Polo del Conocimiento

Enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en el Ecuador. Estudio Comparativo de Clases Online y Presenciales para la Adquisición de Segundas Lenguas

Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador. Comparative Study of Online and Face-to-Face classes for Second Language Acquisition

Ensino de Inglês como Língua Estrangeira no Equador. Estudo Comparativo de Aulas Online e Presenciais para Aquisição de Segunda Língua

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Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio es contrastar los aportes de las metodologías presenciales y en línea en la clase de inglés como lengua extranjera en grupos de estudiantes de primaria en Ecuador. La investigación de métodos mixtos se utilizó para combinar métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos. Los instrumentos utilizados para la recolección de datos fueron los Estándares de Desempeño Profesional Docente establecidos por el Ministerio de Educación (2016) y el Cambridge Assessment A1 Movers (2014). Las técnicas aplicadas fueron un formulario de observaciones, una entrevista abierta y una prueba de inglés como lengua extranjera. Los datos recopilados permitieron a la investigadora contrastar los planes de lecciones elaborados para las clases presenciales con los utilizados para las clases de TEFL en línea en la provincia de Manabí, Ecuador. Los resultados muestran que las clases presenciales alcanzaron un 62% de efectividad, frente al 43% alcanzado a través de las clases online. Los alumnos muestran un mejor desarrollo de las habilidades de escuchar y hablar cuando tienen clases presenciales en comparación con las clases en línea. La evidencia permitió concluir que en este estudio los participantes alcanzaron un mayor nivel de aprendizaje de EFL cuando tuvieron clases presenciales en contraste con las clases en línea.

Palabras clave: Ecuador; inglés como lengua extranjera; cara a cara; en línea; métodos de enseñanza

Abstract

This study aim is to contrast the contributions of face-to-face with online methodologies in English as a foreign language class in groups of elementary school students in Ecuador. The mixed methods research was used to combine qualitative and quantitative methods. The instruments used for the data collection were the Teaching Professional Performance Standards established by the Ministry of Education (2016) and the Cambridge Assessment A1 Movers (2014). The techniques applied were an observations form, an open interview, and English as a foreign language test. The data collected allowed the researcher to contrast the lesson plans elaborated for face-to-face classes with those used for online TEFL classes in the province of Manabi, Ecuador. The results shows that the face-to face classes reached a 62% of effectiveness, rather than the 43% achieved through the online classes. Learners show a better development of the listening and speaking skills when they have face-to-face classes in comparison to online classes. The evidence allowed to conclude that

in this study participants reached a higher level of EFL learning when they had face-to-face classes in contrast to the online classes.

Key words: Ecuador; English as a foreign language; face-to-face; online; teaching methods

Resumo

Este estudo tem como objetivo contrastar as contribuições das metodologias presenciais e online em aulas de inglês como língua estrangeira em grupos de alunos do ensino fundamental no Equador. A pesquisa de métodos mistos foi utilizada para combinar métodos qualitativos e quantitativos. Os instrumentos utilizados para a coleta de dados foram os Padrões de Desempenho Profissional de Ensino estabelecidos pelo Ministério da Educação (2016) e o Cambridge Assessment A1 Movers (2014). As técnicas aplicadas foram ficha de observação, entrevista aberta e teste de inglês como língua estrangeira. Os dados coletados permitiram ao pesquisador contrastar os planos de aula elaborados para aulas presenciais com aqueles utilizados para aulas online de TEFL na província de Manabi, Equador. Os resultados mostram que as aulas presenciais atingiram 62% de eficácia, ao invés dos 43% alcançados através das aulas online. Os alunos mostram um melhor desenvolvimento das habilidades de escuta e fala quando têm aulas presenciais em comparação com as aulas online. As evidências permitiram concluir que neste estudo os participantes atingiram um nível mais alto de aprendizado de EFL quando tiveram aulas presenciais em contraste com as aulas online.

Palavras-Chave: Equador; Inglês como uma língua estrangeira; cara a cara; conectados; métodos de ensino

Introducción

The sanitarian emergency of Covid-19 has resulted in the massive closure of the face-to-face activities of educational institutions in more than 190 countries to prevent the spread of the virus. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020), out of more than 1.200 million students from all levels of education around the world who had ceased face-to-face classes at school by mid-May 2020, more than 160 million, were from Latin America and the Caribbean. Such situation has led to the deployment of distance learning

modalities by using a variety of formats and electronic platforms which have demanded the use of miscellaneous Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

In the educational field, much of the measures that the countries of the region have taken in the face of the crisis relate to the suspension of face-to-face classes at all levels, which has resulted in three main fields of action: the deployment of distance learning modalities, using a variety of formats and platforms (with or without the use of technology).

In the case of Ecuador, on March 15, 2020, the Ministry of Education decreed, that government and private educational institutions from preschools to universities had to cancel their face-to-face activities to continue the learning activities through online means. The education ministry promoted the return to face-to-face classes, a process that has not been completed and is maintained between advances and setbacks due to the appearance of new cases of Covid-19. Therefore, online education remains predominant in Ecuador. (Ministerio de Educación, 2020)

The review of the incorporation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into education shows that it represents a process of transformation of the traditional teaching and learning methodologies, and it is also a challenge for the persons who play teaching roles (Almirón and Porro, 2014; Durán-Rodríguez and Estay-Niculcar, 2016). Thus, online education was rather reserved for isolated experiences that provided innovative teaching and learning strategies as a complementary way of providing face-to-face education. Nevertheless, the current online educational approach a more flexible teaching and learning model which contributes to the current requirements of teaching to a greater number of learners (Cabero, 2019), making it more difficult to establish genuine rapport. as a consequence of Covid-19 (Villafuerte et al., 2020). In such conditions, teachers continue playing a fundamental role that has gone far beyond the pedagogical aspects.

Teachers transformed face-to-face education into remote teaching from home and mediated didactic materials to favor student learning (García, 2020). As a result, the importance that online education has acquired in recent years is an unprecedented fact that will mark a before and after in pedagogical practices and in current educational systems worldwide. However, it is necessary to study the similarities, differences, and contribution of online and face-to-face classes. Thus, this work is focused on the instruction of English as a foreign language to students of primary education in the Ecuadorian context.

The authors' motivation behind this work is to determine which of the two modalities is more effective and better adapted to the social and economic conditions of Ecuadorian students and in the improvement of their level of English as a foreign language (EFL). Considering that the purpose of this research is focused on the acquisition of a second language (SLA), specifically the English language, this matter will also be approached through a theorical review, emphasizing how children acquire a second language.

The object of this ~~is~~ research is to contrast the contributions of face-to-face and online methodologies in English as a foreign language class in groups of elementary school students in Ecuador.

The research questions that guide this study are:

1. What are the contributions of face-to-face and online methodologies to the implementation of EFL teaching and learning international standards in Ecuador?
2. What are the EFL teachers' perceptions concerning ~~to~~ language assessment during the pandemic Covid-19?
3. What are the main similarities and differences appearing in the EFL lesson plans of face-to-face and online classes?
4. What is the difference in the knowledge of English obtained between face-to-face and online classes?

Theorical Framework

1. Second Language Acquisition Overview

In second language acquisition (SLA) the first language is a language that is learned in the earliest years of life, usually before the age of three. Mother tongue, native language, and primary language are some of the terms used to describe a person's first language (L1) (Sinha et al., 2009). Otherwise, second language (L2) is often an official or social language that is required for education, employment, and other purposes (e.g. English) (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015).

To describe the theoretical frameworks briefly, the study of SLA originally started in psychology (e.g. processing individual differences), then went through theoretical linguistics (syntax, lexis, semantics, discourse, pragmatics, phonology), education, sociolinguistics, L1 acquisition, sociocultural theory, neurolinguistics, and other disciplines. This resulted in a plethora of

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theoretical approaches, some of which were complementary, and others were incompatible (Mitchell, et al., 2013).

Between the 1940s and 1950s, most of the theories related to language acquisition were strongly influenced by behaviorism, with exponents such as Fries, C. (1945) who postulated that practice and repetition lead to fluency and accuracy in the second language and that teaching should be based on highlighting the differences between L1 and L2. On the other hand, Skinner, B. F. (1957) contends that language development, like any other type of learning, is based on stimulus-response reinforcement, which leads to habit formation. In contrast to the previous positions, Chomsky (1959) raised for the first time the idea that children have an innate ability to acquire and develop a language and that they do not simply repeat the sounds they hear in their environment.

Years later, Krashen (1982) published Principles and practice in second language acquisition, where he postulated five hypotheses related to the acquisition of a second language. The hypothesis mainly states that language acquisition is successfully achieved through a non-stressful learning environment, understandable content, and meaningful activities and messages that are truly comprehensible. These reached great acceptance in the psychological and educational community. The natural order hypothesis and The Input hypothesis stand out, being important references for current research around SLA.

The input hypothesis proposes a procedure that permits second language learners to progress through the natural order hypothesis-predicted sequence of grammatical structure learning (Liu, 2015). Regarding to the Natural Order Hypothesis, Krashen (1982) suggests that the level of stress and anxiety in learners can significantly affect the ability to acquire a second language. Thus, the appropriate conditions must be created so that L2 is acquired in the most natural way possible, through the inputs and stimuli obtained from the context (Baaqeel, 2020).

2. Face-to-face Teaching methodology

According to Cuevas & Feliciano (2015), the "rise of e-learning has helped to encourage students to take on more responsibility for their own acquisition of knowledge". Face-to-face teaching mainly consists of having a sender (teacher) and a receiver (student) that are physically in the same place and time (class); the sender provides elements that give the possibility of feedback and self-regulation, which are very valuable. In addition, a teacher is able to know when students have not understood a topic, which requires extra tutoring or repetition from the teacher. Once students have

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grasped the topic, they can express it in a different way (self-regulation) (Maldonado, Araujo , & Rondon , 2018).

However, the transition to less traditional classes has coincided with a greater focus on more student-centered learning, with the lecturer facilitating or managing the students' learning, rather than simply transmitting information. (Parra, 2020).

Some of the most common methodologies emerged for teaching EFL in elementary schools in Ecuador are master classes, project-based learning, and flipped classrooms (Villafuerte, 2019).

By means of master classes a logically structured topic is presented to provide information on the contents of the subject of study. The central part of the method is the presentation delivered by the teacher (Vallejos & Guevara , 2021). Active master classes comprise an interactive presentation about a topic to promote the understanding and construction of knowledge by students. In addition, the teacher dedicates class time to the content analysis, and actively involves students in the teaching-learning process (Maldonado, Araujo , & Rondon , 2018),

Learning by projects allows students to conduct a project in order   to solve a problem or tackle a task by planning, designing, and carrying out a series of proposed activities (Gonzalez, 2020).

The flipped classroom methodology consists of transferring the passive work of certain activities outside the classroom by using face-to-face class time to answer questions, enhance knowledge acquisition processes, practice, exercises, or perform tasks of assimilation of concepts that have previously been studied outside the classroom. Some complementary tasks to be assigned are the following: to prepare reports on existing research related to a job or project, to view academic videos proposed or prepared by the professor, and to prepare oral presentations, seminars, or conferences (Morales & Moreno , 2020).

3. Online Education Models

The advantages of online education are numerous in contrast to the face-to-face modality that occurs in the physical settings of the classrooms (Garcia, 2017). Internet access is already seen more as a necessity than as a privilege, and its use has increased in all social strata, due to the decrease in the costs of Internet connections and the public networks available in public areas of massive concurrence, such as: parks, squares, and shopping centers (Hinojo, 2019).

Online education is the learning process that exists between teachers and students in a fully digital environment where technology and learning techniques make up the educational model. However,

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it achieves a highly interactive environment, at any time and from any place in the world. (Ojeda, 2020)

The revolution at the social and communicative level that ICTs have brought to the educational environment transcends conventional classrooms. In the globalized society, new teaching platforms are opening, which generate uncertainty in all those who consider them a threat to traditional educational models and to teaching as we know it (Picon, 2021).

It is necessary to mention e-learning platforms, which encompass various concepts of virtual education, such as online courses, flexible collaborative education, web education, and other teaching modalities that involve the network as the main resource. (Zevallos, 2021)

Gonzalez (2020) has studied the need to specify its meaning: This education does not equal a distance modality, since the distance in the virtual communicative processes is relative (it is worth reflecting on the 30 centimeters that separate us from the computer screen). Some types of online education are:

Face-to-face teaching model with Internet support*:* face-to-face education in traditional physical spaces, endowed with technological resources; for example, computer rooms. (Area, 2018)

Blended learning or blended learning model*:* it is a combination of physical face-to-face education and virtual teaching classes. It is more efficient in the interactive education process between teacher-student and student-student. (Garcia, 2020)

Distance or online education model*:* Physical presence is minimally required, the entire teaching process is carried out through virtual spaces, so that physical coexistence with other members of the educational community is practically nil. (Salazar, 2020).

4. Online TEFL in Covid's time

The access to quality education ~~of~~ is a human right. It must be guaranteed as a fundamental action of the governments around the world (Area, 2018). Thus, the importance that online education has acquired in 2020 sets a precedent in pedagogical practices and in globally current educational systems. Likewise, the social, cultural, and economic inequalities of more than 180 countries that have been victims of the COVID-19 pandemic have been highlighted. (Castro, 2020)

The need and urgency that the current health crisis brought with it made governments close the doors of educational institutions as a measure to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, thus affecting 94% of students worldwide.

Until now, in general terms, virtual education was rather reserved for isolated experiences that provided innovative teaching and learning strategies in a complementary way to face-to-face education. In fact, for several decades Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have been implemented as tools put at the service of education, which represents a review of traditional teaching and learning processes, and a challenge for the teaching role (Ferreira & Gomez , 2020). Referring to the EFL Fitting Methodologies and Approaches (Ferreira & Gomez, 2020) sustain that online education could be challenging for those teachers who are used to teaching through more traditional methodologies. But the reality is that online education is a big opportunity to explore an extraordinary number of tools, services, platforms, and content available on the web.

It is true that some of the most common approaches in TEFL could result in difficult or unsatisfactory implementations in online lessons. It is also true that some of them can be useful for both scenarios. We are going to explore two of them. One is a well-known methodology in TEFL which had historically achieved great results, and the other is an innovative way to make the teaching-learning process an entertaining experience, especially for kids (Zevallos, 2021).

Audio-Lingual method: this methodology focuses on oral competence. Its goal is to help pupils enhance their speaking skills. To help students learn language skills successfully, language components are delivered to them in spoken form without reference to the mother tongue (Caicedo, 2016). The purpose of the Audio-Lingual approach is to enable pupils to answer quickly and correctly in spoken language by teaching vocabulary and grammatical features through dialogues. Repetition is used to learn the dialogues, and drills such as repetition, transformation, and question-and-answers are used to reinforce the patterns in the dialogue. (Ramírez, Perlaza , Sosa , & Bautista , 2018)

Children in virtual classrooms use this strategy to learn and familiarize themselves with the new methodology through visuals, songs, dialogs, stories, and activities that they can do at home. This makes audio-lingual an enjoyable method for the learners to acquire a new language (Moso & Isa , 2019). However, it is vital to note that children get easily distracted, especially while they are sitting in front of a screen.

Gamification in TEFL: The use of game components and design approaches in non-game environments is known as gamification. It is built on the game industry's success, social media, and decades of human psychology research (Salazar, 2020). This methodology has become a popular trend in online learning and teacher professional development.

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The major goal is to boost the participation of a person, who is most often referred to as a "user," and to encourage him or her by combining game aspects and strategies such as leaderboards and instant feedback (Parra, 2020). This gives users a sense of control and involvement as they work through processes and complete tasks. Furthermore, when defining and employing gamification as a strategy. It is necessary to understand the fundamental notions of games. But, before considering the motivational features of this notion, it is important to be aware of the four main components of gamification: games, elements, design, and non-game situations (Picon, 2021).

Considering the above, both Gamification and Audio-Lingual methodologies are effective for teaching English online and in face-to-face classes; since they allow the teacher to adapt the concepts, strategies, and techniques to the needs of each modality and to the needs of their students. Those are two flexible methodologies, which pose the student as the center of the class and can be complemented by using other strategies to achieve more satisfactory results. The teacher's concern is to provide the learner with the tools to continue their process of language acquisition, through his guidance and support (Salazar, 2020).

5. Teaching English as a Foreign Language Online vs Face-to-face Previous Studies

A study conducted by Parra (2020) states that teaching English as a foreign language is an extensive topic with many nuances to analyze, but this research addresses it from the current health, social, economic, and educational emergency, focusing on the transition from classroom to virtual education. Furthermore, the research carried out by Ferreira & Gomez (2020) from the University of Cambridge, makes a comparison between online and face-to-face teaching of the English language, considering some essential skills for the acquisition of a new language. In the following chart, the most remarkable differences between the two modalities are summarized.

A report presented by Kaplan University focuses on the integration of a Gamification software into their teaching platforms and apps; they performed a pilot program in one of their computer technologies courses with huge achievement. According to the NMC-Horizon Report (2014), by using the software learner's marks improved 9%, in contrast to the decrease of 16% of students who failed the course (Castro, 2020). The positive result reflects the effectiveness of using Gamification in TEFL, as it provides a wide range of possibilities to be adapted for both, virtual and face-to-face teaching. Through virtual education, apart from the language acquisition, learners are led to develop the necessary technological skills typical of the 21st century teaching.

Research carried out in Germany by Shashaa (2020) explains that being at home away from distractions, greatly motivates students to continue with online education. Although participants felt the need to connect with their classmates, they have discovered that having the option to take online classes has provided them with additional benefits. The following are the results of the data gathered from the survey he conducted: most students have access to the internet and Wi-Fi to join to the classes. Their academics are not hampered by the internet, and more than 77 percent have access to online classes. Students can be motivated to stay in online programs, according to 53% of respondents.

As (Srinivas, 2014) mentioned "further pointed out that in the collaborative learning environment, learners are challenged both socially and emotionally as they listen to different perspectives and are required to articulate and defend their ideas".

Methodology

This work is based on a mixed research methodology, through qualitative and quantitative approaches, which allow obtaining a broader perspective on the research topic.

This project is focused on teaching the English language in Manta, Manabi, Ecuador under two different scenarios. On the one hand, teaching online, but on the other hand, in face-to-face classes. In order to accomplish the aim of this research, the subjects taught were the same in both cases, as were their ages in a range from six to nine. The group of participants was integrated by thirteen people; two TEFL female teachers, who contributed to the construction of the project through the interviews carried out; the other eleven participants were children who received English classes; six of them attended face-to-face classes, (one girl and five boys), for the online class there were five children (three girls, and one boy).

It is important to point out that the methodologies and planning applied in the classes were brought into action according to the needs of each modality.

Considering that the participants in this research are minors, letters of consent were extended to thirty-five parents, of whom eleven accepted the voluntary participation of their children. But it was agreed to keep them anonymous for their own protection.

Material and instruments

The instruments used in this research are explained below.

Observation sheet. - This observation sheet was intended to determine the effectiveness of the application of the Professional Teaching Performance Standards established by the Ministry of Education (2016), in the teaching English as a foreign language. The Professional Teaching Performance Standards allow us to establish the characteristics and practices of a qualified teacher, who, in addition to having command of the area that they teach, evidence other characteristics that strengthen their performance, such as the use of varied pedagogy, permanent updating, the good relationship with students and parents, solid professional ethics, among others, and it served as the model used to contrast with the virtual modality currently used. The instrument was used in face-to-face classes in 2019 and for online classes, the researcher team joined to the teleconference application used by the teachers' institutions.

Open interview guide. – The instrument purpose was to collect information concerning to the EFL teachers' transition from face-to-face to virtual classes. The instrument was proposed ad. Hoc and titled by the researcher's team as Teacher's perceptions about language assessment comparing face-to-face and virtual class'. The instrument of the original version consisted of 12 questions. The instrument was evaluated by a specialist panel integrated by three researchers in fields of English language instruction, psychology, and education administration, all of them ascribed to a national university located in Manabi, Ecuador. The panel suggested to reduce the interview to 8 open questions to ask about the type of assessment that EFL teachers used in face-to-face and virtual classes during the Covid-19 pandemic. The interview was applied to an EFL instruction researcher.

Placement test. – Considering that this research is focused on the measurement of oral skills of the English language, more specifically, on the acquisition of vocabulary. The Cambridge Assessment A1 Movers rubric (2014) was used for the speaking assessment and adapted to the purpose of this research. The three main components measured correspond to: 1) Vocabulary and Grammar, 2) Pronunciation, 3) Interaction. This rubric was designed for young learners and provides a reliable and consistent measure of how well a child is doing in learning English. The A1 Movers test is one of the three Cambridge tests designed for kids to offer a comprehensive approach for testing the English level of learners in primary and lower secondary education.

Procedure

Stage 1: Observation of classes regarding ~~to~~ the Professional Teaching Performance Standards established by the Ministry of Education (2016). For the execution of this step, two groups of teachers were observed, one face-to-face and the other online to complete the observation sheet based on Ecuadorian standards for teaching English as a foreign language.

Stage 2: Invitation and organization of the participants. An invitation was extended to the parents of the children to give their consent to voluntary participation in any of the modalities (face-to-face or online)

Pretest: The Cambridge Assessment A1 Movers (2014). Based on the Cambridge exam format, a pre-test model directed towards the participants was designed, this model was later adapted according to the characteristics of each teaching modality.

Stage 3: Lesson Planning design. The lesson plans were used as the main instrument for the teacher, to explain all the details, content, material, strategies, and activities that will be carried out in each lesson. The lesson plan, and the content given was the same for online and face-to-face lessons, but the activities vary according to the modality.

Stage 4: Interview. To find out more about the change in the teaching modality from face-to-face to online, an interview script was designed about the perceptions of English teachers in this matter. The interview was conducted virtually.

Post-test: The model considered was The Cambridge Assessment A1 Movers (2014) as in the pre-test, but this time the exam was designed considering the contents of the lesson plan and the classes given.

Stage 5: Analysis of information and data. The information obtained through the instruments was collected, and it was analyzed through a mixed research approach.

Stage 6: Drafting of the report. In this step, the information was organized to make a report of the activities carried out throughout the investigation process.

Results

The results are exposed following the order of the research questions presented in the introduction. In answer to question 1: What are the contributions of face-to-face and online methodologies to the implementation of TEFL and learning international standards in Ecuador? Table 1 shows the difference between face-to-face and online achievement of the teaching and learning standards.

Table 1. Ecuadorian standards for teaching English as a Foreign Language

Standards	Face-to-face instruction	Online instruction
Language	Teachers know the grammatical structures of the language to be taught, they have the appropriate vocabulary for the level in which they operate. However, their communication methods had become stuck in the traditional, which is outdated for the current circumstances.	Teachers found the need to develop additional communication skills or strengthen existing ones, such as the sense of patience, empathy, the understanding of non-verbal language and the ability to listen. All with the purpose of creating a positive environment for learning
Culture	According to what has been observed, this domain is not satisfactorily fulfilled, since there are not any spaces created to introduce cultural aspects of English-speaking countries, or of their own culture but in English.	The teachers observed in the virtual modality were mostly native speakers of the English language, so in the classes they tried to make their culture known and learn about that of their students.
Curricular Development	The teachers do not have the technological material for the development of their classes, even less didactic resources for their students.	In the virtual mode, teachers have more resources and platforms at their disposal, not only to include in their classes, but also to better organize and manage their time.
Evaluation	During the observation period, no evaluation was performed.	During the observation period, no evaluation was performed.
Professionalism and Ethical Commitment	The teachers try to be at the forefront of the new changes in the teaching of the language, but they articulated that sometimes it is very expensive to do it by self-management or, failing that, it is due to lack of time.	The transition from face-to-face to virtual has been a big change, so that teachers have had to ratify their commitment to teaching, facing the eventualities that may arise when working with under the virtual modality.

Source: Teachers interviews (2020).

Regarding the Ecuadorian standards for teaching English as a Foreign Language, the main differences observed correspond to the change in the teaching modality from face-to-face to online, in aspects such as Language and Content, since they do not vary much since they are governed by the curriculum proposed by the Ministry of Education. As for the cultural aspect, in the virtual modality there are more tools that facilitate the introduction of cultural topics. On the other hand, in Curricular Development the virtual modality allows students to have more comforts at home such as the chance of having the toilet nearby at any time. Through online classes, pupils also can explore a wider variety of platforms and resources.

In answer to the question 2: What are the EFL teachers' perceptions concerning to language assessment during the Covid-19 pandemic? The researcher team used the following categories system to analyze the information collected through an open interview applied to an–TEFL researcher. See table 2.

The categories are the following: (1) Attitudes of the teachers about the evaluation process, (2) Pertinence of the evaluation in EFL instruction, (3) Assessment objectives in EFL instruction, and (4) Actions of the teachers after assessment. The subcategories were (a) relevant change, (b) moderate change and (c) low change.

Table 2. EFL teachers' beliefs and assumptions about language assessment during the pandemic for Covid 19

Categories	Evidence	Subcategories
Teacher attitudes to the evaluation process	The teacher expresses that in English, unlike other subjects, it is easier to identify when a student does not understand through informal assessment (body language, making review questions, or just talking to the learners; but it is more effective when classes are face-to-face.	Relevant change
Relevance of the evaluation	The decisions, not only about evaluation, but about all issues are discussed together with the other teachers, and the academic director of the institute. He also mentioned that they teacher stated that they perform training periodically. He uses some digital platforms such as Kahoot and Quizizz to carry out the virtual assessment at the end of each class. The teacher does not seem to carry out formal evaluations, or at least that is not his main objective.	Relevant change
Objectives of the evaluation	He comments that his interest is to evaluate communication skills, mainly listening and speaking, but without leaving aside the other skills. Despite his focus on communication skills, he makes no mention of having a rubric to do a formal assessment of these skills.	Moderate change
Post evaluation teacher actions	Regarding feedback, he mentions that students who obtain a grade lower than 7 are sent to the mentoring program to reinforce the issues that have not been clear.	Low change

Source: Project registers (2020).

It has been a great transition to change from face-to-face to online teaching in such a sudden way. Therefore, the adaptation process has been slow for many teachers fully adapted to the face-to-face modality. However, the information in the table shows that online education has provided them with an opportunity to expand their skills and explore new resources and platforms to incorporate into their lessons.

In answer to the question 3: What are the differences in the lessons planning between face-to-face and virtual classes? Table 3 shows the difference in the EFL lesson plans between face-to-face and virtual classes for children from third to fifth grade of elementary school.

Table 3 EFL Lesson Plans for face-to-face class and virtual class.

Topic: Making new Friends	
Methodology: Gamification/Audio-lingual	
Goals In this lesson students will learn basic vocabulary of meetings, greetings, and simple commands. At the end, they will be able to do a brief introduction of themselves. (A greeting and their names)	
Grammatical Structures/Vocabulary: **Question:** What is your name? **Answer:** My name is_____ Hello, hi, good morning, good afternoon, good night, good evening, goodbye, bye.	
Face-to-face	**Virtual**
MATERIALS: -Audio-visual resources (songs) -Flash cards -Printed Worksheets -Cards for "memorama"	**MATERIALS:** -Audio-visual resources (songs, slides, Kahoot) -Songs -Images -Computer
Warm up 1. Playing "Hello" song 2. Play "Ball Pass" and say names (Get student familiarized with the vocabulary). **New Learning and practice** 1. Using name tags to teach them how to ask for names and, how to introduce themselves. 2. Do a brief introduction of themselves imitating the "Hello" song. **Wrap up.** 1. Playing "memorama" Simon says	**Warm up** 1. Sing a song: "What's your name? song." 2. Introduction of the topic using images from Google to show learners greetings. **New learning and practice** 1. Watch a short storytelling about meetings and greetings and then ask simple questions about what happened in the story. 2. Students will do a craft **Wrap up** Students will do a brief introduction of themselves. Students choose the correct answer about the topic through Kahoot platform.
OBSERVATIONS: After the first class, it was evident the positive impact of having a solid planning and to be well prepared to answer any possible questions about the class, since children are curious and expect to get an answer to all their questions. It is necessary to establish simple rules to maintain order during the lessons. To prevent them from getting bored or losing interest, it is important to keep the children performing an activity.	**OBSERVATIONS:** It was hard to try to keep the order, sometimes they turned off their cameras or distracted, their parents helped monitoring the children from their homes
ACHIEVEMENTS: The children had a negative preconception of English due to the traditional methodology with which it is taught in schools. Once the class was finished, they manifested enthusiasm to keep attending, Therefore the achievement was not only the learnt vocabulary, but also, they engagement created through gamification methodology.	**ACHIEVEMENTS:** The objective of the class was met, and the children had an active participation during the class and interest in the activities. They felt more confident to interact with each other.

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During this first session, the most obvious difference is the difficulties parents have in guiding their children in their virtual classes. Another difference was that the interaction between the children was more fluid in the face-to-face mode. In this first session, the children of the virtual modality showed more prior knowledge on the subject.

Topic: My colorful world	
Methodology: Gamification/Audiolingual	
Goals At the end of the lesson students will be able to recognize and saying the colors.	
Grammatical Structures/Vocabulary: **Question:** What color is it? **Answer:** It is_____. Target vocabulary red, orange, blue, yellow, green, purple, pink, black and white.	
Face-to-face	**Virtual**
Material/Resources -Audio-visual resources -Color cardboards -Printed Worksheets. -Color pens -Q-tips -Acrylic paints	**Material/Resources** -Audio-visual resources (Videos, games, slides) -Songs -Images - Computer
Warm up 1. Song "What's your favorite color?" **New Learning and practice** 1. To teach the vocabulary 2. Color a drawing of the rainbow 3. Play "Touch the Colors on Posters" **Wrap up** 1. Play "Twister" 2. Play "I see something"	**Warm up** 1. Warm up using "The colour song" **New Learning and practice** 2. Introduce the topic using simple questions "What colour is my hat?" and show flashcards to teach the colours. 3. Activity "Simon says you have to find something RED" **Wrap up** 1. Students will draw a rainbow then they will paint it while the teacher says the colour.
OBSERVATIONS Children feel more attracted to learning when they perform kinesthetic activities, since it allows to use all the senses and create meaningful learning experiences.	**OBSERVATIONS** Students were attentive as the teacher gave instructions They participated in the activities carried out. By the end of the lesson the internet connection started to fail, but the children sent the screenshots of their works via WhatsApp.
ACHIEVEMENTS The objective of the class was met, and the children had an active participation during the class and interest in the activities. They felt more confident to interact with each other.	**ACHIEVEMENTS** Introducing new learning platforms Development of problem solving and technological skills using online platforms and apps.

With reference to the second session, in the virtual mode, it was decided to use known web platforms to facilitate interaction, but new web pages were also incorporated to keep the class dynamic. In terms of face-to-face, the experience of coloring objects not only contributes to language learning, but also to motor skills and creativity.

| Topic: Counting 1-10	
Methodology: Gamification/Audiolingual	
Goals Kids will be able to count numbers 1-10. Learn and follow new commands.	
Grammatical Structures/Vocabulary: Vocabulary: numbers from 1-10, jump, turn around, clap your hands, kick, wiggle	
Face-to-face	**Virtual**
Material/Resources Songs　　　　　Printed Worksheets. Chalk　　　　　Crayons / pencils 　　　　　　　　A didactic box	**Material/Resources** Audio-visual resources (videos, games, slides) Images Computer
Warm up 1. Song "Five Little monkeys jumping on the bed" imitating the movements **New Learning and practice** 1. Numbers writing practice 2. Play a "numbers puzzle" 3. Use the didact box **Wrap up** 1. Play Hopscotch	**Warm up** 1. Motivate the students, begin by saying, "Today, we will be learning about numbers. Raise your hand if you know a number." 2. Select students to share the number they know. 3. Video "The number song" **New Learning and practice.** 1. Explain the numbers showing images from google. 2. Read the Poem One, Two, Buckle My Shoe 3. Use a learning platform to play a matching game. **Wrap up** 1. Students will be to find real world objects, depend on what teacher says Example: "Please, can you show me four shoes"
OBSERVATIONS The weather on the day the class was performed was not the most optimal for playing outdoors, it was hot outside, so it was necessary to reduce the time for playing "Hopscotch"	**OBSERVATIONS** Students already had prior knowledge of English numbers. Bad internet connection
ACHIEVEMENTS Some of the children already knew the numbers, for those who already knew the vocabulary it was a reinforcement of their previous knowledge using fun activities, while for the others it was easy to keep up with the class. So, the goal of this lesson was achieved.	**ACHIEVEMENTS** Students learnt to identify numbers one to ten and indicated and showed an understanding of numbers through a worksheet.

The difference to highlight in this session is that at the moment of the research the children participating in the virtual modality already demonstrated a great mastery of technological resources and a better relationship with their peers. Although it is worth mentioning that the

children in the face-to-face modality were less exposed to the use of technology, which can be a negative point for this modality.

In answer to question 4. What is the difference in terms of students' knowledge obtained with face-to-face and virtual classes? The following charts are intended to show the knowledge that children demonstrated before the lessons (prior knowledge), in relation to the knowledge they reached at the end of each class.

The following analytic (Figure 1) corresponds to the pre-test, and as can be seen, in the first instance the children who participated in the virtual classes raised a higher percentage of vocabulary, in contrast to those of the virtual modality, whose results in this pre-test were considerably lower.

Figure 1 Pre-test

Pre-test

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3
Face-to-face	20%	33%	53%
Online	40%	41%	61%
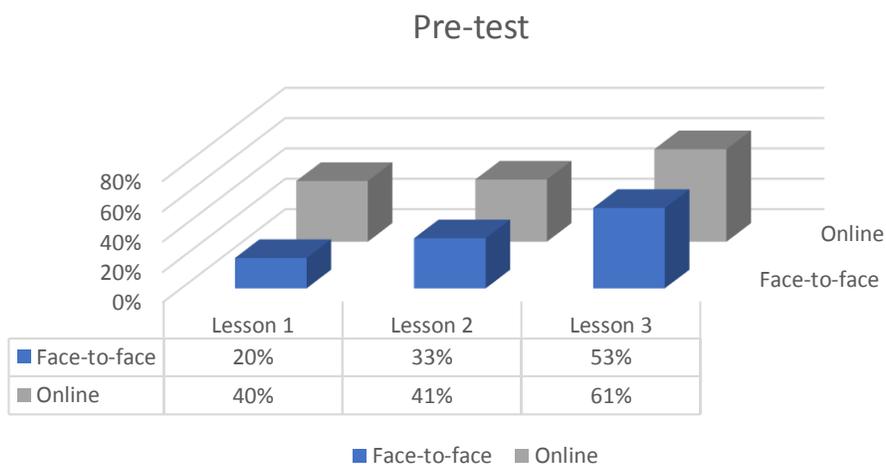
The bars below (Figure 2) represent the progress achieved by the children of both modalities at the end of the lessons (post-test). A change of scenario can be appreciated, since the students of the face-to-face modality achieved better results despite having reflected a lower percentage in the pre-test. This indicates that the methodology and modality used was a key factor in meeting the target vocabulary.
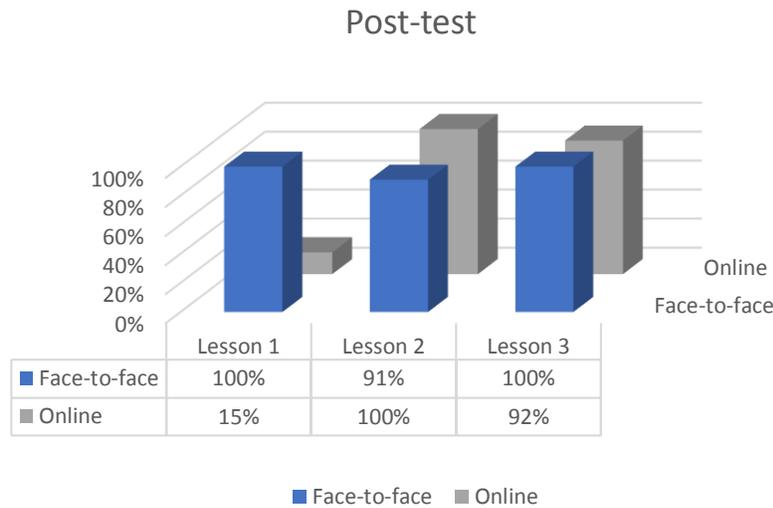
Figure 2 Post-test

Post-test

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3
■ Face-to-face	100%	91%	100%
■ Online	15%	100%	92%

■ Face-to-face   ■ Online

Table 4. Changes in participants' English Knowledge

Lessons	Face to face			Virtual classes			
	Pre-test	Post-test	Intra group differences	Pre-test	Post-test	Intra group differences	Inter group difference
Making new friends	2,4	9,8	7,4	3,6	8,2	4,6	2,8
My colorful world	4,4	11,2	6,8	5,2	11,6	6,4	0,4
Counting 1-10	7,2	12,6	5,4	8	12	4	1,4

Source: Register of the research (2020)

The table shows the average that the participants reached in each of the lessons in the different stages.

The lesson 'Making new friends' reports the highest intergroup difference. The correct number of answers given by the children in the post-test was 7,4 in comparison to the pretest for the face-to-face class, while pupils in the virtual class reported 4,6 correct answers. The difference inter groups was 2,8.

The lesson 'My Colorful World' reports the lowest intergroup difference. The correct number of answers given by the children in the post-test was 6,8 in comparison to the pretest for the face-to-face class, while the virtual class reported 6,4 correct answers. The intergroup difference was 0, 4.

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After lessons, accurate results were obtained, as it can be noted that some of the children who had a low level, managed to acquire vocabulary greater than 5 words, this is a great step for young learners.

The percentage of vocabulary acquired was higher in the face-to-face mode, although it is important to consider that the participants in the virtual mode had shown a greater background knowledge during the pre-test, which means that they previously had incorporated in their vocabulary some of the taught words in the lesson.

Figure 3 Final Results Constrast
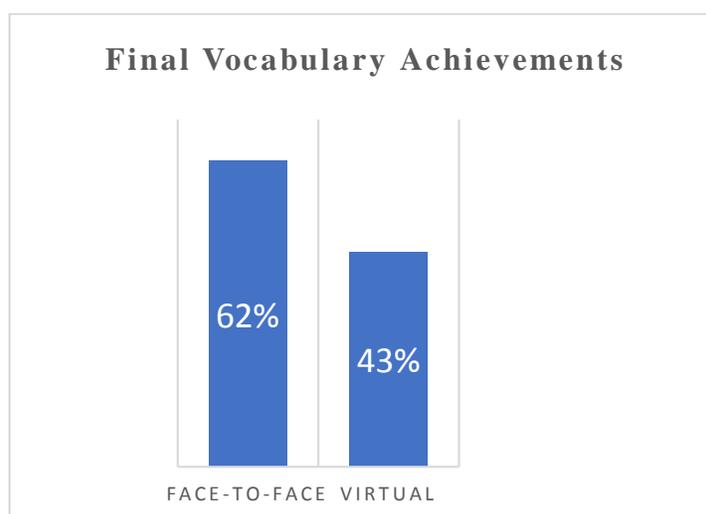
The final percentage of vocabulary acquired, (Figure 3), was obtained by calculating the differences between the pre-test and post-test in the two modalities separately. The graphical representation of the wheel does not show a very wide range of difference between the results obtained. However, in the modality that obtained the best results, it was in the classroom with 62% of words learned, compared to 43% in the virtual modality.

Discussion

Among the previous studies Parra (2020) is cited. He affirms that teaching of English as a foreign language is an extensive topic with many nuances to analyze, but in this research, we want to

address it from the current health, social, economic, and educational emergency, focusing on the transition from classroom to virtual education.

Returning to the Shashaa survey (2020) carried out in Germany, its results conclude that the change to the online modality is not a determining factor for students to withdraw from online courses, since according to the answers obtained, all have Internet connection and studying at home is more comfortable for them. However, that is not the reality in our country where schooling rates decreased during the pandemic, because of the lack of access to internet connection or digital devices to connect to their online classes, especially in rural areas. In fact, in this research for the online mode, low quality of the internet connection was one of the greatest challenges since children tend to lose interest in the class by not being able to communicate or appreciate the content in an appropriate way.

Therefore, and according to the reality of our educational system, it is not a convenient option to prolong online teaching, from the educational point of view. In addition, the results of the research concluded that teaching English online is less effective in elementary school children, due to the lack of interaction that is essential at this stage.

It should be noted that the children whose participation in the project was through virtual teaching had a medium level of knowledge, which is why a lower average of words learned is displayed in the tables, since the base of the one that they left was superior to those of the face.to-face. That is the reason why it was decided to teach them extra vocabulary as the class continues, in fact, the ICTs were of great importance to carry out dynamic and entertaining virtual classes, having the opportunity to show images and videos, make use of secure websites and carry out online activities. reaffirming the results presented by NMC-Horizon Report (2014), which shows that by using the software learner's marks improved 9%, in contrast to the decreased of 16% of students who failed the course (Castro, 2020).

Furthermore, current experience has shown that the teaching role goes beyond the pedagogical. Some exploratory studies anticipate that in this pandemic scenario the teacher must not only be a motivator and an academic guide, but also must assume affective containment, be a promoter of resilience, an emotional advisor, and an active listener; assuming the role of "guardian of hope for the evolution of education" (Villafuerte, Bello, Cevallos and Bermello, 2020, p.149).

The results of this research show that in our country there is still a great tendency to prefer face-to-face classes, especially for children, since they require developing their social, cognitive, and motor

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skills in a safe environment surrounded by their peers. In addition to the poor internet connection in some areas or the economic limitation for purchasing electronic devices to access ~~to~~ the classes. Despite these factors, the difference in final learning percentage was not wide in contrast to face-to-face education, which shows the interest of the children to continue learning.

Conclusion

Based on the literary review and the results obtained, the authors of this work declare that the proposed objectives for this study have been completed. After analyzing and contrasting the information obtained through the instruments used in the research, it has been found that even though English teaching in terms of content was the same, the modality that is used to teach the classes can be a relevant factor in the fulfillment of the objectives of the lesson.

The mechanisms of each one is different. On the one hand, virtual education offers teachers an opportunity to explore new tools and skills of the 21st century and take advantage of them for teaching English as a foreign language, through interactive classes that encourage children to participate and create positive feelings towards the target language. While face-to-face teaching has an irreplaceable point in its favor, which is direct person-to-person interaction, favoring collaborative learning. In addition, ~~to~~ this modality offers more alternatives to learn in real contexts. It also favors play, learning. and teamwork.

In any case, the evidence obtained in this research concludes that under the circumstances in which the research work was developed, online education obtained 43% effectiveness, compared to the 62% achieved under the face-to-face modality. On the contrary, the interview with the teacher reflects a different scenario, since he states that he feels more comfortable when teaching English virtually, due to the low time load and the possibility of innovating in each of his classes.

The contribution of this work is mainly to highlight the differences between the face-to-face and online modality for TEFL, contextualized to the socio-educational reality of our country and current global conditions. In addition to serving as a reference for future research in this field, which can provide relevant information that helps the educational community to improve and renew and adapt according to the changes that this globalized society constantly faces.

The limitation of this study is the reduced size of participants that does not allow to make any generalizations; however, it serves as a foundation for other researchers in the region to continue

studying the contributions of the online and face-to-face classes in English students to contribute to the improvement of the processes of learning this foreign language.

Acknowledgements

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