the assigned workshops effortlessly. However, this was difficult for others because of the lack of economic resources to get data or the Internet to be online or to download and upload their activities. In this sense, some perceived the ability to work independently as more complex than others did, which could be because of the necessity that some teenagers have of an authority asking them to comply with their duties or also because they need to be surrounded by an academic environment to feel motivated. In this regard, it seems essential to consider fostering digital skills proposed by ISTE (2016), so that pupils perform according to the setting and needs while achieving their language learning goals.

Furthermore, students recognized that teachers had to face the limitations that distance brought, and highlighted that some of them promoted students' active online learning through innovative methodologies and activities that allowed for interaction and communication. This finding supports that success in Remote Learning lies in strengthening interpersonal interactions and actively involving in the context (Sherry, 1995). Correspondingly, some students expressed:

- *In my opinion, I like it more from a distance since we can watch online games, videos, and even exams but with much more entertaining features."* [6]

However, some students who did not experiment taking the classes like this highlighted the importance of developing activities like making drawings, handicrafts, singing, watching videos, and playing as they perceived these strategies as engaging, interesting and motivating. For example, a student recommended:

- *"I would like to see more games, I am someone kinesthetic, so games or things that have to do with something to develop or that represent a challenge is something motivating and helps me learn better, and at a time when virtuality is something important should gain strength methodologies with games in the classes."* [7]

This finding supports Boling's (2012) statement regarding the potential emphasis on reading and writing exercises during remote learning, which may overlook the importance of active speaking and listening practices. Some teachers may not have explored or considered the possible strategies that could be implemented through technology to facilitate such practices.

5.3 Affective Factors during Remote Learning

It was found that some external factors influenced the students' performance, attitude, and motivation towards the class. For example, distractions at home, namely noise, having to do errands, chores, and emotional issues related to the emergency and isolation directly affected their academic performance. As a result, participants valued the teachers' efforts to keep them motivated and interested in the activities but in the case of the ones who were exposed to monotonous classes, they felt lost and not committed to learning the language. In this regard, a student stated:

- *"It is difficult to learn when they only assign workshops and no speaking activities or activities that help us speak, grammar, among others, to improve it."* [8]

---

[6] "En mi opinión me gusta más a distancia ya que podemos ver juegos online,videos y incluso exámenes pero con atractivos mucho más entretenidos."

[7] "Me gustaría ver más juegos, yo soy alguien quinestésico así que juegos o cosas que tengan que ver con algo a desarrollar o que representen un reto es algo motivante y me ayuda a aprender mejor, y en un momento en donde la virtualidad es algo importante debería coger fuerza metodologías con juegos en las clases."

[8] "Es difícil aprender cuando solo ponen talleres y no actividades para hablar ni actividades que nos ayuden a él hablé, gramática entre otras a mejorarlo."

In other words, the results supported what authors like Ferri, Grifoni & Guzzo (2020) think about the goal of today's education, which is to emphasize and promote the active role of the students by enhancing cooperative and creative work and the share of knowledge in the digital classroom. Moreover, pupils expressed feeling overwhelmed because of the academic overload; they had many activities and had to do a lot of homework. Therefore, many felt they were only trying to comply with these tasks and did not have significant learning and practice in English. In this regard, teachers noticed an impact on the affective filter (Krashen, 1982), in which issues related to motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence affect the regular development of the class in terms of participation, interest, and commitment. Students explained that studying at home was difficult because of distractions, connectivity issues, and devices. One of the students explained:

- *"It is a bit difficult to fight against distraction, even when you are in the comfort of your home, it is very easy to get distracted lately I have worsened my English pronunciation, and that makes me sad, I hardly participate and from time to time I speak."* [9]

- *"The class should be more didactic and (teachers) should get more interested in the student's learning than in to make progress in the topics. Many students are not learning; they only develop workshops out of obligation."* [10]

To sum up, while some students have reported positive experiences with remote learning, others have expressed negative emotions related to the Covid-19 emergency, which has impacted their overall performance in the remote classroom. These negative emotions can have a significant impact on language learning, as they can affect motivation, engagement, and confidence. In this regard, Dornyei (2005) emphasizes the importance of creating a positive and supportive learning environment to enhance learners' motivation and engagement. In the context of ERT, this may involve creating opportunities for social interaction and collaboration, providing learners with meaningful and engaging activities, and offering frequent feedback and support.

6. Conclusions

In 2020, the Covid-19 outbreak forced the world to adapt and make changes in all aspects of life, including education. As a result, students had to transition to Emergency Remote Teaching, which posed challenges for language learning. However, through the analysis of surveys completed by high school students in Manizales, key elements were identified that shed light on how English language learning occurred during the pandemic, the relevance of affective factors in the process, and potential improvements for language teaching practices in the future.

The Experience of Emergency Remote Learning

The number of hours of instruction in ELT is of paramount importance despite the learning setting. Hence, when the exposure to the language is affected, supporting activities should be considered to maintain the same amount of contact and input. In this sense, class planning and methodologies need to be aligned to the specific student's needs and limitations because of the distance. In this regard, teachers should also embrace varied assessment strategies as alternatives for students to show their progress, given the setting circumstances.

Nonetheless, it was evident that technological resources supported the EFL class development significantly, as students who reported a better experience enjoy the innovative activities through the smartphones and computers, while the ones who did not have access to those, highlight the need for dynamic lessons to make them feel more engaged.

Besides, the results reported the importance of the affective factors in the experience of the Emergency Remote Teaching during the pandemic. These factors include motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. Maintaining learners' motivation can be challenging, as learners may feel isolated or disengaged from the learning process. Accordingly, teachers can help to address this by providing engaging and interactive learning materials, offering frequent feedback and support, and creating opportunities

---

[9] "Es un poco difícil luchar contra la distracción, aun cuando uno se encuentra en la comodidad de su casa, es muy fácil distraerse, últimamente he empeorado mi pronunciación del inglés, y eso me da tristeza, casi no participo y de vez en cuando hablo."

[10] "La clase que sea más lúdica y (los profesores) se interesen más por el aprendizaje del estudiante, que por avanzar en los temas. Muchos estudiantes no están aprendiendo, solo se están desarrollando los talleres por obligación."

for social interaction and collaboration among learners. Moreover, self-confidence is also an important affective factor, as learners may feel less confident due to the lack of face-to-face interaction and feedback. In this case, teachers can help to build learners' confidence by providing positive feedback, offering opportunities for practice, and creating a supportive learning environment. Finally, anxiety is another affective factor that can have a significant impact as students may experience anxiety due to a range of factors, including technology issues, feelings of isolation or external concerns. Hence, teachers can help to address anxiety by providing clear and consistent instructions, offering support and feedback, and creating a low-pressure and encouraging learning environment.

Future Practices in English Teaching

It can be concluded that incorporating technology to achieve specific language goals is highly beneficial for students, considering the importance and success of remote learning practices. By doing so, teachers will enable students to develop essential digital skills necessary for functioning in a world that requires keeping up with technological advancements. Additionally, these tools faci-

litate the implementation of a communicative approach that encourages interaction and collaboration, both in and beyond the English classroom.

To effectively integrate technology in the classroom and enhance students' digital literacy skills, it is crucial to have appropriate devices and a reliable internet connection. As a result, students can expand their opportunities to practice English and improve their device management skills, resulting in a more effective and engaging learning experience.

Gonzalez-Lloret, Canals, and Pineda (2021) present empirical and methodological studies that support this conclusion, emphasizing the significance of teachers' training in the use of information and communication tools, along with optimal structural conditions to keep students satisfied with their language courses. Therefore, professional development for English instructors is essential to update their practices in current trends in ELT, adapt and design materials for more productive classes, and promote the development of twenty-first-century skills.

References

Al-Zoubi, S. M. (2018). The Impact of Exposure to English Language on Language Acquisition. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research,* 151-162.

Bao, Y., & Liu, S. (2021). The Influence of Affective Factors in Second Language Acquisition on Foreign Language Teaching. *Open Journal of Social Sciences,* 463-470.

Ballesteros-Romero, N., & García-Peñalvo, F. J. (2019). Teacher training in the use of ICTs for English as a foreign language: A systematic review of literature. *Education Sciences*, 9(2), 109.

Boling, E., Hough, M., Krinsky, H., & Stevens, H. S. (2012). Cutting the distance in distance education: Perspectives on What promotes positive, online learning experiences. *The learner and higher education,* 118-26.

Brown. (2002). Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning: *Quantitative research in second language studies.*

Cozby, P. (2008). Asking people about themselves: Survey Research. In P. C. Cozby, & S. C. Bates, *Methods in Behavioral Research* (121-131).

Dornyei, Z. (2005). Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom. *Cambridge Language Teaching Library.*

Ferrari, A. (2012). Digital competence in practice: An analysis of frameworks. *Institute for Prospective Technological Studies, Joint Research Centre*. Digital competence in practice: An analysis of frameworks.

Ferri, F., Grifoni, P., & Guzzo, a. T. (2020). Online Learning and Emergency Remote Teaching: Opportunities and challenges in emergency situations. *Societies,* 10(4), 86.

Gardner, R. (1985). *Social Psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation.*

Gillis, A., & Krull, L. (2020). COVID-19 Remote Learning Transition in Spring 2020: Class structures, Student perceptions, and inequality in college courses. *American Sociological Association: Teaching sociology,* 283-299.

Gómez-Montero, J., & López-Gil, D. (2021). The challenge of ensuring equity and access to technology in the transition to online language teaching. *Journal of Education and e-Learning Research,* 8(1), 16-23.

Gonzalez-Lloret, M. & Canals, L. & Hoyos, J. (2021). Role of Technology in Language Teaching and Learning amid the Crisis Generated by the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Íkala*. 26. 477-482.

Hodges, C., Moore, S., Lockee, B., Trust, T., & Bond., M. (2020). *The difference between emergency remote teaching and online learning.* Educause Review.

Hrastinski, S. (2008). *A story of asynchronous and synchronous e-learning methods discovered that each supports different purposes.* Educause Review.

Hsiao, W.-Y. (2010). In-service teachers' perspectives of enhancing asynchronous classroom interaction with a face-to-face real-time meeting software. *The International Journal of Technology Knowledge and Society*, 27-40.

International Society for Technology in Education. (2016). *ISTE standards for students.* International Society for Technology in Education.

Krashen, S. (1981). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning.*

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition.*

Marín-López, E. A., Lopera-Castaño, D. M., & Jiménez-Osorio, M. A. (2021). Learning management system as an alternative in English language teaching in a public university in Colombia during COVID-19

pandemic. *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning*, 14(2), 350-367.

Ministerio de Educación Nacional, MEN (2020, March 16). Medidas adicionales y complementarias para el manejo, control y prevención del Coronavirus (COVID-19). https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/portal/normativa/Circulares/394018:Circular-No-20-del-16-de-marzo-de-2020

Ni, H. (2012). The Effects of Affective Factors in SLA and Pedagogical Implications. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 1508-1513.

Ortiz-Rojas, D., Quintero-Barrera, L., & Jiménez-Millán, D. (2021). WhatsApp and language learning: A study with EFL learners in Colombia. HOW Journal, 28(2), 147-163.

Oxford Learner's Dictionary. (2020). Remote Learning. In Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 10th edition (OALD).

Pavlik, J. V. (2015). Fueling a Third Paradigm of Education: The Pedagogical Implications of Digital, Social and Mobile Media. *Contemporary Educational Technology,* 113-125.

Perveen, A. (2016). Synchronous and Asynchronous E-Language Learning: A Case Study of Virtual University of Pakistan. *Open Praxis*, 21-39.

Saldaña (2015). The Qualitative Data Collection Cycle. SAGE Journal.

Sherry, L. (1995). Issues in Distance Learning. *International Jl. of Educational Telecommunications,* 337-365.

Warschauer, M., & Matuchniak, T. (2010). New technology and digital worlds: Analyzing evidence of equity in access, use, and outcomes. R*eview of Research in Education,* 34(1), 179-225

Appendix A. Students' Survey Quantitative Results

**SECTION I – DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

1. Age Range
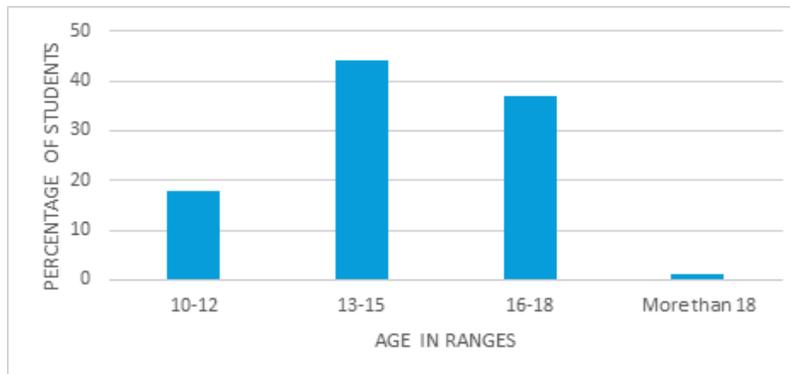


 2. Gender
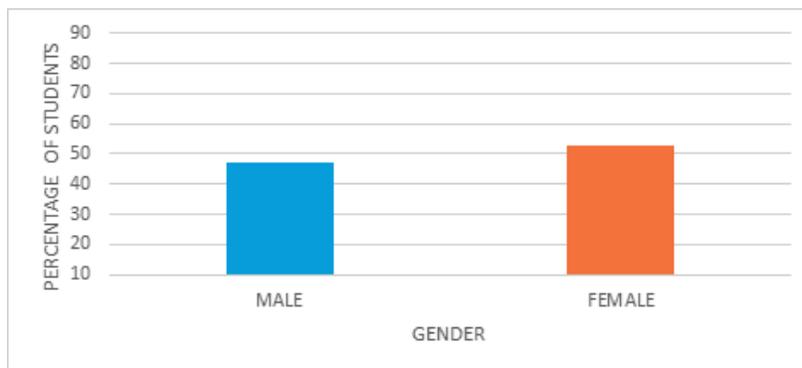
3. Grade

4. Number of years studying English
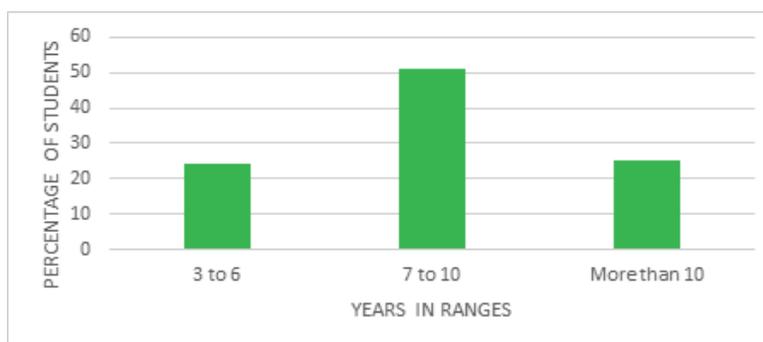
*5. Hours of English per Week before and During the Pandemic*
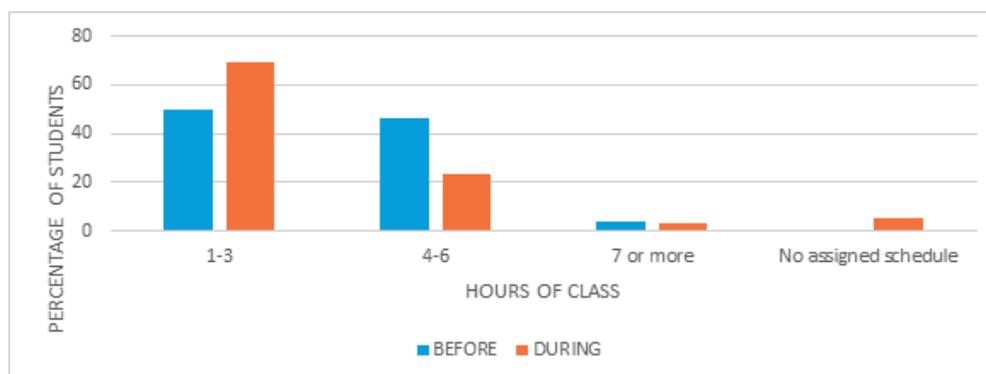
## SECTION II – EXPERIENCE IN THE ENGLISH CLASS DURING THE PANDEMIC

*6. Learning Modality*
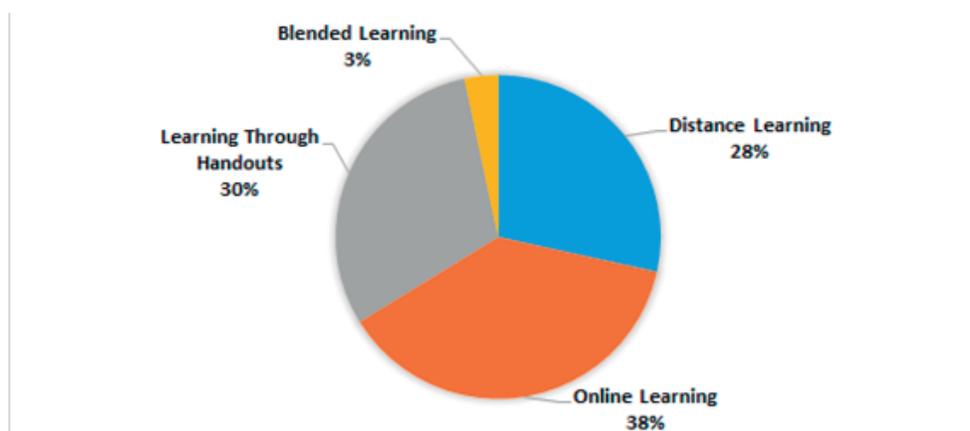
7. Learning Type
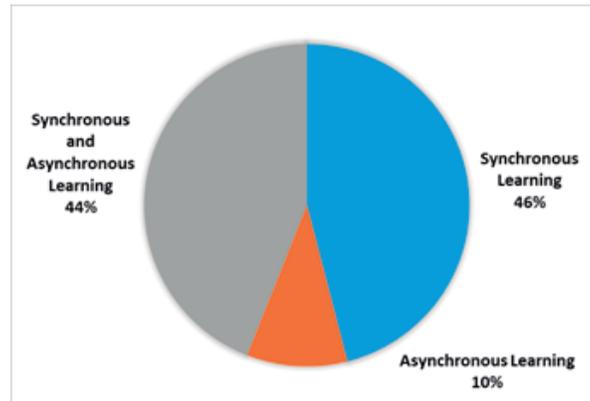
8. Learning Means
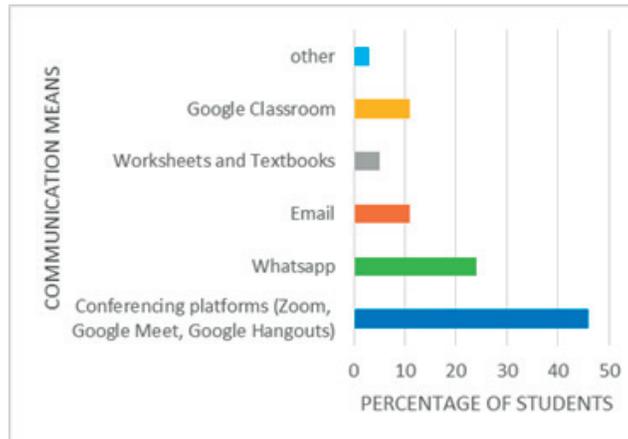
9. Learning Devices
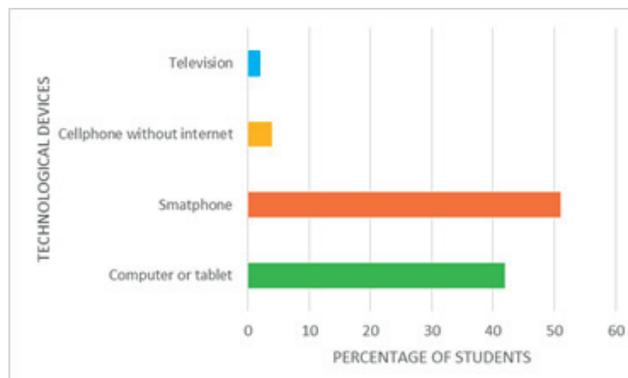
10. Challenges in the Remote Setting
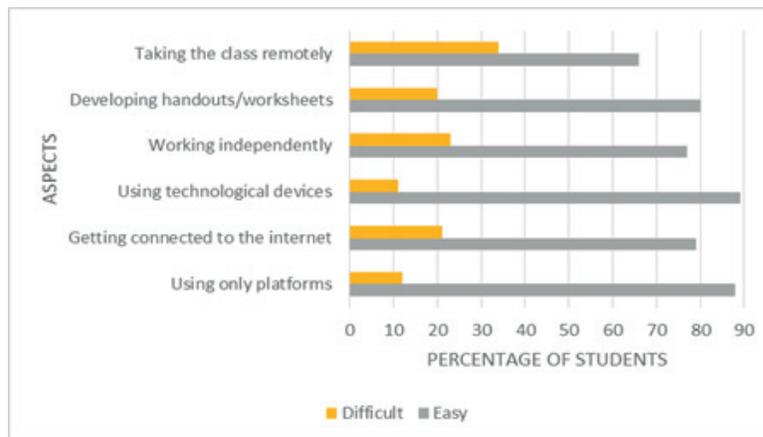
*11. Performance in the English skills during the Pandemic*
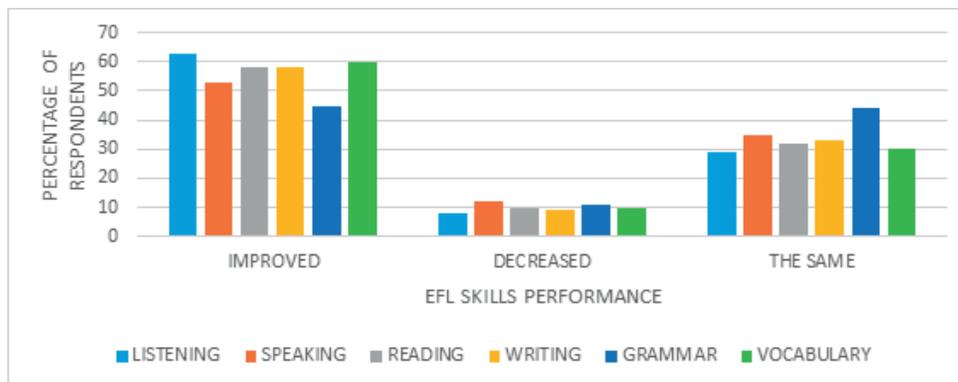
SECTION III: THE EFL CLASS BEFORE AND DURING THE PANDEMIC

*12. Percentage that English classes were/are taught in English*
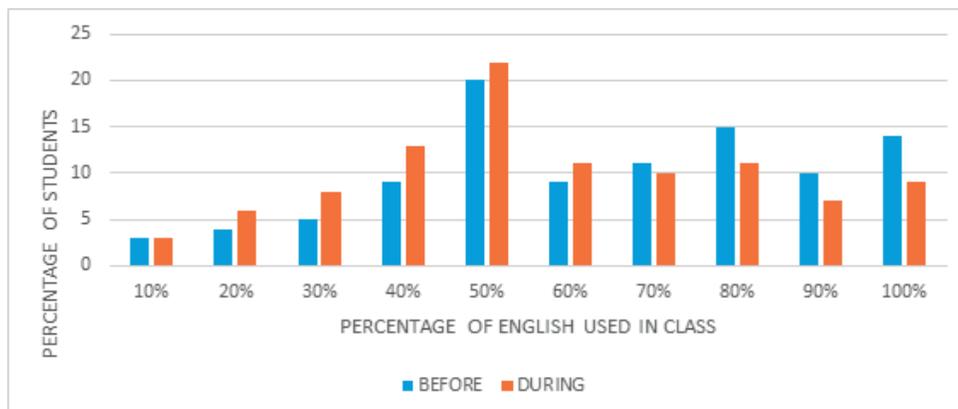
## 13. Frequency of Tasks According to the English skills

14. Frequency of Tasks according to Language Elicitation Strategies
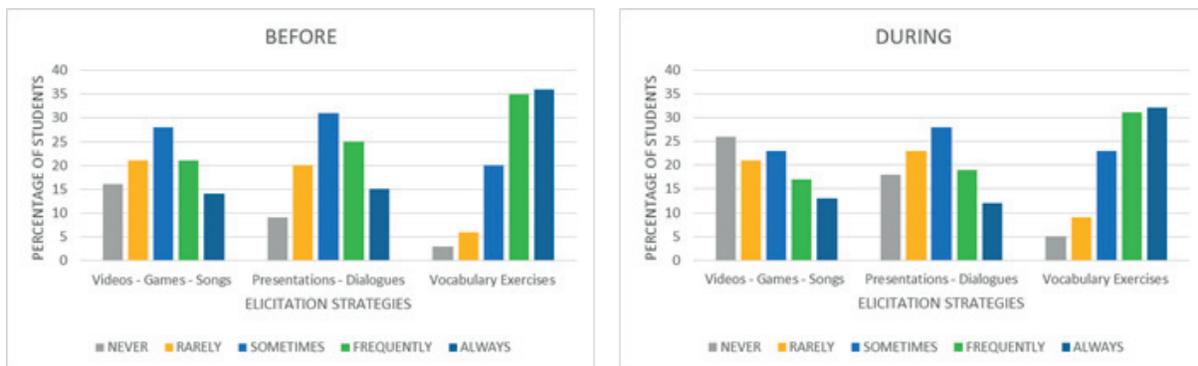

15. Materials and Resources Used
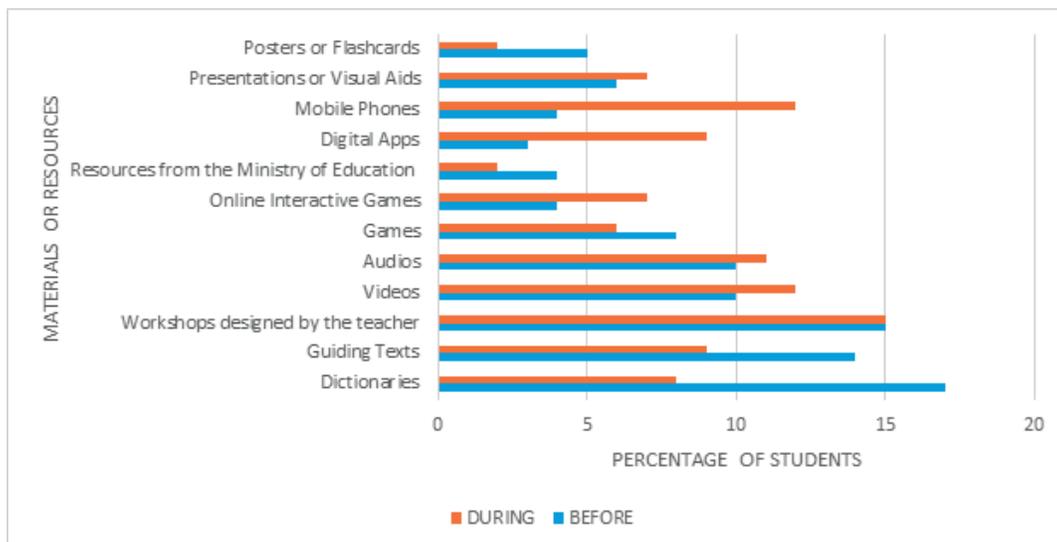
16. Assessment Strategies Used Before and During the Pandemic
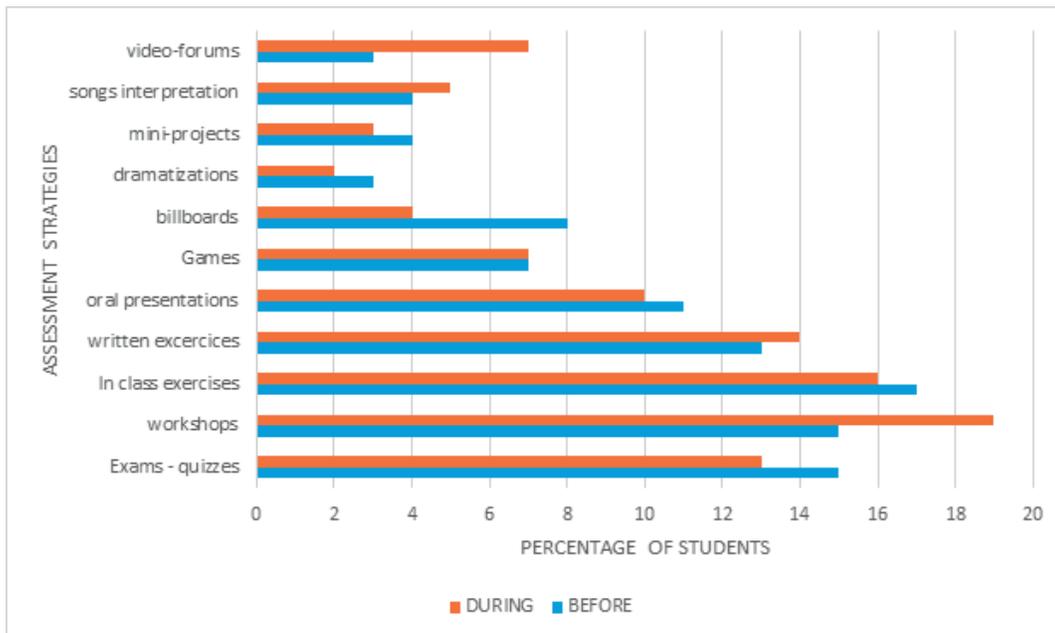
17. Rate of Attitudes toward the English Class before and During the Pandemic
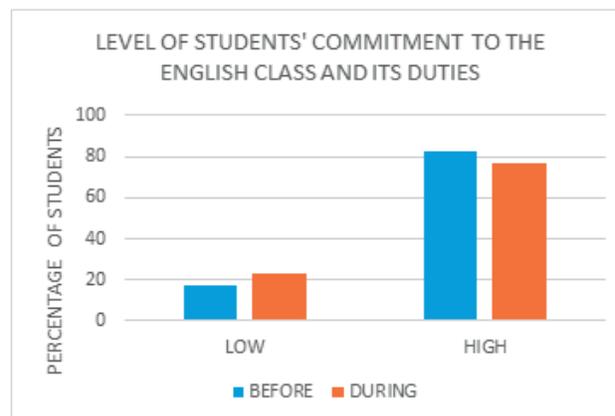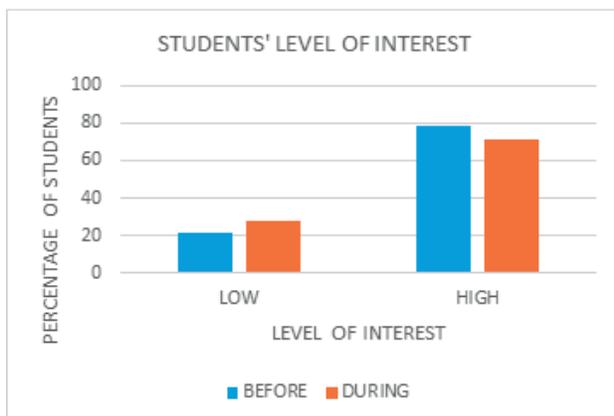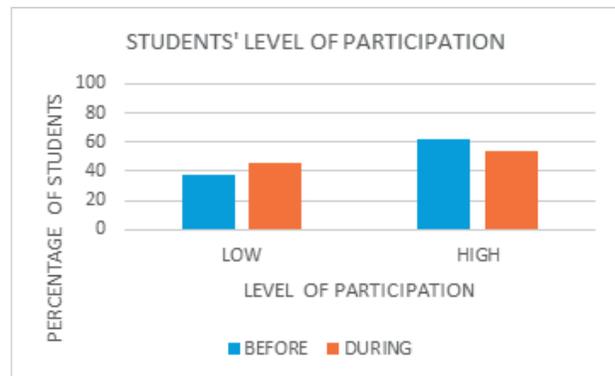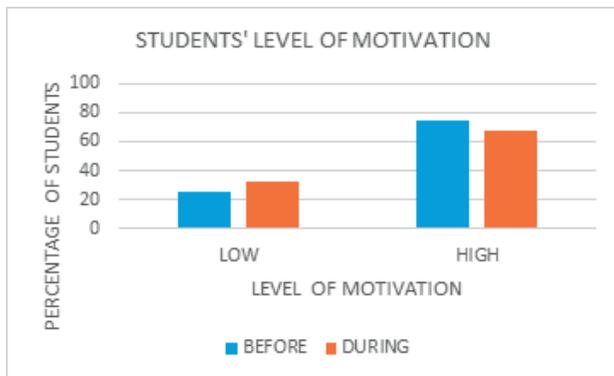
18. Students' Feelings and Emotions in the English Class during the Pandemic
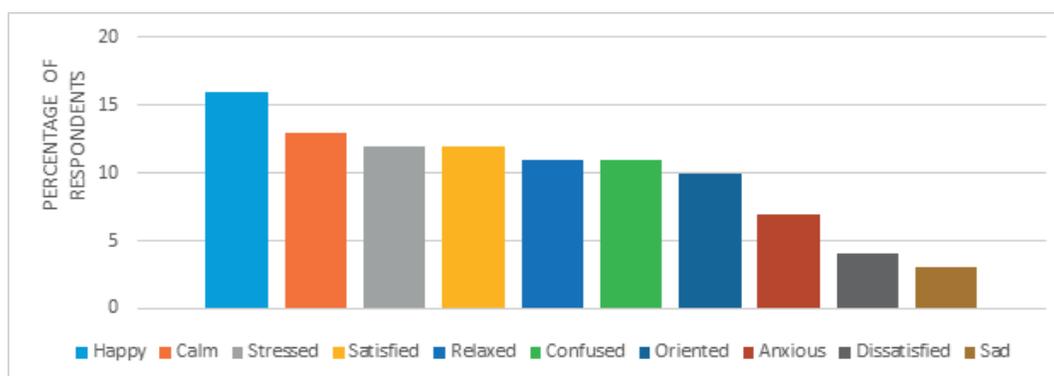
Qualitative Results:

19. Recommendations or suggestions do you have about the remote English classes during the pandemic?

(Relevant answers)

- "Aveces son muy bnas las clasases,por una parte a veces no me guatan las clases virtuales porque aveces mi celular se descarga pero por agora estoy bie gracias a lafu dacion luker que nos mando tabletas para mas comodidad." [Sometimes, the classes are very good; on other hand, I don't like virtual classes because sometimes my phone's battery dies but for now, I am good thanks to the Luker Foundation that sent us tablets for more comfort].

- "Ayudar a mejorar los ejercicios de escuha." [To help improving the listening exercises].

- "buena comunicacion, mejor explicacion y mas dialogo." [Good communication, better explanations and more dialogues].

- "Bueno a mi parecer, le recomendaría al profesor que se abriera a nuevas dinámicas para enseñar a los estudiantes ya que muchas veces es tedioso por los trabajos que el dispone." [Well, in my view, I would recommend to the teacher to be open to new strategies to teach to the students because it is often tedious the homework he assigns].

- "Bueno para mí las clases en plataformas son una forma de cuidarnosasi que no tengo ninguna recomendación porq son perfectas." [Well, I think the classes carried out in platforms are a good way to take care of us, so I don't have any recommendations because they are perfect].

- "Bueno realmente devido a la enfermeda nos toca trabajar de esa manera pero en realidad es mejor q los niños hacitan precenciales por aprende mucho mas nunca sera lo mismo frente a un pisaron q en una hoja o por celular." [Ok, really, due to this illness is that we have to work in this way but actually it is better that children attend face-to-face because you learn much more. It would never be the same to be in front of the board than in front of a paper or through the cellphone].

- "Creo que es importante buscar nuevos métodos para que los estudiantes estudien el inglés. Un ejemplo son los juegos, los videos, las actividades orales, etc." [I believe it is important to look for new methods for the students to learn English. Examples are games, videos, activities, etc].

- "creo que la educación a distancia es supremamente difícil tanto para los estudiantes como para los profesores." [I think that distance education is extremely hard for both students and teachers].

- "Creo que lo único que mejoraría nuestros saberes es entrar al colegio, aunque tenemos una excelente profesora es demasiado complicado en casa por que hay demasiada distracción." [I believe that the only thing that will improve our knowledge is to go to school. Although we have an excellent teacher, it is too difficult at home because there are many distractions].

- "Cuandon haya clase de ingles podamos presencial, el día en que toque ingles ese dia de la semana presencial al otro día de la semana en casa e irnos turnando." [When there is English class we can go in-person, the other day of the week at home and continue rotating].

- "Recomiendo que se hagan más actividades donde se pongan en juego las habilidades orales, no solo que se desarrollen guias." [I recommend that more activities be done, where oral skills are put into play, and not only to develop workshops].

- "Dar más clases donde puedan preguntar dónde agan juegos llamativos donde todos participen traducir si no entendemos ,que hablemos o por lo menos intentemos y nos permitan hablar en inglés." [To carry on classes where you can make questions, where interesting games be done and where everybody participate. To translate when we don't understand, to talk or at least to try to and to be allowed to speak in English].

- "Darle más intensidad a la materia, ya que en el período solo vemos una o dos clases" [To increase the time for the subject because during a term we only have one or two classes].

- "de que en las clases sean respondiendo las preguntas y explicar después de explicar, estar preguntando de vez en cuando cada uno de los estudiantes para ver si entendieron y dar puntos extras a los que no pudieron participar." [That classes be about answering questions and explaining after explaining, asking regularly to each of the students to check if they understood and to give extra points to those who could not participate].

- "Desde mi punto de vista, podriamos implementar mas actividades a la hora de estar tomando la clase de ingles." [In my point of view, we could implement more activities when we are taking the English class].

- "Disfruto mucho las clases de ingles, pero recomiendo hacer juegos en la web como kahoot más frecuentemente, para hacer las clases un poco mas dinámicas." [I enjoy the English classes a lot, but I recommend to carry on games on the web like Kahoot more often, to make the classes a little more dynamic].

- "Durante la pandemia no hay mucho que hacer, sin embargo me gustaría más interacción con el docente." [During the pandemic, there isn't much to do, however, I would like more interaction with the teacher].

20. Preference between face-to-face or remote classes (explain)

(Relevant answers)

- "A distancia, ya que podemos utilizar plataformas como herramientas para un desarrollo más rápido." [In distance because we can use platforms as tools for a faster development].

- "Considero que las prefiero en presencial, pues así se tiene la manera de interactuar con otras personas, entre ellas los compañeros y los maestos, aspecto que facilita el sencillo intercambio de aprendizaje." [I consider that I prefer face-to-face, as there is a way to interact with other people such as the classmates, the teachers. Fact that eases the simple interchange of knowledge].

- "creo q presencial es mucho mejor ya q puedo entender más y así desarrollar talleres." [I think that face-to-face is much better because I can understand more and be able to develop workshops].

- "Creo que a todos nos cansan la virtualidad pero gracias a las reuniones he podido interesarme más por la asignación aún así prefiero la presencialidad." [I think that we are all tired of virtuality but thanks to the meetings, I have been more interested in the subject. Even so, I prefer face-to-face].

- "Creo que ambas están bien, no depende tanto de la modalidad, depende más bien de la forma en la que se enseña y de los trabajos en clase." [I think both are okay, it doesn't depend too much on the modality but rather on the way it is being taught and on the in-class activities].

- "Creo que es mejor presencial porque nos ayuda a entender más." [I believe it is better face-to-face because it helps us to understand more].

- "Creo que es mejor presencial ya que es más fácil interactuar entre alumnos y docentes, quedan más claras las actividades y se pueden usar más recursos." [I think is better face-to-face because it is easier to interact among students and teachers. The activities are clearer, and more resources can be used].

- "de forma presencial y a distancia, en mi anterior colegio casi no cambio la forma de enseñanza así que de las dos formas me gusto, sin embargo en este, creo o supongo que seria mejor presencial." [Face-to-face and distance. In my last high school, it almost didn't change the way of teaching so I liked both ways. However, in this (high school), I think or suppose that it will be better in face-to-face].

- "de forma presencial y a la vez virtual mejor dicho 50/50 por lo tanto me gusta estar asi." [Face-to-face and at the same time virtual. I mean, 50/50. Therefore, I like to be like this].

- "De forma presencial ya que es más satisfactorio a la hora de aprender inglés y es mucho más fácil para ambos tanto como estudiante y para el profesor." [Face-to-face because is more satisfying at the moment of learning English and it is much easier for both the student and the teacher].

- "De forma presencial ya que los procesos educativos son mas personalizados." [Face-to-face because the educative processes are more personalized].

- "De las dos formas me gusta ya que tienen sus pro y sus contra. Me parece que presencialmente se le presta mas atencion a la clase pero crea en muchas ocaciones mas estres, virtualmente se pierde un poco de estres pero no se presta casi atención." [I like both ways as they have their pros and cons. I think that in face-to-face you pay more attention to the class but it often provokes more stress. Virtually, stress is less but you don't pay much attention].

- "De las dos formas me he sentido muy comodo pero en mi opinión, prefiero ver estas clases de forma presencial, para poder entender dudas de forma más claras." [I have being comfortable in both ways, but in my opinion, I prefer to take these classes face-to-face to be able to understand doubts in a clearer way].