

**PERCEPTIONS OF EFL TEACHERS ON HOW TO TEACH ENGLISH IN A PUBLIC
SCHOOL IN BOGOTA DURING THE QUARANTINE FOR COVID 19**

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MAESTRIA EN ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS

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Abstract

This master thesis reports a qualitative research project guided by an inquiry, with the objective of analyzing the perceptions of EFL teachers on English teaching and learning in a public school in Bogotá during the quarantine for the Covid-19.

This research project was developed with 5 participants of Colegio República de China, in the northwest District of Engativá in Bogotá, Colombia. The 5 participants are teachers with more than 15 years of experience in EFL teaching.

Data were collected from questionnaires. The analysis of data showed that the processes of EFL teaching, according to the voices of the participants, have been impacted by a number of facts that have influenced the way in which those teachers perceive their experience of teaching the English language during the lockdown for the Covid-19. For instance, parents' lack of employment, connectivity and resources have influenced students' participation in the strategy "Learning at Home". Moreover, human losses and confinement influenced the physical, mental and psychological state of the population in general and more specifically, of EFL students and teachers at Colegio República de China.

Finally, it is concluded that at the present, the role of teachers and other members of the academic community is changing and needs to change. Moreover, education in Colombia brings enormous challenges. In addition, academic processes in general, and particularly in EFL teaching are being reshaped and also the way in which the participants see their practicum and in the use of technological tools.

Key words: perception, virtual teaching and learning, Constructivism, autonomous learning, face to face education, remote education, MALL

Resumen

Esta tesis de maestría, reporta un proyecto de investigación cualitativa guiado por una indagación narrativa, cuyo objetivo fue analizar las percepciones de cinco docentes de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera del Colegio República de China, en el noroccidente de Bogotá, en la Localidad de Engativá, acerca de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de inglés en un colegio distrital en Bogotá, Colombia, durante el confinamiento por Covid-19.

El análisis de los datos mostró que los procesos de enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera han sido impactados negativamente por un número de factores que han reconfigurado la forma en la que los docentes perciben su práctica. Algunos de esos factores son la falta de empleo de los padres de familia, falta de recursos para financiar materiales de uso académico, falta de acceso a Internet, los cuales influyeron en la participación de los estudiantes y sus acudientes en la estrategia “Aprendiendo en Casa”, establecida por la Secretaría de Educación de Bogotá. Adicionalmente, la pérdida de vidas humanas y el confinamiento impactaron el estado físico, mental y psicológico de la población en general, y más específicamente los estudiantes y docentes del Colegio República de China.

Finalmente, se concluye que en el momento presente el papel de docentes y otros miembros de la comunidad académica está cambiando. Además, la educación en Colombia presenta grandes retos. Adicionalmente, los procesos académicos en general y en particular la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera se están reconfigurando.

Palabras clave: percepción, educación presencial, educación virtual, Constructivismo, aprendizaje autónomo, Enseñanza asistida por celular

Dedicatoria

Dedico esta tesis a los docentes cuyas voces han sido calladas

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Chapter 1

Statement of the problem

In this first chapter I introduce the generalities of my study, justification, research questions and objectives of my research project.

This study was carried out at Colegio República de China in the District 10 of Bogotá (Engativá). It is a public school with approximately 2000 students. In the primary section of the school, there are about 300 students, divided into 5 levels with 2 groups in each one. The school faces a number of difficulties, such as the lack of materials and resources for each subject, and lack of English labs, among others. These difficulties affect not only the teaching of all subjects, but also the students' learning process.

As any other public school in Colombia, English is a subject which is included in the curricula for all courses from First Grade to Eleventh Grade. In addition, the guidelines given by the Ministry of Education and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), must be kept in mind. The CEFR defines the linguistic competence that individuals should have in any language. It establishes 6 reference levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. EFL teaching at public schools must focus on helping students reach an English level according to their age and grade.

According to Decreto 3870, 2006, in the case of primary school, students between first grade and third grade are supposed to reach an A1 level, while students between fourth and fifth grade are supposed to reach A2.

1.1 Introduction

The conception of the English Language in the Latin American context is connected to Eurocentrism, as well as the presence of English in curricula and in the Bilingualism policies which have appeared in Colombia in the last decades. Eurocentrism is the use of reason as the only way to know something. The term is applied to any kind of attitude, posture or intellectual or social approach, which considers that Europe and its culture have been the center and engine of civilization. This way of thinking considers no European trajectories as incomplete or deformed.

According to Robin Kelly in the *Discourse on Colonialism* by Aimé Césaire, the colonial domination has required a total form of thinking in which everything that is considered good, civilized and advanced is in relation to Europe. The coloniality of knowledge denies other ways in which knowledge is produced. It determines what knowledge is and who produces it. The decolonial perspective intends to re write history from another logic, another language and another framework of thinking which is alternative to modern Eurocentrism and believes it is necessary to develop a new language that will represent the complex processes of the capitalist/patriarchal modern/colonial world-system without depending on the old language which was inherited from the social sciences of the XIX century. The decolonial thinker Walter D. Mignolo states that it is essential to establish a “dialogue” with non western ways of knowledge that see the world as a whole in which everything is connected to everything. According to the sociologist Aníbal Quijano, in an interview with Jorge Pereira Filho, “there is, certainly, a past that is globally common to all of us, which allowed the formation of a pattern of power whose

inherent main feature is its Coloniality and we are all inhabitants of it and we are also inhabited by it. And that “racialization” and “capitalistization” of the social relations of that new pattern of power and the Eurocentrism of its control are in the very base of our actual problems of identity”. Similarly, he claims that “until the point in which most of the countries in America have not achieved basic equality and the des/coloniality of power, and considers it difficult that the integration of Latin America can move forward and consolidate. Up to the present there have been efforts in terms of merchandising, as local markets are considered small, due to the limited purchasing power of most people. But isn't it time to wonder why Switzerland or Belgium, which do not own the resources of our countries, or the size or our populations, have great internal markets? This fact can only be inquired of, or answered, in terms of the coloniality of power.”

In this spirit, we, the teachers of the subject English as a Foreign Language have been forced to limit our practicum to the regulations of Common European Framework of Reference for the teaching of languages: learning, teaching, assessment, which is a European standard, used also in other countries, to measure the level of comprehension and oral expression in a specific language. It is a set of rules based on the European reality. It is conceived in the way students must be. We as teachers enter a classroom with encounters and inconsistencies. What should we teach? What should students learn? We teachers face realities which are different from the ones included at the Common European Framework. There is not a unique way in which things must be. There is not a way in which students must learn. There are particularities. We as teachers should reconsider our ways of producing knowledge and our teaching practices.

In the teaching of English as a Foreign Language, teachers deal with a vast number of academic, administrative, ethical and social challenges, being one of them the social and academic pressure

that we must face in terms of their own knowledge of the subject they are in charge of.

Oftentimes, teachers must teach values that are not present in the reality of their communities. In spite of all those difficulties, we always make our best effort to overcome them and achieve the best academic outcome. As time goes by, more difficulties arise and more demanding our job is.

Based on the insights of Edgar Morin, the teacher of the future must own certain competences, like guarantee relevant knowledge, teach about human condition, teach ethics, teach identity, among others. (Morin, 2010).

We are now living in a complex world, in which we witness injustice, selfishness, inequality and violence on a daily basis, truth, justice, respect towards all citizens, freedom, peace, human rights, are usually empty words. The educational system must face the contradictions between the values it teaches and the existing costumes. How can teachers teach a society like this one? How can they not? Teach citizens cannot be limited to a class schedule in a school and it must be based on the productions of knowledge. How can we prevent violence in a society where people who own the political or economic power are placed above the rest and break the law for their own benefit? (Lascoumes, 1997). Teachers believe that humanistic values have no echo in the minds of students. The prohibition of violence provokes a reaction of incomprehension. The fight against violence in schools requires dialogue, debate, reinvent rules and principles of civilization. If violence is the real problem, then it must be in the heart of pedagogy (Pain, 1992). Violence is not only physically hitting someone, or thefts, but also lack of freedom of expression, movement or dignity. Students must be sitting for hours, unable to speak, without moving or talking, pay attention, be productive, show their work, accept opinions about their work, answer tests, accept opinions about their intelligence, culture and behavior. Schools put too much pressure on students and that is where violence starts. Most human beings want to be recognized

and appreciated as unique people. Nobody wants to be a number in a class with a number. Teachers are also victims of massification, of being treated like a number, to be undervalued by their coworkers and bosses, and at the same time judged by the academic results of their students. Teachers are expected to serve justice. Solidarity and the sense of responsibility depend greatly on the sense of justice. Serving justice requires specific competences. Teachers always keep in mind principles of justice and the consequences of every decision: a fair option is not always effective... (Perrenoud, 1993). How can teachers serve justice if they are not treated with justice?

Nowadays, in the case of teachers of English as a Foreign language in public schools in Bogotá, there is an evident disconnection among the government policies of English teaching, curricula and school programs, which intend to follow the parameters of the Common European Framework. We know for a fact that the Common European Framework was designed for a society which is extremely different from ours, in terms of culture and many other aspects.

In addition, we teachers have witnessed the fact that the curricula in schools are disconnected from the reality of the students. Curricula for teaching English have been designed in a way which is unrealistic and does not include our students' interests and needs. Neither do they include students' reality.

Specifically in the case of Colegio República de China, around 50 percent of the students are home alone while their parents work long hours, and children are left to the care of grandparents or older siblings. Many families do not own a computer, tablet or laptop, do not have internet access, many parents only have one or two cell phones with no capacity for access to platforms. Also the academic level of the students families is low oftentimes, there is usually no way for

parents to check their kids notebooks or homework, or for students to carry out effective processes of autonomous learning.

In general, teachers who teach many different subjects, such as Math, Science, Spanish, Social Studies, Art, Music, Physical Education and others, feel that academic processes are being carried out in a rather ineffective way. However, they feel burned out and overwhelmed with too much paperwork, too many meetings and long hours. Each teacher, no matter what subject or level, is supposed to teach 23 hours per week, attend a two hour meeting and meet with parents for two hours.

In the case of primary school teachers, we teach 5 hours per day, from Monday to Friday, comply with playground duty during entrance and break once a week, and door duty everyday.

In the case of English teachers, our struggles are even greater. Communicative skills are especially hard to work on in a Spanish speaking environment, especially the listening and speaking. As we teach a language which is not students' mother tongue, motivation in students decreases and it is rather discouraging for learners and their families to try to comply with assignments in English. Most people are afraid of English.

Due to the quarantine for Covid-19, which started in Bogotá in March of 2020, the need to explore this new reality has emerged, as it has influenced the lives of people in all dimensions. As EFL teachers, it is relevant to understand how academic processes have been affected and what our contribution has been.

This introduction is the starting point of this case study. This study aims at understanding the perceptions of teachers of English as a Foreign Language on English teaching and learning during the quarantine for the Covid-19, in a public school in the north west of Bogota, Colombia.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Keeping in mind the factors mentioned above, and the fact that the lockdown for Covid-19 in Bogotá started in March of 2020, it is of great relevance to reflect on EFL teachers in Bogotá and their perceptions on how to teach English as a Foreign Language in a public school in Bogotá during the quarantine for the Covid-19.

This study was carried out at Colegio República de China, located in the north west of Bogotá, in the District of Engativá.

I intended to have an initial diagnosis through a questionnaire which was answered by five teachers of English as Foreign Language in the month of May 2020. Those five teachers are in charge of teaching English as a Foreign Language in Primary and Secondary levels, in the school where I am currently working as a supporting English teaching in Primary School.

In the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in the public schools in Bogotá, not only in the school I currently for at, teachers face a number of challenges, as described above, being one of the main the fact that they must find a balance between the educational policies of the Ministry of Education (MEN), Secretariat of Education (SED), Institutional System of Assessment (SIE) and their own beliefs and conceptions related to the processes of teaching and learning of English. The contradictions between these organizations mentioned above have prevented the success of these processes, in spite of the *Acuerdo del Concejo de Bogotá “Bogotá Bilingüe”* (2005), Law of Bilingualism (Ley 1651 de 2013) and the Basic Standards of Competence in Foreign Languages (MEN).

1.3 Research question

Based on my own experience as an EFL teacher during this pandemic, the process of reflection that has led me to this research problem, has also allowed me to establish a question: How do teachers of English as a Foreign Language perceive their job in the midst of quarantine?

1.4 Research objectives

General

The general objective of this research is to understand the perceptions of EFL teachers on English teaching and learning in a public school in Bogotá during the quarantine for Covid-19.

Specific

The specific objectives are:

1. To analyze the impact of Covid-19 and the lockdown in EFL teaching.
2. To understand hardships which emerged in the teaching and learning EFL processes during the quarantine and how teachers dealt with them.

1.5 Rationale

Being a teacher is a hard task, and we teachers are always in conflict between what we must do and that we are told to do. Additionally, the perfect school, the perfect group of teachers, and the perfect group of students does not exist. We may have an outstanding lesson plan, but we often lack resources, or the previous knowledge of our students is not enough for the activities we intend to develop in class. Frequently, students have no attitude or disposition for class. This is especially true for teachers of English as a Foreign Language. There is a number of situations that affect teaching practices, and lead teachers to suffer from anxiety, anger, stress, frustration, depression, and this state of affairs is regarded by some teachers as normal. “This has always

been like this, what can we do?”, let us not waste our time talking about it, we will not be heard”. Those teachers lost hope.

At the present time it is impossible to remain silent after witnessing injustice, discrimination, corruption, lack of respect, indifference, in some members of the educational system. Very often teachers are not regarded as professionals whose opinions are relevant, but they are treated like children and their reasons are ignored. The conditions of schools are not always appropriate for the needs of students and teachers. Usually space, illumination and air circulation are not adequate. There is too much noise and overcrowding, which affect the mental health of both teachers and students and make them feel overwhelmed and become aggressive.

Due to the implementation of the *Jornada Única*, which in many cases has not been not adequate, in some schools students do not have access to breakfast and lunch or a proper place to sit down and eat. In spite of that, students must be at school for 8 hours a day. This has affected students’ levels of concentration and therefore, their academic results and behavior. It is disappointing to see that there is no interest in which teachers and students be productive in academic terms. The quality of education is not even a goal in the minds of some coordinators and principals. Most of the time the priority consists on locking 40 students up in a classroom and being fed they by teachers, who are treated like caregivers or nannies.

In the specific case of the teachers of English as a Foreign Language, hardships are even greater, due to the fact that most students are reluctant towards the learning, in spite of the fact that Colombian population acknowledges English as the universal language for academic and job purposes. There is a generalized fear towards the language, which is connected to the belief that it is a difficult language, and in some cases because of rejection to American and European cultures, in spite of the imperialist hegemony.

In addition to all of the facts mentioned above, there is the quarantine due to the appearance of the first pandemic of 2020: the Covid-19. Since the 17th of March we have been confined due to the fact that Coronavirus appeared when, in late 2019, someone at the Huanan seafood market in Wuhan was infected with a virus from a bat. Several of the early cases had visited the market and so the virus is thought to have a zoonotic origin. The virus that caused the outbreak is known as SARS-CoV-2. The scientific consensus is that Covid-19 has a natural origin. The probable bat-to-human infection may have been among people processing bat carcasses and guano in the production of traditional Chinese medicines. “La Covid-19 es la enfermedad causada por el nuevo coronavirus conocido como SARS-CoV-2. La OMS tuvo noticia por primera vez de la existencia de este nuevo virus el 31 de diciembre de 2019, al ser informada de un grupo de casos de «neumonía vírica» que se habían declarado en Wuhan (República Popular China)”.(OMS, 2020).

The virus spread all around the world and in March, 2020, the Government of Colombia decided we needed a lockdown. Additionally, the government stated that students have the right to education and in spite of the crisis, they must continue with their regular academic activities from home. The Secretariat of Education of Bogota implemented the strategy called “Learning At Home” (Aprendiendo en Casa), which seeks to provide guideline, contents and tools, to the academic community of the city of Bogotá for the design of pedagogical strategies needed during the sanitary emergency decreed because of the Covid-19, allows children and teenagers to continue their learning process at home. The main objective of this strategy is to strengthen the home as a learning space, of co responsibility, autonomy and care, enriched by several pedagogical mediation actions proposed and oriented from the school and supported by the teachers and schools. The strategy intends “promover experiencias educativas que fortalezcan la

estructura, la estabilidad y la esperanza, generar oportunidades y experiencias para que, en el escenario del hogar, todas las personas reconozcan y profundicen las capacidades y habilidades que les permiten comprender y hacer frente desde lo personal y lo colectivo a sus realidades (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2020, pp 2).

It is necessary to clarify that “Learning At Home” is not a process of virtual education or virtualization of schools, it is not a model of Education at home or “Home school”. It is a strategy which is built and dynamized every day. It is also a space to learn and face new challenges. In this line of thought, we teachers are supposed to continue working taking advantage of all technological tools available. This has required teachers to continue carrying out academic process that have started at the beginning of the year, with no training, no resources and no certainty of what the future would bring. It is also essential to mention that there was no preparation or training for teachers or students before the implementation of the strategy.

The hard times which the world is going through, with the lockdown in many countries like Colombia, due to the Covid-19, for so many months, has affected the way of living and dynamics of life in a number of dimensions. Education is one of them. It has not been easy for students, teachers and administrative staff to face the challenges of these times, when everything is expected to be normal, but it is far from it. As language teachers, this is one of the many situations we have to deal with, which affects our perceptions of the work we do and leads us to wonder how we can improve the way we work and better our practicum.

As language teachers, we have a very heavy burden on our shoulders. At the beginning of the lockdown, there was no time for us to stop and reflect on how to assume the Learning at Home strategy, but we were required to continue our academic processes as usual. Adapting to this new

way of working has not been easy at all. Moreover, now that the students of Bogotá are starting to slowly go back to school after 16 months of quarantine, we teachers must return to classrooms in the uncertainty and imminent risk of getting infected with the virus. We must continue at schools, as mediators, between students and school, in a time when many people have been suffering from anxiety, depression and other emotional disorders and we all have had to deal with loss, not only the loss of human lives, but the loss of little individual freedoms and privileges.

Additionally, this research is a valuable opportunity for me as an EFL teacher and researcher to reflect on how this quarantine has affected our role as teachers.

Chapter 2: Literature review

In this chapter I present some studies that contribute to my research question and its importance in this field of research.

Perception

Firstly, I would like to bring the readers' attention to the concept of perception. Perception is the way in which something is regarded, perceived or interpreted. Perception creates our experience of the world around us and it is very important in understanding human behavior. Every person perceives the world and approaches problems and situations differently.

Montes and Rivera (2014), in their research, present a reflection on the role of perception in widening and organization of the experience of people. At this point, three levels of analysis are considered. The first one is related to the construction of phenomena and the relationships established by students as source, medium and receiver in the case of the phenomenology of audition. The second level of analysis takes place through the elements that include widening and organization of the experience of subjects, in the way students talk and behave in different situations in a classroom. Lastly, the analysis of perception as a widener of the experience and a tool for organizing the construction of explanation of events that take place in nature. (Figure 1).



According to Montes and Rivera, "when we discuss the term perception, we relate it with certain senses given by nature, which influence the way in which we are able to communicate with the world, such as the sense of touch, hearing, taste, smell and vision". Perception is not limited to

what our senses receive, but it also includes the experience and the questions that may arise, as there is a need to ask questions about what goes on in the world.

Before sharing ideas with others, the subject must talk to himself about the phenomena, in an attempt to comprehend the variations of the world, providing them with sense and meaning.

After that, constructing the phenomena includes a re elaboration of the language. Because of that, the organizations and individual expressions of a subject show what he has built or modified of the phenomena. Also the way subjects act show how they talk and express themselves.

Finally, the authors state that “perception is a relevant element in the construction of explanations”. In spite of that, it is common to undervalue it, but it must be understood as an element that allows the widening of the experience of the subject and the organization of the phenomena. The construction of explanations from the point of view of the role of perception permits the understanding of how the subject establishes relationships with the world. The subject intends to provide it with meaning through his senses, sensations which are explored and self-talked so that experience can be organized and communicated.

Bermudez, Fandiño and Ramirez (2014), describe the findings of a study which took place in five public schools belonging to the Proyecto Bogotá Bilingüe (PBB) in the subjects of English and French, and it let the authors recognize the perceptions and opinions of teachers regarding three main aspects which are key in the implementation of the Program: background, resources and external support and expectations.

“The findings of this study suggest that perceptions of teachers, coordinators and principals must be taken into account in a deeper way by the academic community in the city. Moreover, this approach will allow a reconfiguration or re interpretation of the discourse and the practices that

constitute the program as a whole. In such a way, isolated decisions would be avoided depending on the interests of city administrations. Therefore, a collective commitment is required in order to guarantee successful teaching processes and a valuable learning of foreign languages”

(Fandiño, 2014, p. 233)

Perceptions on PNB

PNB (*Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo*) is one of the policies which have intended to improve EFL teaching in Colombia since 2004.

Quintero and Escobar (2012), claim that their main objective of this thesis is to gather the perceptions of teachers and students in three universities in Bogota about the PNB; in this way the authors intend to analyze the impact of a public policy in these communities and observe the strategies which have been applied for its completion. Their research revealed that there is in general a difference of opinion among teachers of each of the universities. In the case of La Salle, the highest percentage of agreement was observed only in one question, with 55%; whereas in the 16 questions only in three the answers given by the teachers coincided. In Los Libertadores, the difference of opinion is less notorious in spite of the fact that it appeared in 6 questions out of 16. However, there was a high percentage of agreement in three questions, whereas in the remaining nine questions, the agreement percentage varied between 50 and 60 per cent, showing greater homogeneity compared to the findings of La Salle. Finally, the teachers at Javeriana are more similar to the ones in La Salle than the teachers at Los Libertadores, showing in their answers a high difference in criteria in some cases in which they did not even reach a 40

percent of agreement. In addition, the teachers at Javeriana reflected a relatively high percentage of agreement in 7 questions out of 16.

As a conclusion, a percentage of disagreement so high as the one observed in this study, makes the authors question the possibility of reaching common objectives and the standardization of tests, without even mentioning what the applying of methodological approaches would mean.

Concerning the perceptions of students, teachers and managers, certain negativity or distrust can be observed related to the PNB and its achievements; this feeling is increased in the case of managers, who are the ones the most knowledgeable on the PNB and its goals. This is not a perception with no fundamentals, as could be observed in the results of this research. In the case of students, there was an interesting similarity in their answers, especially if we consider that they belong to three universities with different social profiles. However, this similarity showed how students prefer a traditional style of English teaching which promotes the development of reception abilities; this means that priority is granted to abilities which do not require students to take risks or expose themselves to the criticism of their classmates when interacting with the group, and also, they do not comply with the aims of the PNB of turning Colombia into a bilingual country, since they do not promote communication and interaction among students.

Also, their insecurity regarding certain aspects, for instance, if it is easy for Colombians to learn a foreign language, if people who speak a foreign language are smarter, among others; it reflects a lack of knowledge in the subject and a lack of trust related to what they can achieve in the field of English learning.

As far as teachers are concerned, authors found a lack of homogenization in their criteria and a disparity of concepts referring their teaching methodological praxis. This made the authors think

about English teaching in universities which could be considered from two perspectives: as eclectic in a positive perspective and as a disorganized one from a negative perspective. It was evident that there is lack of common parameters which facilitate the standardization of criteria in an educational level for the certification of levels, and in a methodological level for the homologation and student mobility.

In the case of managers, their efforts are appreciated and the universities they represent, but it is also notorious their lack of credibility in relation to the PNB and what can really be achieved.

These perceptions, not very encouraging towards the PNB are originated in a context different from the higher education and it is in the secondary education (básica y media). That is where the most number of inconveniences appear. It is a paradox that right in that context the Government has developed the guidelines for schools to follow and where its influence is greater, and that is also the context in which many reasons are present to block its success. The lack of training in teachers on their competence in English and in methodological aspects; the few hours of input that students enjoy, the great amount of students per class, are just few of the most evident. In addition, the lack of coverage nationwide and the lack of resources to build a solid infrastructure, it could be stated that public policies as the PNB agree with the popular feeling that they are designed more at an abstract level, not related to reality. As a conclusion, the authors suggest, firstly, that channels of communication be strengthen inside the universities, so that the scope of the plan can be understood. Secondly, establish stronger language teaching policies in the universities, the case of La Salle could be a model for other universities. Thirdly, offer training seminars for teachers to promote the unification of criteria in terms of methodology and assessment. Fourth, the MEN should rethink the goals proposed in the PNB in the aspects related to the level of English expected in students by the end of their undergraduate programs. This is

due to the fact that the real level of students at the beginning of undergraduate programs does not allow them to obtain the B2 level. Fifth, carry out a thorough analysis of what goes on in secondary school teaching of English (básica y media) so that the MEN strategies can be strengthened leading to an appropriate articulation which can be real and effective with the PNB.

Perceptions regarding TICS

In the words of Álvarez-Quiroz and Romero (2015), one of their aims has been to make visible the voices of teachers of rural institutions in some regions of Colombia regarding TICS. It is essential to begin with the experiences and perceptions of rural teachers, in order to achieve a correct appropriation of TICS in pedagogical processes «where actions, interpretations and perceptions have not altered, in one word, the identity of the known subject» (Vasilachis, 2006: 52), since they are the ones who can identify needs and strengths related to social, political and educational aspects of the environment in which they work. From this perspective it is understood that in the formulation of criteria for the use of TICS, the opinions, expectations, perceptions and interests of teachers are of great importance. The epistemology of the known subject needs to acknowledge his ability to participate in the transformation of his context. He is recognized as a political subject, as a subjectivity that builds power. It is essential for teachers to enjoy greater autonomy and power of decision on the contents of the curricula, as a strategy to channel their fears and desires of change. Teachers identify as a good opportunity the type of software used in training sessions, which allows them to come up with proposals taking into account their surroundings and what they consider necessary and relevant for the school. Communication features of TICS must strengthen local aspects in order to achieve a dialogue of

knowledge in the globalized world. Some teachers consider TICS as didactic tools or mediators in the learning process, since they allow them to use diverse forms of representations of knowledge –audios, videos, texts–. It is vital that rural teachers recognize themselves as political subjects, who can generate changes. Therefore, they need to have spaces where they can express their opinions. The aim of this study is to characterize the perceptions of a group of rural teachers on the use of TICS in their pedagogical practices. Through the qualitative research method, the study was based on a case study, with focus groups and life stories as techniques of data collection. One of the conclusions is the importance of recognizing teachers as political subjects, a subjectivity that builds power. That is why it is relevant for teachers to have greater autonomy and power of decision on the contents of the curricula as a strategy to channel fears and enhance a desire for change.

Perceptions on a videogame in a classroom

As stated by Castellanos, Castellanos, Salazar and Casas (2016), the qualitative research project intends to observe and interpret social behaviors and work dynamics of a population in order to comprehend what occurs in the school context of the students of fourth grade, related to the videogame Minecraft from the categories of collaborative work and didactics of videogames. The second phase of the study seeks to know the teacher's perceptions on videogames. The perception on the use of videogames in a classroom changes when pedagogical alternatives are studied and “teachers are the ones who really experience a change in their attitude, since they used to think about technological devices as a waste of time, not only for students, but also for

their families” (Sánchez, 2013, p.16). Videogames are valuable resources that can be useful tools for students to build ideas about the world, discuss values and explore social rules about their reality (McGonigal, 2013 y Gros, 2008).

In conclusion, Minecraft is “viewed as an educational tool, and motivates the creation of another type of educational scenario which goes beyond the traditional model of teaching and learning, where methodologies, forms and approaches to teaching can be changed, and also relations, roles and positions of the subjects involved. Teachers’ perceptions can be a limiting factor in the inclusion of a videogame in the classroom, as the findings of this study showed. Oftentimes teachers feel insecure to include a videogame in the classroom since they might not know it and believe they lack the necessary knowledge to use it as a teaching tool.

Perceptions on the teaching of Phonetics

Orta Gracia (2000) pretends to analyze the beliefs of a group of teachers of Spanish as a Foreign Language in a specific situation of immersion, and understand the measure in which they are reflected in their teaching practice. The author claims that the teaching of pronunciation has passed from absolute ignorance (with the grammar translation method), to outstanding leadership (audiolingual method). In the case of the Natural Approach, pronunciation is supposed to be learned in an unconscious way through the students being exposed to oral texts. In the Communicative approach pronunciation is integrated with the other oral competences, and fluency is more relevant than correction. Additionally, there are three different types of classes

depending on the way teachers deal with pronunciation. For instance, in integrated classes, pronunciation is one more component in the lesson plan, and it is present in the activities included in the class. A teacher would correct pronunciation as soon as a mistake is made. In reactive classes, the teacher's role is correct a mistake immediately. On the other hand, in practical classes, the teacher isolates a specific aspect of pronunciation, and designs a specific activity to work on it, in spite of the fact that there is no connection to the specific objectives of the class. Also, it has been observed that most teachers avoid working on pronunciation in the classroom. The authors of the books do not design materials for pronunciation in spite of the fact that these books are aligned with the Common European Framework, which is included in some chapters. For example, chapter 4.5 mentions the competences that students are supposed to develop for the four communicative processes of the language: speaking, writing, listening and reading. One of the abilities mentioned in order to speak is to articulate the sentence (phonetic ability). In order to listen effectively, the need to perceive the sentence (auditive phonetic ability) is mentioned.

Chapter 5.2 is dedicated to the communicative competences of the user, and includes phonological competence, which is the pronunciation of the oral language, and orthoepic competence, pronunciation of a written text. Both competences are part of the linguistic competences. In 5.2.1.4 phonological competence is defined as the knowledge and the ability in production and perception of phonemes, words and sentences. After interviewing teachers, it is concluded that teachers must give more relevance to pronunciation in their classes. Most teachers used terms like phonetics, pronunciation and intonation indistinctively. Also, teachers admitted that they do not include pronunciation activities in their lesson plans. The author mentions a paper by Dolors Poch, which states that in the teaching of English little attention is paid to

pronunciation problems of students, due to the fact that there is a widely spread belief that a teacher needs to be a specialist in phonetics in order to deal with pronunciation problems.

Furthermore, Lidia Usó Viciedo, (2009), claims that some teachers of Spanish believe that Spanish is a phonetic language and therefore it is easy to learn, and that pronunciation is an aspect that is learned in the process while the students are living among native speakers. Because of that pronunciation is left out of most classes.

Perceptions on communication among English teachers and the Coordination

Vargas (2017), states that the main features of communication in the institution are fluency, dynamics of information and communication with the coordinator. Due to that, we can claim that the coordination of the English Department is concerned about providing information in a swift way and uses appropriate means and techniques in an effective manner. It can be concluded that the coordination keeps teachers informed about regulations and rules, so that teachers are aware of the way to execute their duties and responsibilities. There are some difficulties in lateral communication, among teachers, and factors like spaces and schedules make working in groups difficult. In terms of motivation, teachers perceive that their work and prestige as teachers are undervalued, and they do not feel motivated on their working conditions. Therefore, it can be stated that there is dissatisfaction in teachers, which affects their self-esteem, generating conflict, frustration and stress. Moreover, teachers do not feel very motivated to work towards the objectives of the area. The positive features in terms of trust are the respect for the spaces assigned to teachers, the importance of relationships and meetings for friendly purposes and the level of trust. In spite of that, teachers perceive that these relations are not entirely sincere. This

leads the author to conclude that other values such as security, loyalty, friendship and openness towards others are being affected.

In relation to participation, the positive features are connected to the high level of effectiveness of teamwork, the level of preparation of other teachers, the relevance of general meetings with coordinators. Based on all of the above, it can be concluded that the coordination office encourages participation and teamwork.

Perceptions on motivation in EFL teachers

As said by Vargas (2008), the main elements in teachers' motivation which intervene in teachers careers of two private schools in the border between México and the United States were studied and analyzed according to the teachers' answers to questionnaires. It was found that training offered at a school or university is relevant for teachers as it helps them enrich their everyday teaching practices. Teachers cherish and feel committed to the institution they work for. The fact that teachers have numerous hours of training show their interest to become better professionals, and they feel they are ready to transmit knowledge to their students. This shows that teachers are interested, and that is due to the fact that they are motivated. When human beings start any kind of activity, they have been motivated by some kind of stimuli that come from the permanent interaction between them and any component of the environment surrounding them. Also, it is true that receiving resources necessary to work every day make teachers feel motivated, as well as being updated in technology issues and pedagogy in general. Motivation is a state of internal stimulation that results of a need and generally activates the behavior oriented to satisfy it, according to Pecorelli (1995).

Perceptions on PCI

As claimed by Changano and Roque, (2018), teachers' perceptions on PCI are oriented towards to considering it a document that organizes their teaching practice, and as an administrative document, with which not all teachers identify with. As a consequence, it can become less effective for teachers and the curricular organization of the school. In terms of the phases of development of PCI, more importance is given to the stages of planning and execution and less relevance to the assessment stage. Due to this, PCI is not worked on as a whole, and time is not enough for the development of all the stages. Additionally, the elaboration of PCI requires a pedagogical leader in charge of organizing, planning, leading and executing all these stages. On the other hand, it was found that not all the teachers have the same level of commitment for this task. Teachers believe that the time devoted for this activity is never enough, and oftentimes the task is not consensual or systematized. The document is considered a key element for teachers to do a better job.

Perceptions on teachers' evaluation

In the words of Camarillo (2015), after analyzing uncertainty and anxiety of teachers during the evaluation process due to the fact that they do not know the result they will get, and stated the relevance of the position as the first author in published articles, the author claims that there is a constant race against time, and authors do not have enough time to write a convenient amount of articles before the deadline comes. In chapter four he referred to the perception of publishing in

high impact magazines and the difference between the authors in distant places of the country and the authors in the capital. According to Hugues Lagrange, when human beings are faced to a threaten, they have two alternatives: fleeing and aggression. But human beings know another feeling: a fear that is socially and culturally recycled, a "derivating fear". It is a feeling of uncertainty and vulnerability. However, it cannot be stated that all teachers experience this kind of fear. Based on the testimonies, it can be deduced that keeping any of the SNI grants is complicated. In spite of the fact that the study is located in a university on the north border of México, results can be generalized, as the SNI precisely evaluates the productivity of the scientific community of Mexican IES (Institutos de Educación Secundaria) based on a national standard. On the other hand, there might be differences in several institutional environments and the analysis is a subjective interpretation of the researcher. Keeping the membership implies a permanent struggle for teachers as they must deal with worries, tensions and trouble both in and out of the workplace. In addition, the participants are aware of the fact that they must compete with other teachers in order to publish articles in high impact magazines, and that competition is affected by the differences in the institutional environments, which can be a disadvantage when being evaluated.

In this spirit, teachers' perceptions are valuable and relevant to make decisions that can lead to the improvement of academic processes.

In Person Teaching and Learning

In education, two main trends / methods are considered: In person teaching and virtual teaching. For quite some time, there have been a number of academic debates and discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of each one, and which one is more effective than the other. Due to the quarantine, the academic community in general has been reflecting on the principles and assumptions of these two trends.

In person teaching might be the oldest and the most common. It is also the kind of teaching and learning that we are used to. We learned in person and we tend to believe it is the most effective way of carrying out academic processes. We are convinced that people, especially children, need a teacher who can guide them, motivate and encourage, assess and work with them as a team, which is more challenging through a screen.

EFL teachers always thought the only way to carry out their duties was on face to face learning, until a decade ago, when virtual education emerged. At that time and from that moment on, they have been thinking about how: how to motivate, how to control attendance and discipline, how to explain a difficult topic, how to assess, how to give proper feedback, how to make bonds, how to be effective teachers, how to make students learn.

During the last year, because of the lockdown for the Covid-19, the quarantine left us with no other possibility than the use of technology to pretend that we were able to continue academic processes through social media, virtual platforms and so on. We wonder up to what extent we have succeeded.

The following are the insights of some people about in person learning:

In the words of Browning et Al, (2020), education can be thought of as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society. Education is supposed to guide children in learning a culture, molding their behavior in the ways of adulthood, and directing them toward their eventual role in society. In ancient times, there was often little formal learning and all activities are frequently viewed as school and classes, and many or all adults act as teachers. As societies became more complex, the quantity of knowledge to be passed on from one generation to the next increases exponentially, resulting in formal education, with a school and a teacher, who is a specialist. As times pass by, educational experience becomes less directly related to daily life, and more a matter of distilling, telling, and learning things out of context. As society gradually attaches more and more importance to education, it also tries to formulate the objectives, content, organization, and strategies of education.

Certain aspects of education have been practiced commonly within cultures. For instance, rigid method and severe discipline have been applied to achieve uniformity in cultural transmission, since deviation from the traditional pattern of thought was strictly prohibited. Drill and memorization were the typical methods employed.

Nowadays, as people, society and life in general have changed, discipline is not that severe, and especially in the modern era, educational practices have been improved thanks to the advances in technology and culture. Many other things have changed as well. In spite of that, a common feature of education everywhere for decades and centuries, has been the fact that teachers are expected to stand up in front of a group of students and develop teaching and learning activities successfully. We teachers must be able to choose the most suitable method of instruction, spark intellectual growth, communicate ideas effectively, make our students fall in love with our subject, motivate students' participation, be the experts and thus, the providers of knowledge.

We must be creative, nice, honest, helpful, lively, impartial, understanding, open-minded, organized, patient, polite, sensible, dynamic, inspiring, knowledgeable, clever, hardworking, reliable, responsible and exercise authority on students.

Virtual Teaching and Learning

For the last two decades, there has been an exponential growth in the number of virtual courses and programs which are offered to children and young people, making them feel that they can be autonomous enough to study on line and be successful. This has been true especially since the lockdown for Covid-19 started in March 2020.

Due to the advance of technology and the speed of life, some believe that virtual education is more appropriate. In spite of that, some others claim that virtuality makes it difficult for people to socialize and make bonds with others.

The following are insights of people who are for virtual teaching and learning:

At the present, we are living in a technological world, in which education has been affected by the implementation of tools and strategies of learning, such as apps, games, videos, articles, interactive activities to support educational processes in students. In the views of Fonseca and Melo (2019), especially in the field of foreign language teaching, these technological tools are extremely useful. Furthermore, the educational responsibility of the teacher is shared not only with students, but also with students' families and other people of the community who get involved in the educational process.

As claimed by Rojas (2020), the development of the public policies in the ICT educational field started approximately in 1990, in Latin America. Nevertheless, its implementation takes us all the way back to the second half of the 20th century, a time when several theories of learning appeared, such as conductism, reflexive model and critical theory. In the case of Colombia, between 2007 and 2019, a new vision of education emerged. There is a number of challenges which teachers face when teaching with the help of technological tools, such as MOOCs, according to Gil (2015), to facilitate resources, access and quality. The main objective of a MOOC is to offer access to educational material for free and at a distance. They have become an interesting tool for a considerable number of education institutions, and a valuable source of information to anyone with an internet connection. As any technological innovation, there are things that can and cannot be done with a MOOC, its benefits and its problems. One of the challenges, it is complex to provide students with feedback, and assess reports, as it is hard to establish a real relationship between a student and a teacher. On the other hand, there is a high percentage of desertion, which ranges from 85 % and 95 %. The MOOCs and other avant-garde experiences in the field of education are only one part of the change of paradigm which is moving the leading role of the educational processes out of the institutions and it is being established in the students themselves. (Gil, 2015)

In the perspective of Clavijo, Hine and Quintero (2008), young people are growing up in an informational age where information is available in a wide variety of media, delivered via a variety of platforms including books, magazines, newspapers, telephones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), computers, games consoles, TVs, radios, CDs and DVDs, etc. In terms of education, media literacy curricula should be revisited to ensure that they are able to train students on abilities to comprehend the message delivered by all these media, and in having the

skills to express their ideas with these media. In the same spirit, information and communication technologies (ICTs) offer opportunities for treating teaching and learning as truly social activities where knowledge is built through interaction and dialogue rather than lectures and recitation (Brown, 2000; Hardwick, 2000; Rice, 2003). Technology goes beyond the delivery of information and lies instead in the power to create collaborative, learner-centered educational spaces. Thanks to technology, language teachers have a new tool that can provide students with opportunities to interact with a virtual community, they can construct knowledge and exchange cultural issues with the participants, at the same time that they encourage social and communicative behaviors to construct knowledge and language learning.

As can be seen in the studies mentioned above, it is essential to talk about the perceptions of teachers in relation to several situations in the field of teaching of English as a Foreign Language. It is vital to understand that the perceptions of teachers are relevant and are linked to a mixture of elements such as experience, and it is also necessary to make the teachers voices visible, as oftentimes they have been ignored completely.

Since the lockdown started in Bogotá, we teachers have been forced to carry out our duties, and continue our academic processes with public school students of all levels, which has been a massive hardship, due to the fact that new challenges emerged, since the educational approach we have been using is not in person, nor is it virtual. We must keep in mind that we did this overnight, with no time to receive training or to prepare appropriately.

For the last few weeks, a new struggle has emerged with the implementation of the strategy R GPS (Regreso a las aulas Gradual, Progresivo y Seguro, according to the abbreviation in

Spanish), and schools are expected to make decisions to guarantee that the shift system includes all students effectively.

The passing from in person to virtual education, on such short notice, has made evident some pedagogical and didactic shortages, as Muinos, Cambours and Lastra state (2020), as it has been difficult to adapt a face to face format to a virtual one, which requires an efficient and creative “didactic transposition” to keep students’ attention. We teachers must now face new pedagogical problems. In order to include everyone, we come up with a large variety of resources. We do not intend to replace face to face classes with virtual lessons; instead, we intend to provide each and every student with materials in different formats; combining and alternating; also, letting students do likewise” (Benchimol et al., 2020)

The problem established above is relevant due to the fact that the quarantine has made teachers re configure ourselves and reflect on the role we play as a part of the education system and in our classrooms. The present quarantine has contributed to the intention of analyzing and understanding the role of teachers.

As an English teacher who desires to earn the Title of Magister in English Teaching as a Foreign Language, and as a part of Colombian society, it is my interest to reflect on my role in this difficult time, and make decisions on how I can become a better professional.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

Teachers' hardships

As I mentioned above, English teaching in public schools face a number of challenges.

English teachers often find themselves at a crossroads, between what we must do and that we are told to do. We are in a constant fight between our beliefs and our duties as employees who must fulfill a list of requirements in order to keep our jobs.

Moreover, we have to deal with lack of resources. We are expected to show results but we are not given the technological tools and the training that is required to obtain such results.

Very often, we have students with little or no motivation towards learning in general and towards the language. At that moment, we must encourage students to learn, through the use of a speech which we do not believe anymore. Such speech claims that having a degree and finishing your studies will make you a better person, and doors will open for you. It also states that knowing English will allow you better job opportunities and better salaries.

We also must overcome deficiencies in learning environments, such as insufficient space and lightning, too much noise and pollution. Even in Bogotá, the capital city, often times the state of some schools is far from ideal.

Additionally, whenever we think of difficulties which exist in the idiosyncrasy of our country and which affect academic processes, we agree on the fact that we Colombians, generally speaking, lack autonomy to carry out academic processes. Another important aspect is the fact that few parents are active participants of the academic processes of their children. In addition, most parents work long hours and cannot devote enough time to helping their children with homework or supervising academic processes. This is true especially for families that have come from Venezuela during the last years.

The plague

Since March 17th, 2020, when the lockdown started in Bogotá due to the Covid-19, our job as English teachers has become so much more complex. We still encounter the difficulties described above, plus many others, such as the need to continue effective learning processes from home, by means of a cell phone and a computer. Many teachers lost their jobs at private

schools. There is uncertainty as to when students will be able to go back to school fully and when we teachers will be back (to school and to normal).

Due to the lockdown because of the Covid-19, students and their families have been affected in a number of aspects, and the education processes have suffered too. Some students have not been able to continue studying, due to a number of reasons.

Moreover, there have been hardships for families because of the increase in unemployment, lack of financial resources, overcrowding, violence inside families, anxiety, depression, divorces, insecurity in the city, and a large number of other situations.

Since the pandemic started, the real contexts of the public education system in schools emerged and sharpened. The colonial heritage which we have known for quite a while, has arisen even more than before and has become more evident.

The quarantine for the Covid-19 has reminded us of these truths. We as teachers of English at public schools in Bogota, since March 17th, were told to start working with the Strategy “Learning At Home”, with no guidelines, only the title. We are supposed to do the best we can with what we have, knowing that our students belong to socioeconomic strata 1 and 2, knowing the most of their parents could not work and later on lost their jobs, knowing that many of those students depend on the food they receive at school every day. Also we know that their families have limited access to computers or Internet. Since it has been impossible to continue with face to face classes, we have been experimenting with CALL and MALL.

Firstly, I will reflect on CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) and its principles. CALL is a young branch of applied linguistics and is still establishing its directions. According to the

point of view of Beatty, (2010), CALL is “any process in which a learner uses a computer and, as a result, improves his or her language”. It includes a broad range of activities which makes it difficult to describe it as a single idea or simple research agenda. CALL may include materials which are purpose-made for language learning, video and other materials. He also claims that “because of the changing nature of computers, CALL is an amorphous or unstructured discipline, constantly evolving both in terms of pedagogy and technological advances in hardware and software. Language labs, originally built for listening practice, now integrate CALL with teachers using CALL activities based on email, the World Wide Web (WWW) and even mobile telephones to supplement student learning. Delivery methods for CALL include the use of individual computers at home or in the classroom, classroom sets of computers, language labs into which computer functions have been incorporated, online instruction through the WWW and distance and networked learning through the use of email, blogs, wikis, online social networking and other interactive WWW sites and services”. In spite of the variety of materials, several authors complain that CALL materials lack “the ability to monitor and correct unpredictable student answers. It is easy for a computer to mark and give feedback to a multiple choice question; it is extremely difficult to accurately do so with answers set in sentences, although some programs try by having an answer field recognizing several pre-designated key words. However, the problem with such an approach is the computer’s difficulty in sorting out unexpected answers”.

Towards Constructivism and autonomous learning

Dr. Noushad Husainin, (2010) highlights the relevance of Constructivism during the last decade, which has roots in philosophy, psychology and cybernetics and attempts to describe how people know the world. He claims that “in the constructivist theory, knowledge is being actively constructed by the individual and knowing is an adaptive process which organizes the individual’s experiential world. Hence, the learner is not considered as a controlled respondent to stimuli, but as “already a scientist” who actively constructs knowing while striving to make sense of the world on the basis of personal filters: experiences, goals, curiosities and beliefs. The learning process is characterized by placing a high responsibility into the hands of the learner instead of the teacher. Computers are extremely suited for this type of learning since they encourage independent, individualized, experimental and discovery learning”.

Also, Vygotsky’s social constructivism also supports the use of tools, which through scaffolding and providing directed pointers can “enrich and broaden both the scope of activity and the scope of thinking of the child”. Given all of the advances in technology, the personal computer has become a versatile tool through which one can gain a wide variety of learning experiences. The integration of simulations, graphics and animation enables users to experience and witness processes and procedures that might not otherwise be readily observable. This makes computer a powerful tool for learning. Computer technology has the potential to provide specific activity based better learning environment. Thus, it favors child centered education. In the age of science & Technology, knowledge is being increasing rapidly and consequencely, which has caused revolutionary changes in the educational system. For a long time, education was teacher-centered in which student accepted every thought and philosophy of the teacher, without any logic and argument. Today Information Technology and computers have changed every sphere of human life, including the education system. Teaching is not considered just as “teacher-centered” but

now moreover it is “child centered”. For this, it is very necessary to bring revolutionary changes in the methods of teaching-learning process.

Autonomous learning

The dream of every teacher is to know that his or her students are able to become active participants of their learning process outside of the classroom. Additionally, we teachers believe that students who are autonomous love to learn and know the necessary tools to learn by themselves.

In general terms, Holec (1981) defines autonomy as the ability to take charge of one’s learning.

Regarding EFL, Pemperton et al (1996) state that autonomy is enhanced when students are actively involved in the productive use of the target language, and use that language outside of the classroom. At this point, after 12 months of quarantine, we wonder the extent to which our students have become more autonomous.

Computers

Colegio República de China and other schools have lent laptops to their students who do not own a computer, for academic purposes, since March 2020. Also, some students who have a computer or laptop at home have enjoyed a very useful tool for their learning in this lockdown.

Computer technology can enhance the quality of education in several ways: by increasing students’ motivation and engagement, by facilitating the acquisition of basic skills and by

enhancing teacher training. The computers have a vast potential for instruction in all educational environments ranging from schools to universities.

Computers offer children highly individualized learning experiences. Computers can also be very accommodating; they can reach students at different study levels, any time of the day or night. Additionally, the sense of independence and accomplishment a computer offers children helps fuel their self-confidence. Relying on a computer as a tool may be one of the most effective ways to build both a child's learning skills and self-esteem. On the other hand, one of the disadvantages of computers is people's lack of training on how to use them effectively, which can affect academic processes.

Remote or Distance Education

In the words of Bournissen, (2017), remote education is understood as the education in which the actors (teachers and students) do not meet in the same place, which means, there is a physical distance between them. But thanks to the support of a pedagogical model, this distance is shortened or tends to disappear through the use of Information and Communication technologies, and the didactic materials, which must "include" the teacher (Cirigliano, 1983). In spite of the fact that there is physical distance, what we should shorten or should not exist is the dialogic distance, so that the dialogue might be permanent (Moore, 1977). In this way the student will never feel lonely.

As stated by Llorente (2008), there are different ways to understand distance education.

Holmbert (1989) defines it as a concept which covers activities of teaching and learning in cognitive and affective domains of a learner and a supporting organization. It is a means of communication which can be carried out in any place and at any time.

Keegan (1998) claims that distance learning represents issues such as the importance of the student and his or her needs, the most relevant is who learns and not who teaches, the teacher is a facilitator, the emphasis is on quality and quantity of what is being learned, more than in an institutional structure.

On the views of Garcia_Aretio (2001), distance teaching is a technological system of bidirectional communication (multidirectional), which can be massive, based on the systematic action of didactic resources and the support of an organization, physically apart from students but encouraging independent learning (cooperative).

According to D. Pedro Moñino Ángel, CALL appears to have been originated in Great Britain, to describe a learning process centered in the student and not in the teaching, (Thomas et al., 2013).

There is also CELL (Computer Enhanced Language Learning) or CBLT (Computer Based Language Training) Their evolution has been parallel to the evolution of technologies.

Any use of computers to aid or support the education or training of people. CAL can test attainment at any point, provide faster or slower routes through the material for people of different aptitudes, and can maintain a progress record for the instructor. Computer-assisted learning is one of several terms used to describe this application of computers. Other terms include computer-aided (or -assisted) instruction, CAI, computer-based learning, CBL, and computer-managed instruction, CMI. (Oxford Reference, 2021).

The use of technology for EFL

As stated by Escalona, (2011), teachers must take advantage of the motivational effects of technologies and this motivation can be either extrinsic or intrinsic. The first one occurs when the student is motivated from the outside, through the setting of goals, rewards or punishments. It can also be related to didactic resources brought by the teacher to motivate learning. The extrinsic motivation occurs when students feel satisfaction or interest in the completion of an activity. The author concludes that the use of a computer in the teaching and learning process can allow both types of motivation. We EFL teachers can state that during this pandemic our motivation came from the obligation of not stopping our teaching processes, in spite of our conceptions or opinions on how effective our teaching would be, or how many of our students would be left out for not having access to internet or to a cell phone, tablet, laptop or computer.

Keeping active with computers

N. Leontiev considers activity as a process which relates a vital attitude, active from the subject towards reality and states that one of the distinctive features of that activity is the coincidence of motive with the objective, meaning that the activity is motivated by the objective whose achievement is directed to. (Torres, 1997) The theory of activity was developed afterwards by P. Y. Galperin, who established a difference between formation by stages and mental actions. He considers studying as a system of specific types of activity whose fulfillment leads the student to new knowledge and habits. Each type of activity is a system of actions united by a motive that ensures the achievement of the goal of the activity it belongs to. The basic cell of the teachers'

activity is action. Action can be divided according to its functions in three parts: of guidance, of execution and of control.

- The part of guidance is the owner of all the initial information and should serve the student as a guide for the achievement of the goal for which the action is performed.
- The part of execution ensures the transformations which take place in the subject of the action, which can be idealistic or materialistic.
- The part of control of the action is in charge of following the course of action; confront the results with the models provided. With its help, necessary corrections are made in the part of guidance and in the part of control. An author who continued the works of Galperin was N.F. Talízina, who distinguishes three main forms of action: material, verbal external and mental. Also, the material form is highlighted, and the perceptive, which is intermediate up to some extent, between the material (or materialized) and the verbal external. (Talizina N. F., 1988). The material and materialized forms of action are the ones to begin with. Their peculiarity consists in which the object of the action is given to the student in real objects (material) or in models, schemes, drawing (materialized). They are extremely useful in the beginning stages of knowledge as a bridge between concrete thinking and abstract thinking. The perceptive actions include the ability to see and hear, and the actions of this type do not provoke physical changes in the objects, students work with their representations at a mental level. They are related with the sensorial stage of reasoning. In the external verbal form of action, the object of action is represented in the verbal external-oral or written form, the process of transformation of this object occurs also in verbal external form: in a form of out loud reasoning or discovering its path, they are related to the ability of expression of the student and the development of the logic-linguistic relation of thinking. The mental form of the action means that the actions is done for

itself, its structural elements are the representations, concepts and express a theoretical thinking. That is the reason why when computers are included in education, it is essential to determine what types of activities are going to be assigned to students, as the actions they must carry out must be in accordance with the functions and forms described above.

MALL stands for Mobile assisted language learning. In their article *An overview of mobile assisted language learning*, L. Angeles and Shield claims that “mobile learning is undergoing rapid evolution. Current, widespread ownership of mobile and wireless devices means that learners are increasingly in a position to take the lead and engage in activities motivated by their personal needs and circumstances of use. Trifanova et al. (2004) define mobile devices as “...any device that is small, autonomous and unobtrusive enough to accompany us in every moment”. For our purposes, then, ‘mobile learning’ refers to learning mediated via handheld devices and potentially available anytime, anywhere. Such learning may be formal or informal. In general, MALL would be expected to use technologies such as mobile phones, MP3/MP4 players, PDAs and palmtop computers.

George M. Chinnery states that mobile learning environments might be face to-face, distance, or online; further, they may be self-paced or calendar-based. Copaert (2004) emphasizes the importance of developing the language learning environment before deciding on the role of mobile technologies and further emphasizes focusing on the learner ahead of the technology. Salaberry (2001) also argues against "technology-driven pedagogy," suggesting that despite their revolutionary status, it is not clear that any modern technology (e.g., television, radio, the PC) has offered the same pedagogical benefits as traditional second language instruction. Some common features of cell phones now include Internet access, voice-messaging, SMS text-messaging, cameras, and even video-recording. In language learning, all of these features enable

communicative language practice, access to authentic content, and task completion. Though, research of such uses is scarce.

Assumptions about Face to Face Education

At this point, it is of great importance to analyze the impact of what students and researchers believe about face to face education.

Face to face education, according to Durán (2015), includes the following features:

- The teacher is an expert, who provides information to students (receivers) and does so through a unique channel which is oral transmission.
- Students must attend classes, which have shifts and specific hours for starting and ending.
- Classes take place in a specific classroom and building.
- There is a minimum percentage of attendance so students have the right to receive a final grade.
- There is a close relation with teachers and classmates, which is motivating for learning.
- Teachers' speech is addressed from expert to less expert.
- There is little participation of the students.
- Feedback is seldom received by students.
- Autonomous learning is not considered.
- There are relations of power.
- Teachers can reach their full potential.
- Teachers are superior, oftentimes in a stage above students.

- The classroom has a static setting. Furniture attached to the floor, facing the board.
- The classroom is a close space. Everything happens behind closed doors.
- The classroom is a physical space with no virtual dimension.

In the words of Martínez, (2017) face to face education has existed since the beginning of time, since the Homo sapiens started discerning. It has been the way of transmission of knowledge, for centuries, and its most important feature is the socializing contact, of physical expressions of sensations, feelings, desires and emotions, which are impossible at a distance.

Escobar (2007), states that the teacher is expected to communicate effectively, be able to reflect on his praxis and be a permanent learner, must be a researchers of his own work, so that he might contribute to change He must be able to control his emotions, feelings and affections so that he can find a balance between subjectivity and intersubjectivity of the classroom dynamics.

As claimed by D. López (2011), the teacher, as the owner of knowledge must possess at least, deep understanding of his subject, and also pedagogical, psychological, didactical, epistemological and historical knowledge, in order to be able to teach and encourage academic growth in his students. Also he should interact in social and cultural scenarios in the society of knowledge. He should also be able to improve teaching methods, updating curricula and assessment.

Elena Barberà (2018), states that a face to face teacher allows interaction, which is a dialogue that leads to allows knowledge construction. A remote student who participates often might feel that his performance is, at least, average, which is not always accurate.

F. Jardines (2010), argues that in face to face education, the role of the teacher “is understood as the non verbal behaviors that reduce physical and psychological distance between teachers and students” (p. 544). He based his opinion on eye contact, related body posture, making gestures and smiling, which improved the affect of students towards the practices of the course.

In this spirit, the concepts presented above are key to comprehend the difficulties that the education system in general and more specifically, EFL teachers lived during the lockdown for Covid-19.

Moreover, these concepts provide some insight to understand the way in which EFL teachers who participated in this project have perceived their job during the quarantine for Covid-19 and be accepting to the voices of those teachers.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In this chapter, I intend to describe widely the research design of my study. The chapter explains the type of study (qualitative) and research approach (case study). Also, I will describe the context where the study was developed, the participants, and the researcher’s role. Finally, the instruments used to gather data and the data collection procedures carried out.

4.1 Research paradigm

This research project can be framed within the qualitative research (QR) paradigm. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2005) “Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretative, material practices, including field notes, interviews, conversation, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the

world, which means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”.

4.2 Research approach

There are multiple definitions and understandings of the case study. According to Bromley (1990), it is a “systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest” (pp 302). Information or data is obtained largely from documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation and physical artifacts (Yin, 1994). According to Yin (1994) the case study design must have five components: the research question(s), its propositions, its unit(s) of analysis, a determination of how the data are linked to the propositions and criteria to interpret the findings. Stake (1995) emphasized that the number and type of case studies depend upon the purpose of the inquiry: an instrumental case study is used to provide insight into an issue; an intrinsic case study is undertaken to gain a deeper understanding of the case; and the collective case study is the study of a number of cases in order to inquire into a particular phenomenon. Yin (1994) points out that case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” and “why” questions are posed. The researcher’s actions include recording, constructing and presenting, and producing a chronicle, a profile or facts. Additionally the researcher is construing, synthesizing and clarifying, and producing a history, meanings and understandings. A student’s understanding of such activities helps him/her form the stages of the case study method. In summary the purposes of case study research may be exploratory, descriptive, interpretive and explanatory (Mariano, 1993).

As claimed by Beltrán (2017), Merriam explains that three main characteristics of qualitative case study are: being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. The first one means that the study is about a particular situation, program or phenomena. The second one implies that the conclusions of the study might be a rich description of the object studied. The third one refers to the new comprehension of the phenomena resulting from the study.

As a language teacher, one of my main concerns at this time is to reflect on the way in which academic processes are being carried out during the pandemic. That is why this study did not intend to make an intervention. As a researcher in a case study, I remained as critical as possible and unbiased towards the information that was obtained in the study. Furthermore, I intended to describe and explain the perceptions of the teachers who participated in the study and provide insight to the readers.

Keeping this in mind, I worked with five EFL teachers working with Colegio República de China in the morning and afternoon shift.

My research project dealt with qualitative data gathered in the form of written surveys.

Moreover, it privileged interpretative analysis, as the outcome of my interpretation of the data gathered in my research process. Additionally, this research project highlights insider meaning, listening to the subjective experiences of the five teachers.

4.3 Setting

Colegio República de China is a public school located in the north west of Bogotá. In general terms, the area is commercial, with small businesses (restaurants, clothing shops, cafeterias, ATMs, Tattoo Shops) and some banks.

The school was founded in 1970. In 1974, as a result of the work done by the school teachers, the support for the school was obtained from the commercial office of Taiwan. The school philosophy attempts to educate students which are social subjects that interact with their peers, respecting differences and diversity, knowing his rights but also his duties. The student is a person who is able to relate with his or her family, social, cultural and natural environment.

In the same line of thought, the school sets the following institutional values: responsibility, respect, tolerance, commitment, and loyalty. Additionally, the school's principles are dignity of the human being, humanization and inclusion, transcendent and critical spirit, personal, work and social projection, and living of the school values. (Manual de Convivencia, Colegio República de China, 2019).

Likewise, the school's philosophy is to educate students in knowledge, in the development of a second language, the appropriate use of technologies, research, the care for the environment, education for peace and coexistence, keeping in mind the values and principles of the school, promoting an attitude of commitment towards their life project transcending to undergraduate education, to be an active participant in the working world and generate entrepreneurship.

Consequently, the institution relies on a cross project in the light of the PEI "la comunidad educativa, gestora de un proyecto de vida", and its main objective is to guarantee access and permanence of boys, girls and adolescents in the school, providing them with the necessary tools for them to establish a life project and develop abilities which allow them to know, know how to do, know how to learn and coexist, in order to achieve success in any activity they carry out.

The specific objectives are:

- Enhance the abilities of boys, girls and adolescents in entrepreneurship and setting a life

Project.

- Promote processes of participation, discussion, debate and argumentation in the spirit of sane coexistence.
- Motivate team work, prioritizing respect, responsibility, tolerance, commitment and loyalty.
- Develop critical, reflexive and analytical capacity, which strengthens communications and technological advances.
- Innovate educational practices in order to stimulate academic excellence.
- Include population with special educational needs to the pedagogical processes.
- Strengthen the processes of articulation with undergraduate education, which allow students the access to the world of work and entrepreneurship.
- Design plans of expanding attitudes and abilities that help students develop in the students the competences related to being, acting, feeling, living in community, knowing, knowing how to do, thinking and learning.

Currently, the school is constituted approximately by 1.000 students in the morning shift and 880 in the afternoon shift. Also, 65 teachers in the morning shift and 55 in the afternoon shift.

4.4 Participants

The teachers who contributed to this research project are teachers who are working at the school, as EFL teachers. All of the teachers majored in English teaching and completed studies of Masters in Education.

Table 1 Participants characteristics

Participants			
Participant	Age	Gender	Degree
Lida	40	Feminine	Spanish and foreign languages
Yaneth	44	Feminine	Spanish and foreign languages
Yady	39	Feminine	Spanish and English
Camila	38	Feminine	Spanish and English
Pilar C.	43	Feminine	Spanish and Foreign Languages

Own elaboration

4.5 Researcher's role

The role the researched fulfilled in this study was, first, that of an analyst, as I intended to examine teachers perceptions based on their answers to the surveys applied. I also wish to reach a deeper understanding of the points of view of those teachers.

Through the questions included in my surveys, I intended to hear the voices of my colleagues, which, in my opinion, does not happen often enough. This is the result of us teachers working long hours and not be given the opportunity to participate in academic encounters in which we can have our voices heard.

In the process of research, I was always open to different points of view and treated all teachers and the opinions expressed by them with respect.

Secondly, as a citizen, and as a student of this Masters Program, I became interested in having a greater understanding of the impact of the lockdown in people's lives, especially the lives of my coworkers and students, and how EFL teaching was affected. I believed it was a learning opportunity for me, to be able to acknowledge similarities and differences among those teachers' experiences and my own experience, which contribute to my growth as an EFL teacher. I strongly believe this is a valuable opportunity for Education in general to be reshaped, as well as our role as teachers, among other aspects of our field.

Finally, I expect the findings will have an impact on the way people perceive the teachers role in this pandemic. I hope to be able to share the findings of this research in my academic community.

4.6 Data collection instruments and procedures

Questionnaires were carried out in June of 2020. It is important to mention that the instruments were applied in Spanish, as language barriers may affect loquacity and spontaneity. I even gave participants the possibility to answer the questions in English. However, they decided not to use English while partaking in the study.

Through questionnaires or surveys, a researcher can comprehend the past and present experiences of the participants and hypothesize about future actions of the respondents.

Questionnaires are considered introspective instruments which pursue detailed information perceptions, experiences, etc. of a specific population (Bell, 2005; Cohen & Manion, 1994; Wallace, 2006). They allow participants to donate data in an individual, private, and anonymous

way. In this study, the majority of the questions were open questions. The questions focused on present-current behavior, experiences, attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and values of EFL teachers involved in EFL teaching processes during the pandemic for Covid-19.

This instrument was relevant for the research as it allowed to make inference of obtained data, relating it to EFL teachers' experience (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

In the words of Cohen and Manion (1994) some advantages of questionnaires are: saving time in the process of data gathering, and offering considerable accuracy in the process of extracting data from the general group of participants. Moreover, Marshall and Rossman (1999) state that questionnaires help to deal with political or ethical issues of the study, and allow describing and explaining statistically the variability of specific characteristics of the target population.

Chapter 5: Data analysis and findings

The first part of this chapter explains the Critical Discourse Analysis approach. The second part provides some insight in relation to the analytical procedures used and deepens in the way the collected data was analyzed. The third part shows some findings gathered from the questionnaires applied.

5.1 Analysis Approach

Discourse analysis studies and analyses the uses of language. Critical discourse analysis includes all of the social practices, individuals and institutions that make it possible or legitimate to understand phenomena in a particular way (Hodges, 2008).

Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak (2011) state that “in recent decades critical discourse analysis CDA has become a well established field in social sciences. However, in contrast with some branches of linguistics, CDA is not a discrete academic discipline with a relatively fixed set of research methods. Instead, we might best see CDA as a problem-oriented interdisciplinary research movement, subsuming a variety of approaches, each with different theoretical models, research methods and agenda”.

Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer have argued that...

...Critical Discourse Analysis is analysis of the dialectical relationships between semiosis (including language) and other elements of social practices. Its particular concern is with the radical changes that are taking place in contemporary social life. Semiosis can be understood as a part of the social activity within a practice. For instance, part of doing a job (such as being a shop assistant) is using language in a particular way; so too is part of governing a country. Semiosis in the performance of positions constitutes styles. For instance, doctors, teachers or government ministers do not simply have semiotic styles as a function of their positions in practices; each position is performed in diverse styles depending on aspects of identity which exceed the construction of positions in those practices. Styles are ways of being, identities, in their semiotic aspect.

In this study, I support the idea that CDA has emancipatory objectives, and is focused upon the problems confronting what we can loosely refer to as the 'losers' within particular forms of social life ± the poor, the socially excluded, those subject to oppressive gender or race relations, and so forth. Those subjects are in this case, the EFL teachers in general.

5.2 Analytical procedures

I followed four stages throughout the data analysis: Data collection and organization, data reading and reduction, data analysis or interpretation and report of findings.

As previously stated, data was collected from questionnaires to 5 teachers of EFL in a public school in Bogotá. The questionnaires were answered during the lockdown for the Covid-19. The 5 teachers were given plenty of time to answer the questions and were given the possibility to answer in either English or Spanish.

After I received those answered questionnaires, I read each questionnaire several times. At all times I intended to respect the voices of the participants and the opinions expressed by them. When doing the process of reading, I could observe the particular way in which teachers using their language, both in Spanish and English. Additionally, I discerned how each of the participants has built their own style that is a reflection of their identities. The identities of teachers have been re-shaped during the quarantine for Covid-19 in many ways. For instance, new words have been added to the speech of the teachers, which refer to new realities that they have been experiencing. Due to the fact that students have been isolated and academic processes have been happening in a remote manner, new terminology has been included in teachers interactions. Information that was private before, has now become a public matter. E.g. pandemic, connectivity, Internet access, virtual encounters, classroom, vaccine, getting infected, virus, and others.

After reading the questionnaires many times, I selected the information most related to my research question and objectives.

In what follows, I present a summary of the most relevant claims of each of the participants can be found. By reading them, it is possible to identify some meeting points, as well as some differentiating factors. The most important achievement of this thesis project is to hear teachers' voices.

5.2.1. Pilar C.

Pilar C. believes that the Ministry of Education and the Secretary of Education made a very accurate decision when at the beginning of the quarantine, in March, decided to implement the strategy of "Learning at Home". As far as she is concerned, the priority at the moment was to ensure the safety of the children and it was essential to prevent their exposition to the Coronavirus.

In regards to strengths, she claims that one of the most important strengths has been the compromise of many teachers, who have made outstanding efforts to continue working on academic processes with students. There also have been teachers who gathered in work networks in order to share relevant experiences, which have allowed them to learn from each other. It is also necessary to mention that all teachers and coordinators have really done team work, keeping in mind the wellbeing of the students and the continuity of academic processes. She highlights the fact that in virtual lessons students tend to pay more attention and concentrate more.

Concerning weaknesses, she states that the Government should make sure that each and every student can attend their virtual class sessions, due to the fact that several families have had serious financial difficulties during this time and that can make connectivity impossible for them.

She argues that there have been some weaknesses and threats in the public system of education. For instance, she considers the greatest weakness is the number of students per groups, which is around 40. In her opinion, this affects the quality of education. On the other hand, the lack of materials is also an issue; oftentimes students do not own enough materials to carry out their academic activities in a proper way. The Government needs to provide students with those materials. She also feels that teachers need training and they need it on a permanent basis, which should also be provided by the Government, but this training depends on the budgets and the changes in administration, as well as the priorities established by each major.

Furthermore, she has noticed that parents sometimes are not assertive in the way they are too lenient towards the failures of their children and they do not correct them enough when necessary, but they justify their behaviors instead. Another weakness is that fact that in general terms, students do not read well and are not able to follow instructions. Also, they are not autonomous in their academic activities, so most of them are not really punctual when handing in their homework or reports.

All in all, Carolina recognizes that it has been somewhat difficult for her to assume the use of new technologies but she is in the process and knows she can do better. Also, she describes herself as an EFL teacher who is committed to her students, and she really wants her students to be able to communicate effectively in the English language. That is why she makes efforts to provide students with real opportunities for them to use the language in real situations. However, she feels that she needs to be more updated in the use of new technologies.

This strategy could be more effective, in her opinion, if parents and students committed themselves more to their academic duties beyond the class time with a teacher. Also, parents

need to be more aware of the learning processes of their children, and students need to be more autonomous and aware of the school educational project.

In general terms she feels satisfied with her job as an EFL teacher. She is very proud of the fact that her approach changed completely, and one of the aspects that should change in the way students perceive their role of learners is that they need to be more autonomous.

Concerning the difficulties of her students, she claims that her students were affected also by lack of resources and lack of connectivity. However, she feels there were some gains in the middle of the difficulties of the lockdown, such as the fact that she could engage students in activities that she had never before, like the use of an online dictionary.

As far as her relation to the parents of her students is concerned, she feels that her attention to parents became more organized.

Regarding the materials that were useful for her academic processes of EFL teaching, Pilar C. believes that the use of apps and videos was key to foster motivation in her students and therefore, more participation and better satisfactory results.

In terms of evaluation, she is worried that during the lockdown, the written production handed in by her students was not entirely theirs.

She is also concerned with the fact that oral practice will be scarce now because of the need to wear a face mask. In contrast, she feels optimistic as she now has fewer students per class.

Even though Pilar C. had Covid-19 recently, she is optimistic about the future, and hopes to be back to school soon.

5.2.2 Yady

Yady asserts that the strategy “Learning at Home” has been appropriate to ensure the continuity of academic processes in public schools during this quarantine, and schools have carried out meaningful actions with the approval of the Secretary of Education to make sure all of the students are included.

In relation to strengths, Yady enunciates that teachers have been able to experiment with several TIC tools, which have been extremely useful during these months of quarantine. A great number of teachers had never used those technological tools before. This has also contributed to students’ motivation. This strategy has allowed team work among teachers and coordinators, and communications have also improved. Students who have always been responsible and dedicated have found a way to help other students who are not. Many of them have learned to use technology as a tool for learning.

As weaknesses, she mentions the fact that the Government has not offered internet access to teachers or students. Other weakness she has detected is the fact that some teachers of the school do not know how to use technologies in class, which has prevented from using them, which have made students comprehension difficult. All in all, those teachers need to be trained.

One of the realities that have made academic work difficult during quarantine is the fact that not all students have internet access. Only 40 per cent of students attend virtual encounters, which prevents the whole group of students from continuing their academic process. Also, some

students have serious difficulties when understanding instructions and require constant support from the teacher.

She perceives herself as an EFL teacher with abilities to work with TICS. She also feels that if teachers had appropriate TIC training and if the Government could guarantee permanent internet access to all students and teachers everyday of the week, and proper equipment for apps, complements, downloading of files, educational platforms, watch videos, attend meetings and more, this type of computer based work would be effective.

Yady also states that as teachers, we must be prepared for change, and keep an open mind to new pedagogical practices, which are updated and according to the new generations, whose life revolves around technology. She also believes that this pandemic has been good for students, as they have had their parents to support them in the academic activities. This has help families get closer together.

5.2.3 Camila

Camila works as a Supporting Teacher of English for primary students in the morning shift. She suggests that the “Learning at Home” strategy has been relevant in this time of lockdown. However, the strategy was just a name, and teachers were the ones who in a matter of 3 days, had to come up with ways to make it work.

She has noticed that most teachers are updated, not only in the use of TICS for educational purposes, but in many other aspects. Many of those teachers are goal oriented and have been up to the challenge of this pandemic. Also, there are several supporting teachers and mediators for the students with special needs. She also claims that the work at the Humanities team has been

carried out with enthusiasm and responsibility. Also, most students feel motivated towards the learning of English as a foreign language. They are tolerant towards disability and diversity, and they behave in a respectful way.

In regards to weaknesses, Camila says that there are some facts that affect what teachers have worked and the outcomes obtained. For instance, there is lack of support to the public education system, frequently it has been observed that principals do not carry out the necessary actions to obtain the budget and resources their schools need. Also the budget in the schools needs to be distributed in a more assertive way.

She suggests that some teachers lack commitment towards their work, some do not have the training they need to be able to use technologies for academic purposes, or to deal with students with special needs. She also believes that there is a significant difference between the decisions made in the morning shift, compared to the afternoon shift, which affects work environment in general terms, team work and other work competences. She has also noticed that some coordinators could establish a more effective role of supporting each teacher.

In her students, Camila has noticed that many of them do not have the necessary resources to access internet and have the materials needed for working on their academic activities. Many of them do not have their parents to support them in their studies. Many others come from other cities or countries and there is not a system to level them up.

As a teacher, Camila argues that she has been pushed aside. All this is due to some internal situations in the school, and she has not been taken into account to participate in projects. She states that she knows the needs of her students, and she is interested in their likes and their

abilities. Keeping all this in mind, she adapts the topics, activities and classes to the context of the students. Also she motivates her students constantly.

All in all, she asserts that students learning outcomes would improve if they had more and better resources. For instance, Internet access and a laptop.

During this time of lockdown she has learned that we teachers need to be flexible and understand the possibilities of each student. She also considers it is vital for parents to realize the value of teachers, the value of schools, the value of social interaction in the lives of children, which is an enriching environment for the growth processes of children in all their dimensions: socially, mentally and others. She thinks that during lockdown, the loss of loved ones was not considered and people, teachers included, did not have time to mourn. She feels this affected her and many other teachers.

She confesses that during the lockdown, she felt so overwhelmed that she felt that she wanted to quit her job. She believes that at the time she reached a significantly high level of stress. She experienced, as other teachers she knows, that personal time was reduced, as the working schedule was not respected by students, parents, teachers or coordinators.

Camila is convinced that most students felt motivated towards the learning of the English language, as she feels close to most of them, and due to this, most students have intended to continue their academic processes in the subject.

She believes her students have advanced a great deal in their competence in English, as she has been a motivator and that has given them more confidence to work harder and achieve better results.

She feels very satisfied of her role as an EFL teacher during the pandemic, as she is aware of the fact that she did her very best to provide her students and their families with relevant materials and effective assessment. She is also convinced that her methodology changed completely and she feels it was for the better. She has observed that changed has contributed to the advance of her students. She is also happy that some parents have also learned some English.

In regards to the difficulties her students have had during the lockdown, she states that one of the main factors has been the fact that some parents fail to send homework on time or fail to follow the instructions provided.

Concerning the relation to the parents of her students, she claims it has improved, as it has become more permanent. She also has experienced that some parents are excited about learning English along with the children. She is also proud that some parents and students overcame the fear of using technological tools and apps, such as Classroom, emails, YouTube, Zoom, Teams, Meet, among others.

In terms of evaluation, she feels the evaluation of written production not always reliable, as she is not sure if her students in fact wrote the reports they sent, and oral production evaluation has become extremely complex. She has focused more on written skills, but she has motivated students to work on their speaking skills through repetition.

In relation to successful practicum, she highlights the importance of providing students with activities that are meaningful and which allow them to express their reality and talk about themselves.

As she went back to school she has noticed that it is extremely hard to work on speaking skills in class, through a face mask. She has also noticed that her students have difficulties socializing,

are afraid and oftentimes find it hard to dance or exercise. She is concerned and wonders how long it will take for students to be themselves again.

In conclusion, Camila strongly believes that during the quarantine, academic processes were carried out in a face to face remote model mediated by computers. She expects her practicum to be reconfigured completely and she intends to provide her students and their parents with useful tools which will contribute to foster autonomous learning and better use of technological tools.

5.2.4 Lida

Lida believes that the “Learning at Home” strategy has not been adequate to continue academic processes in public schools during the quarantine.

Concerning strengths, she is aware of the fact that many children and teenagers can access public educations, and students with special needs, such as discapacities, have been included. Another strenght has been team work, which has always kept in mind students health and wellbeing. Students feel attracted to technology and are good at using electronic devices.

In relation to weaknesses, there are limitations in the use of TICS, on both teachers and on students. Even the simplest tasks, like sending an email or uploading a file, are complicated for some. Also she notices lack of motivation in students towards the learning of a new language, different from their mother language. Another weakness is the fact that students do not have habits for studying at home. Moreover, parents are usually not at home to support their children in their academic activities. Additionally, she claims that students are exposed to social networks like Facebook, Instagram or Twitter with no supervision.

Not all students can have access to the academic activities, which limits teachers works and worsen learning processes. Students who have internet access and all resources must do the minimal amount of academic work in order not to affect their classmates. She considers that the budget invested in education has been insufficient, and the public education system is not prepared to face this kind of contingencies. Access to internet and technological resources should be guaranteed to all students and teachers at all times, not only for a situation like a lockdown.

She recognizes that, as an EFL teacher she needs to know how to use more apps or programs which will allow me to help develop more communicative abilities in students, especially students with learning disabilities. She perceives herself as a creative and resourceful teacher, who has learned a lot in this quarantine. She believes this crisis is a proper time to reconfigure teaching processes and strengthen the learning of abilities for life. She also hopes students and parents value their school more, and the work of the teacher as someone who accompanies academic processes.

5.2.5 Yaneth

Yaneth feels the strategy “Learning at Home” has been accurate, as we teachers need to take care of our own health.

In regards to strengths, she is happy to see that most teachers have worked hard during this lockdown to do their job in the best way possible, and she has also noticed motivation and interest in students to continue their academic processes.

Yaneth has observed that most teachers have made efforts to learn to use technological tools for their lessons and families, although with financial difficulties, have struggled to carry out all the activities assigned by teachers.

On the other hand, she believes the main weaknesses are related to the fact that many families do not have access to technology. This can lead to school dropout. She has also noticed that some parents use the no money argument as an excuse to not be responsible in fulfilling the academic duties of their children.

The fact that most parents have a low education level has also made it difficult to carry out academic duties.

She suggests that she has had to search for resources and strategies to reach all her students. In her opinion, if people had access to technology and internet this strategy would be more successful. She feels that she learned that as a teacher it is essential to re-invent oneself.

In conclusion, she hopes that parents learn that they need to get to know their children better and be more aware of their academic duties and activities.

5.3 Insights of the analysis

First of all, as stated by the teachers who participated in this study, the strategy “Learning at Home”, based on the principles of remote education, included the need to continue the academic processes that started at the beginning of the year 2020, through the use of technological devices, namely cell phones and computers, failed to consider an important number of possible scenarios.

Many students and parents did not own a cell phone, a tablet or a computer. Other did have these devices but had no internet access and no financial resources.

In the words of Bournissen, remote education is understood as the education in which the actors (teachers and students) do not meet in the same place, but thanks to the support of a pedagogical model, this distance is shortened or tends to disappear through the use of Information and Communication technologies, and the didactic materials, which must “include” the teacher.

In these months of lockdown, we teachers at public schools have continued their academic duties, in spite of all kinds of difficulties. We have had to be resilient and find way to guarantee the continuity of the students academic processes. We have continued working on a schedule. We have not had the time to deal with the loss of loved ones or what means to be in the midst of a pandemic. As Escobar states, the teacher is expected to communicate effectively, be able to reflect on his praxis and be a permanent learner to change. He must be able to control his emotions, feelings and affections so that he can find a balance between subjectivity and intersubjectivity of the classroom dynamics.

Secondly, according to UNICEF (2020), two thirds of the world’s school-age children – or 1.3 billion children aged 3 to 17 years old – do not have internet connection in their homes. Clearly, for children and teenagers with no access to internet, education can be out of reach. This digital divide is perpetuating inequalities, as families from the poorest households are falling behind their classmates and have very little opportunity to catch up. This was observed in a number of students and families during the lockdown, as the Government failed to provide internet access to students who needed it, in spite of the fact that it was requested by the public schools.

Thirdly, reshaping education is inevitable. There must be significant changes in the way the education system works. As stated by Gul and Khilji (2020), Moore (2015, pp. 164–165) proposed the following characteristics for a curriculum of the future:

- forward-looking and proactive (in addition to paying full attention to the present and valuing the past);
- both *respons-ive* and *respons-ible* in their orientation (responsive to wider social and physical change and responsible in encouraging students to envision and to wish, knowing how to contribute to the creation of a safer, more equitable future);
- prioritising individual and collaborative problem-solving skills, “useful knowledge”, and the promotion of love and capacity for learning; for investigation of self-expression over “knowledge for knowledge’s sake” within active, student-centered classrooms;
- taking a more deliberate and thought-out ethical stance regarding concerns and issues that are global rather than local or national;
- ensuring that education—learning—is both relevant (to society and to the learner) and enjoyable;
- providing the stability that schools and teachers need while at the same time continuing to evolve and self-evaluate;
- seeking as far as possible to base judgements on curriculum inclusions and exclusions, on educational and social principles rather than on political ideology or educational myths or illusions of objectivity;

- promoting both *collective*, communitarian values *and* the development of the *individual* citizen as a happy, creative, well rounded, and culturally enriched human being.

Moreover, in a broader sense, in the words of the member of the International Commission on the Futures of Education (2020) nine specific actions are needed today, that “will advance education tomorrow”. 1. Commit to strengthen education as a common good. 2. Expand the definition of the right to education so that it addresses the importance of connectivity and access to knowledge and information. 3. Value the teaching profession and teacher collaboration. 4. Promote student, youth and children’s participation and rights. 5. Protect the social spaces provided by schools as we transform education. 6. Make free and open source technologies available to teachers and students. 7. Ensure scientific literacy within the curriculum. 8. Protect domestic and international financing of public education. 9. Advance global solidarity to end current levels of inequality.

Chapter 6

6.1 Conclusions

This final chapter presents the conclusions of this research. Right after, I mention the possible implications of the study. Next, I suggest some recommendations for the people who might be interested in conducting further research related to this topic.

Based on my research, I have been allowed to share what five EFL teachers had to say about the experience of English as a Foreign Language teaching and learning during the quarantine for Covid-19. I truly believe this is just the starting point to continue inquiring on this topic. These

conclusions do not intend to provide definitive answers. It is actually the opposite. The intention is to give rise to more questions.

Regarding my general objective, by analyzing the participants' answers to the questionnaire, we could comprehend how EFL teachers perceive their experience of teaching English during the quarantine and how this occurrence shaped their teaching practicum and their students experience of learning English. Moreover, how this circumstance made an impact in their students and families. In the answers of the participants, I found similar points of view. All of the EFL teachers who participated in the study claimed that they found identical difficulties in their academic processes, such as students with lack of resources, lack of connectivity, parents who lost their loved ones, their jobs and had to moved to other cities or countries.

Some teachers stated that they felt stressed out and overwhelmed, as they had to work long hours in front of a screen, and lost personal time. Moreover, they could not mourn for their personal losses.

In academic terms, teachers feel that they did the best they could do ensure the continuity of academic processes, but cannot be sure if homework given to them was really done by their students.

In relation to my specific objectives, the voices of the teachers who participated in this study, provided the insight needed to explore and comprehend how the quarantine influenced the viewpoint that teachers have on their practice and how EFL teachers sense their level of competence in the use of technological tools. Some of them believe that the situation of being in lockdown from one week to the next, forced them to learn how to use technological tools, (such as Classroom, Zoom, Meet, Teams, YouTube channels), by themselves, as training was not

provided by the school they work for. Some students have been able to use those tools to interact with the teacher and send homework, while others have not.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the importance of conducting this project as a valuable opportunity for me to, listening to the voice of the participants, recognize my own voice.

Besides, for me and the participants it was a priceless occasion to reflect on how the academic processes on EFL teaching have been touched by the quarantine. Furthermore, the fact that the voices of the teachers can be heard is greatly rewarding for me as a researcher and as an EFL teacher.

All in all, being able to do catharsis is necessary for teachers as it benefits the soul and allows people to move forward and contemplate actions that can lead to necessary changes and reshaping of our behaviors.

6.2 Implications

First of all, as the pandemic has not ended, social distancing will be required for some time, which affects students and teachers attendance to schools and, consequently, academic processes.

In the school, interactions are being affected by this social separation at all times. Not only for academic work, but also for using the restrooms, socializing or eating a snack during break time.

Secondly, it has been observed that students have become more shy and quiet, and the use of the facemask has not made things easier, as teachers need to speak louder in order to be heard.

Students need psychological attention to help them socialize and help them be less shy and more

outgoing. Some students have difficulties moving, playing, dancing or exercising. There is an environment of fear.

Thirdly, having been given the opportunity to talk to students and their parents about the way in which the pandemic touched their families, I have been able to realize that processes of grieving for the loss of loved ones are pending in most cases. Teachers, students and parents require psychological attention in order to start these processes and to learn to deal with the stages of loss.

Furthermore, I have been able to talk to teachers of other subjects about the fact that many students are “lost” in academic terms. They are unable to comply with class assignments and do not remember contents. This is something I have also observed in my face to face sessions. We teachers are worried that the results of previous academic processes disappeared and we might have to go back to square one.

In addition, the fear of coming back is present, and some teachers have experienced anxiety attacks and all the symptoms related. In spite of that, they must go back to work, or else they will lose their jobs. As a result, teachers are getting sick. They are also getting sick due to the fact that in a hundred public schools in Bogota, teachers and students have been infected with the Covid-19 and some have died and the protocols for reporting the case and being isolated are not working. We teachers have to cope with their fear of getting infected and the need to work twice as much, with no salary increase. All of this is causing significant amounts of stress.

Being in a time of transition between remote education and face to face education, teachers need to comply with their time in the institution and time at home, as few students have come back to school. During the month of July, we had 5 students out of 30. As a result, ties with parents must

be strengthened, in order to guarantee the continuity of academic processes. This time of transition has also led to teachers working at school and working at home, teaching face to face and teaching through Zoom, Teams or Meet, which has reduced personal time.

As far as technological tools are concerned, it is vital that parents and students overcome their fear of facing new ways of communications, such as emails and apps like Google Classroom, Zoom, Meet, Teams, YouTube, among others.

The education paradigm is being reconfigured, as we teachers are faced with permanent hardships and are always struggling to give solutions to all difficulties that arise, not only in remote education, but also in face to face education. One of the greatest hardships is the urgent need to reshape EFL teaching. This includes the fact that more autonomy in students must be promoted. Learners should be able to work on their own without their teacher.

Finally, students and teachers need to be guaranteed connectivity and resources to continue their learning processes, for both in person learning and remote education.

6.3 Limitations of the study

As a researcher, I observed that the reluctance of some teachers to participate was understandable, as the pandemic influenced some EFL teachers in a negative way, making them feel overwhelmed and unable to take some time off in order to stop for a moment and give themselves the opportunity to take part. In spite of my insistence, two EFL teachers did not cooperate with the study.

In some cases, the participants did not give detailed answers, which also diminished the amount of data that was gathered.

Moreover, my own condition of feeling submerged in a state of exhaustion and diminished personal accomplishment became a powerful blockade to tear down and start this research project.

6.4 Recommendations

As I have worked on this research project for more than a year, I respectfully would like to present some suggestions to people interested on the topics discussed in this thesis.

Firstly, I strongly believe that teachers are the ones who have carried the heaviest burden in this time of pandemic, and their voices need to be heard and taken into account. Therefore, I would recommend promoting group discussions among EFL teachers, in order to appreciate valuable achievements which are built in a collective way.

Secondly, I believe that after this pandemic we will be in a point in history in which we can contribute to foster deep and meaningful changes in education. I am convinced that deliberation in schools, education and research are relevant scenarios which can be appropriate for doing so and marching towards the world we have dreamed of.

6.5 Further research

At this point, when the transition to face to face education just started, I strongly believe the voices of students and parents should be heard, regarding their own perceptions of the academic work done in the pandemic and their expectations on the times ahead, keeping in mind that the lockdown changed learning and teaching forever.

Additionally, it would be of great importance to conduct some research on how effective were the EFL academic processes carried out in the lockdown, in terms of the building of competence of students in their EFL skills.

Finally, some questions that could promote research projects are: how did the quarantine change the way students perceive the work of their EFL teachers? How did the quarantine change the way students' parents perceive the work of EFL teachers? How were the EFL curricula reshaped after the quarantine for Covid-19? How can EFL teachers promote autonomous learning in prevention of situations like the quarantine of 2020?

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGOGICA NACIONAL

Maestría en Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras

Cuestionario

El siguiente cuestionario se realiza con el objetivo de obtener información en el desarrollo del proyecto de investigación: Percepciones de los docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera en un

colegio público de Bogotá durante el confinamiento por Covid-19, realizada bajo el marco de formación posgradual en el programa de Maestría en Enseñanza de lenguas Extranjeras de la UPN – Universidad Pedagógica Nacional.

De conformidad con los procedimientos establecidos en la Ley 1581 de 2012, Decreto Reglamentario 1377 de 2013 autorizo de manera voluntaria, previa, explícita, informada e inequívoca para tratar mis datos personales con los fines relacionados para el desarrollo del proyecto de investigación: Percepciones de los docentes de inglés sobre la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera en un colegio público de Bogotá durante el confinamiento por Covid-19.

Leído lo anterior, manifiesto que la información para el tratamiento de mis datos personales la he suministrado de forma voluntaria y es veraz, completa, exacta, actualizada, comprobable y comprensible.

Acepto _____ No acepto _____

Introducción

El siguiente cuestionario ha sido diseñado con el propósito de obtener información relacionada con las percepciones de los docentes de inglés acerca de la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en un colegio público de Bogotá durante el confinamiento por Covid-19. A continuación, usted encontrará una serie de preguntas relacionadas con su experiencia en este sentido. La información suministrada por usted será tratada de forma confidencial y exclusivamente para fines académicos. Lea cuidadosamente y responda cada pregunta de la manera más detallada posible.

1. ¿Considera pertinente la medida del trabajo académico no presencial para los estudiantes de los colegios públicos debido a la coyuntura actual del Covid-19? En caso de ser respuesta negativa, ¿por qué?
2. ¿Qué debilidades y amenazas ha detectado en el sistema de educación pública?
3. ¿Qué fortalezas y que oportunidades ha observado en dicho sistema?
4. ¿Qué debilidades y amenazas de su institución educativa se han puesto en evidencia?
5. ¿Qué fortalezas y oportunidades se han puesto en evidencia?
6. ¿Qué debilidades y amenazas ha detectado en sus estudiantes al asumir el trabajo

académico no presencial?

7. ¿Qué fortalezas y qué oportunidades ha observado en ellos?
8. ¿Qué debilidades y amenazas ha notado en usted mismo como docente de inglés?
9. ¿Qué fortalezas y oportunidades ha detectado en usted mismo como docente de inglés?
10. ¿Qué condiciones harían efectiva la estrategia de trabajo no presencial?
11. ¿Qué aprendizajes le ha dejado a usted esta experiencia como docente?
12. ¿Qué aprendizajes o lecciones cree usted que esta experiencia deja a estudiantes y padres de familia?

Segunda Parte

1. ¿Cuál es su edad?
2. ¿Cuál es su título de pregrado?
3. ¿Cuál es su título de Especialización o Maestría?
4. ¿Durante la pandemia, en algún momento ha sentido que desea renunciar a ser docente de inglés como lengua extranjera? Explique su respuesta.
5. ¿Durante la pandemia, sus estudiantes se han sentido más motivados o menos motivados a aprender inglés? ¿Por qué?
6. En una escala de 1 a 5, ¿qué tanto han avanzado sus estudiantes durante la pandemia, en su nivel de competencia en inglés como lengua extranjera? Explique su respuesta.
7. En una escala de 1 a 5, ¿qué tan satisfecho se siente usted respecto a su desempeño como docente de inglés durante la pandemia? Explique su respuesta.
8. En una escala de 1 a 5, ¿en qué medida ha cambiado o transformado su metodología y/o enfoque de sus procesos de enseñanza de inglés durante la pandemia? Explique su

respuesta.

9. Los cambios o transformaciones en su metodología, ¿han afectado o favorecido los procesos de aprendizaje de inglés de sus estudiantes? Explique su respuesta.
10. ¿Qué dificultades han presentado sus estudiantes en el desarrollo de sus actividades académicas en inglés en la pandemia?
11. ¿Cómo ha cambiado su interacción con los padres de familia de sus estudiantes durante la pandemia? Explique.
12. ¿Cómo ha cambiado su manera de evaluar a sus estudiantes de inglés durante la pandemia? Explique.
13. ¿Qué prácticas académicas considera que han sido exitosas para su proceso de enseñanza de inglés durante la pandemia?
14. ¿Qué prácticas académicas considera que han sido provechosas para el proceso de aprendizaje de inglés de sus estudiantes durante la pandemia?
15. A partir de la experiencia de enseñar inglés en "virtualidad" o "no presencialidad" en la pandemia, en una escala de 1 a 5, ¿en qué medida espera que se reconfiguren sus prácticas docentes en el regreso a la presencialidad? Explique.

Mil gracias por su colaboración.

Appendix B: Questionnaire

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Cuestionario para Tesis

Preguntas Respuestas 5 Puntos totales: 7

Cuestionario para tesis

Valoró tu colaboración y esfuerzo al tomarte un tiempo para responder mis preguntas. Muchas gracias!

***Obligatorio**

Nombre * / 0

Sandra Yaneth Rodríguez

Añadir comentarios a una respuesta individual

Edad (siento la intrusión, es información importante para mi tesis) * / 0

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Añadir comentarios a una respuesta individual

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Cuestionario para Tesis

Preguntas Respuestas 5 Puntos totales: 7

✗ Cuál es su título de pregrado? * / 1

Licenciada en filología e idiomas

Añadir comentarios a una respuesta individual

✗ Cuál es su título de Especialización o Maestría? * / 1

Especialización en docencia universitaria/ Maestría en TIC

Añadir comentarios a una respuesta individual

Durante la pandemia, en algún momento ha sentido que desea renunciar a ser docente de Inglés como Lengua extranjera? Explique su respuesta. * / 0

No

Añadir comentarios a una respuesta individual

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Cuestionario para Tesis

Preguntas Respuestas 5 Puntos totales: 7

Durante la pandemia, sus estudiantes se han sentido más motivados o menos motivados a aprender inglés? ____ / 0
Por qué? *

Se han sentido motivados por qué se usan los recursos necesarios para motivarlos.

Añadir comentarios a una respuesta individual

✗ En una escala de 1 a 5, qué tanto han avanzado sus estudiantes durante la pandemia, en su nivel de competencia en inglés como lengua extranjera? Explique su respuesta. * ____ / 1

4

Añadir comentarios a una respuesta individual

✗ En una escala de 1 a 5, qué tan satisfecho se siente usted respecto a su desempeño como docente de inglés durante la pandemia? Explique su respuesta. ____ / 1

5

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Cuestionario para Tesis

Preguntas Respuestas 5 Puntos totales: 7 Configuración

✗ En una escala de 1 a 5, en qué medida ha cambiado o transformado su metodología y/o enfoque de sus procesos de enseñanza de inglés durante la pandemia? Explique su respuesta. * ____ / 1

El trabajo virtual y el involucrar las herramientas tecnológicas

Añadir comentarios a una respuesta individual

✗ Los cambios o transformaciones en su metodología han afectado o favorecido los procesos de aprendizaje de inglés de sus estudiantes? Explique su respuesta. * ____ / 1

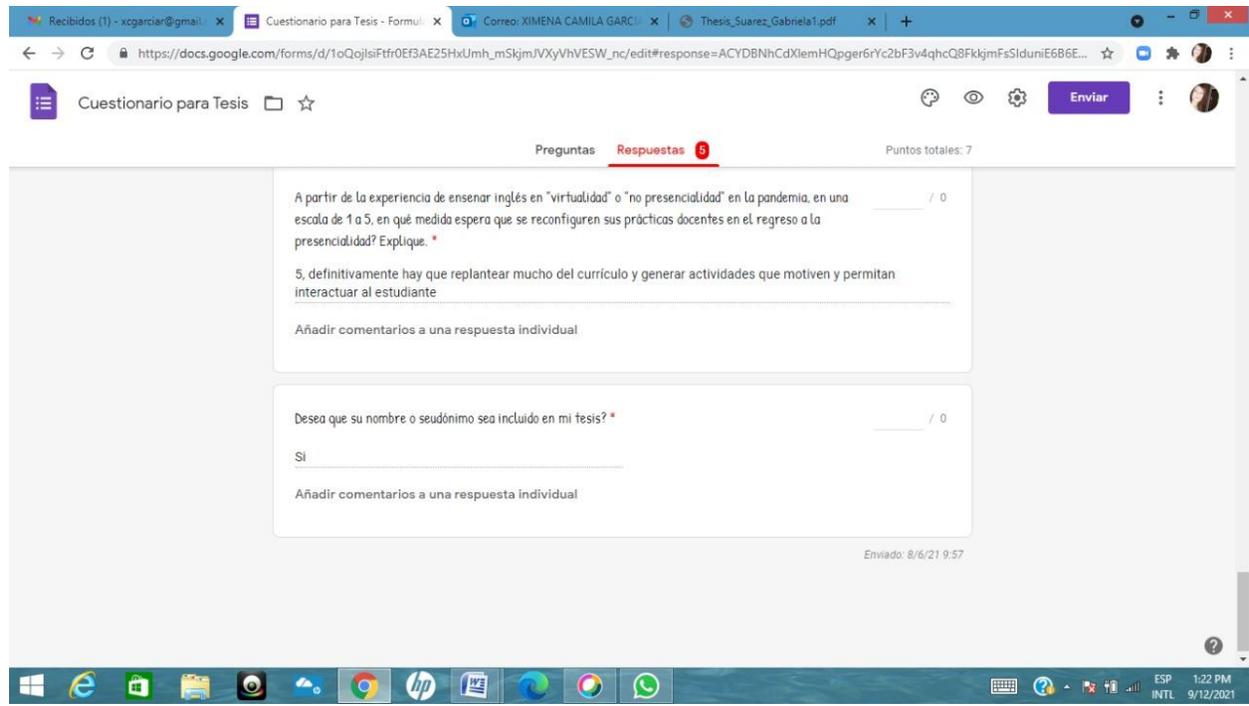
La adaptación del contenido a las OVAS

Añadir comentarios a una respuesta individual

✗ Qué dificultades han presentado sus estudiantes en el desarrollo de sus actividades académicas en inglés en la pandemia? * ____ / 1

La conectividad

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Thanks for reading!

Feel free to contact me if you have any suggestions or comments at

xcgarcia@gmail.com