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CONTENTS

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A Comparative Analysis of English Teachers' Perceptions of English Teaching and Learning in Guanajuato's Private and Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This paper presents a case study about the perceptions that English teachers have about language learning in both public and private secondary schools in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico. The purpose of this research is to understand how and why the different social contexts involved in the public and private sectors influence English language learning and what English teachers perceive in their workplace. It also aims to analyze and compare the potential differences in English teaching in both educational sectors. This study provides an overview of the perceptions of different teachers regarding their challenges, students' motivation, and the influence of social factors in English teaching and learning. The results of the analysis of the data show that teachers face similar issues regarding their work environment. Students' motivation to learn the language is influenced by the social context in which they develop, and the economic problems affect their interest in the language.

Keywords: private sector, public sector, perceptions, English teachers, Mexico.

1. Introduction

English language teaching and learning have become important aspects of the educational system in Mexico. English is a compulsory subject in secondary schools in the public sector. However, according to Davies (2009), after English became a mandatory subject in secondary school fifty years ago, it was noticeable that the ELT curriculum in upper secondary education was a repetition of what was taught in lower secondary school. The English programs in basic public education sometimes do not cover the level proposed by the SEP (Secretaria de Educación Pública) [Ministry of Public Education]. In contrast, private secondary schools seem to have an advantage in the English teaching programs as students seem to achieve better levels of competence. Several private schools in Mexico offer a bilingual model of education. In the curricula of these schools, English appears as an essential feature of their programs. It is notorious that the social context influences the teaching and learning of English in this sector. Furthermore, in this paper, the perceptions of English Teachers from secondary schools will be discussed to compare their experiences with students and the educational environment of the public and private educational sectors in the State of Guanajuato, México.

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- Teachers believe English teaching and learning in the public sector could benefit from various factors such as directives' support, student interest, and socio-economic conditions.

- Teachers from the private sector face challenges concerning administrative roles.

- A noticeable distinction between both educational sectors concerns socioeconomic support and student motivation. These tend to be greater in the private sector.

2. Literature review

This section presents a review of the different aspects that are significant to understanding the findings and the importance of this research.

2.1 *ELT in secondary schools in Mexico*

According to Zorrilla (2004), in the Mexican education system, the level known as *escuela secundaria* (secondary school from now on) is the last step of basic education for students between 12 and 15 years old. Completing this level became mandatory in Mexico in the 1990s, even though these schools have existed since 1921. There are two educational sectors in Mexico. According to *La ley de educación para el estado de Guanajuato* (The educational law for the state of Guanajuato), public education is offered and funded by the state's government; meanwhile, private education is subsidized by particular individuals and has recognition and validation by the Ministry of Education of Guanajuato (SEG). Nevertheless, both sectors follow the official curricula known as *Plan de estudio para la educación preescolar, primaria y secundaria* provided by the Federal Ministry of Education (SEP). According to the educational curriculum in Mexico, English must be taught across all levels of secondary school, and EFL should be delivered by a language specialist (Hernández Hernández & Izquierdo, 2023). However, with new reforms to the curricula and the implementation of *La Nueva Escuela Mexicana* [The New Mexican School], ELT classes are part of one of the formative fields called 'languages', which comprises subjects such as Spanish and Arts through the elaboration of projects.

An important distinction between the public and private sectors remains in the number of English classes that students receive in primary schools, as it varies significantly with some private schools offering bilingual programs and public schools not offering English classes at all. According to Basurto (2010), English is not part of the curricula in primary schools in Mexico. It has been in recent years that a pilot English program has been implemented in some public schools. However, as this program has recently developed, many students in public secondary schools sometimes have a lower level or no knowledge of English. In contrast, Basurto (2010) also points out that English is mandatory at all levels of private primary education, which involves better language development mainly because the private sector provides more teaching and learning resources and dedicates more time to English teaching. Therefore, students in the private sector are more likely to have a deeper knowledge of the language when they get to the secondary school level.

2.2 *Problems with ELT in the Mexican educational system*

Throughout history, Mexico has had several educational reforms that have affected the country's educational system and ELT. According to *Propuesta de una agenda Nacional* (IMCO, 2015), 85% of students attend a public school. Since 1926, ELT has been mandatory in secondary schools, but after 1992, the educational ministers started to design and implement English programs for basic education. In 2009, the SEP started a new program called *Programa Nacional*

de Ingles en Educación Básica (PNIEB) [National English Program for Basic Education], where students ending their third year of the secondary level were expected to have an English level of B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR). However, for Davies (2009), it was noticeable that the ELT curriculum in the last years of secondary level repeated what was taught in the first years of secondary school, resulting in most students entering higher education not having appropriate English skills. Another obstacle to ELT in Mexico, as mentioned by Davies (2007), is the condition in which English is taught in public schools. Some of them are the number of students in secondary schools, which is around 40 to 55. Equally, there is a lack of interest in the language in some schools where only the English teacher is concerned with teaching the language and directives, and parents show no support for English learning.

2.3 *Teachers' perceptions of ELT*

Knowing and understanding the perceptions of English teachers is significant to developing better views about the context of ELT in different sectors and levels of the education system, specifically in Mexico. Research in this area provides more information about teachers' struggles and how they improve their teaching practices. Padilla González and Espinoza Calderón (2015) studied the practices of four different English professors of public secondary schools in Aguascalientes, Mexico. In this research, they offered insights into their teaching strategies inside the classroom, analyzing their pedagogic components and also how their teaching formation influences their practices. Borjian (2015) studied the perspective of Mexican teachers concerning their views on the issue of studying English in Mexico and their recommendations for improving English instruction in Mexico. In this research, the main focus was on how their previous experiences and contexts of learning the language affected their teaching practices and making a comparison with them. These experiences helped them provide some recommendations for improving English learning in Mexican schools.

3. Methodology

This research follows a social constructionism paradigm. Kivunja and Bawa Kuyini (2017) explain that this theory aims to explore people's perspectives under study and comprehend and interpret their thoughts or meaning in a given context. Following a qualitative research approach, described by Dörnyei (2007) as a vehicle to generate detailed descriptions, uncover patterns, and explore new concepts, helpful in areas with limited knowledge and allows for exploring contextual and social factors influencing the phenomena under study. This study will present the different perceptions of a small group of English teachers to understand their views on how the social context influences teaching and learning in two educational sectors.

Creswell (2014) defines case studies as a qualitative investigation where the researcher deeply explores a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. These cases are confined by time and activity, and researchers gather detailed information using diverse data collection methods over an extended period. This research employs various data collection techniques to examine the topic. Following an inductive approach, as described by Thomas (2006), is an approach that allows a detailed view of the data to provide concepts, themes, or models throughout the interpretation made by the researcher. This approach will enhance the development of themes to explain the data recollected.

3.1 *Context*

This study was carried out in six different secondary schools in Guanajuato. The aim was to analyze the potential similarities and differences between English teaching and learning in

private and public secondary schools in the cities of Guanajuato, León, and Irapuato. This research aimed to understand what makes private schools more successful in English teaching and learning and what aspects influence public schools' failure to have the same success. I also wanted to know how teachers perceive these influences on the opportunities to learn and teach English.

3.2 *Participants*

Six participants were recruited to conduct this study. The criteria for selecting these participants were that they must be English teachers working in private and secondary schools in the state of Guanajuato and have at least six months of experience teaching English in the public, private, or both sectors. Table 1. summarizes the participants' profiles and shows the participants' important details in conducting this research.

Table 1. Participants

No. participant	Educational sector	Sex	Experience	Place of work (city)	Experience in both sectors
Participant 1	Public	Male	7 months	León	No
Participant 2	Public	Female	1 year	Irapuato	No
Participant 3	Private	Female	4 years	Guanajuato	No
Participant 4	Private	Male	5 years	Guanajuato	Yes
Participant 5	Public	Female	3 years	Guanajuato	Yes
Participant 6	Public	Female	17 years	Guanajuato	No

3.3 *Ethics*

Following ethical procedures is imperative in research. For this study, participants were given a consent form informing them about the research's purpose. They were also aware of data protection and told that their participation in this study was voluntary and anonymous.

3.4 *Data collection instruments*

As this is a case study, the main feature of this method is the use of multiple data sources. Therefore, three instruments were used to conduct this research: (1) Questionnaires, (2) Semi-structured interviews, and (3) Archival analyses.

Questionnaires serve as a tool to gather unstructured insights into what people think about a particular subject (Brown, 2009). Hence, the participants answered a short online questionnaire comprising five questions regarding their general experience teaching in private and public sectors. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with each participant. According to Longhurst (2009), semi-structured interviews serve as valuable tools to explore complex behaviors, viewpoints, and emotions and gather information about various experiences. Interviews were used to acquire additional information and collect data to enhance and broaden their perspectives on the subject matter. A small archival analysis was made to understand and familiarize with the participants' context. Document analysis requires the careful examination and interpretation of data to extract significance, foster comprehension, and construct empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007, as cited in Bowen, 2009). Participants provided pictures of their classroom and school settings. These were used to obtain a personal perspective and to understand the work the teachers mentioned in the interviews. Also, the teachers share photos of the materials that help them enhance their students' language learning, as it is essential to review the information to compare and support the information stated in the questionnaires and interviews.

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3.5 *Data analysis procedures*

The data collected was analyzed by following a triangulation analysis used to compare and complement information. Data triangulation aims to establish "a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility" (Eisner, 1991, as cited in Bowen, 2009: 110). Bowen (2009) explains that examining information obtained through different research methods allows the researcher to validate findings across various data instruments, reducing the potential biases in a singular study. The data analysis process consisted of different steps. First, the data was coded to identify the important and similar topics mentioned by the participants. Then, thematic analysis was used to discuss the findings and analyze and understand the data collected. This consists of responding to the main research question and constructing a profound understanding of the central phenomenon across a description and thematic development (Creswell, 2012). Finally, a thematic analysis was used to obtain information on the data collected. This analysis will provide the study's main findings and a deeper understanding of the perception of teachers regarding their contexts.

4. Findings and discussion

Following the data analysis, four themes were identified: (1) Teachers' experiences teaching English in secondary schools, (2) Teachers' difficulties with teaching English, (3) Students' motivation and engagement in learning English, and (4) The impact of socio-economical factors in the English teaching and learning. Overall, the themes offered different perspectives about what teachers encounter while teaching English in the public and private basic education sectors, particularly in secondary schools, where English becomes a mandatory subject for students at this educational level.

4.1 *Teaches' experiences teaching English in secondary schools*

Teachers were asked about their experience teaching in their current place of work. All participants talked about how dealing with different aspects of their school has reflected in their practice, resulting in some general setbacks. Participant 3 from a private school expressed:

> *"The experience has been good, with some ups and downs. I have been given the opportunity to teach at different levels. At the student level, there aren't as many children with behavioral problems as I've heard in public schools. The demands of parenting make it challenging. Administrative problems that result from friction between colleagues are the worst." Q/P3*

From the quote above, we see that teachers face different situations in their daily practice. Dealing with administrators and directives can be complicated, making developing a good teaching environment difficult due to the pressure they have.

Another teacher for a public school mentioned that her experience teaching in the school has been evolving:

> *"It has been a roller coaster. I have to adapt my teaching style according to the requirements of the school, closer to traditional teaching. But in the last months, my deputy head has shown more openness to the theme of interculturality at school." Q/P5*

Difficulties can be found in both educational sectors. Following the directives and school requirements can be challenging in developing a more communicative and culturally enriched language class. Students' lack of previous knowledge of the language and parents' involvement in their education also affect the teaching experiences. Participant 6 from a public school mentioned that her experience teaching in the school has been challenging:

> *"It has been difficult because the students arrive without knowing the language, in addition to the fact that parents give little importance to the language and formal education." Q/P6*

It is common that in the public sector, students do not have knowledge of the language or English classes before their secondary studies. Many secondary students had their first encounter with the language until this stage in their lives. Participant 4, who is from a private school, has had a good experience overall; however, he found some challenges working in secondary schools:

> *"While it's pleasant, dealing with teenagers can be complex." Q/P4*

The age of students in secondary schools ranges from 12 to 16 years old. Due to the natural changes that emerge at this stage of their lives, students' behavior can be difficult because of the many psychological and social changes they face. Dealing with this change can be complicated for teachers as it comes with behavioral challenges too.

For the less expert teachers who work in public schools, the experiences that they have been facing tend to be positive. However, they also noticed some issues related to the support of directives and the lack of tools to perform their duties. Participant 2 expressed:

> *"Although it's been good, I feel that the managers should provide more support." Q/P2*

In this regard Participant 1 has mentioned that:

> *"For me, it is a very good experience in general. However, I have faced very difficult situations regarding the classroom setting. Due the fact that the classroom does not have a projector so I had to buy my own projector. Providing media to the students is a very difficult aspect to apply in my public school." Q/P1*

Most of them expressed that they have had good experiences so far. Teacher experiences are important to understanding the context in which the participants work. However, it is difficult not to notice the diverse issues these teachers have to face to develop good English language teaching practices because of the lack of support offered by the school administration.

4.2 *Teachers' difficulties with teaching English*

During this research, it was significant to understand the different struggles that English secondary teachers face in the private and public sectors. Although they performed their duties in different contexts, it is noticeable that in the teaching profession, it is impossible not to find challenges in the workplace. These challenges included dealing with the tools to work, the size of the groups, relationships with school administrators, and students' behavior. Participant 1, from a public school, mentioned that the lack of tools has challenged his practice. Another difficulty he faced in his practice was the demand to work in teams due to the implementation of the new federal curriculum known as *Nueva Escuela Mexicana*" (New Mexican School).

> *"In my school, it is mandatory to sit my students in groups due to the new program of the new Mexican school so classes are like that in groups… supervisors school coordinators pass and see that they are working as a team and so it is difficult because it is a very different way of teaching and I think it is also more complicated because as a group of 40 children up it is very difficult to have a good Group control is at least more difficult."* Int/P1.

This teacher shows that there is pressure to follow the school's guidelines because of the group's size, making it hard to control the class. Making that the participant feels stressful to follow these guidelines because of the constant monitoring of the administrators.

The number of students in public schools tends to be larger than in private institutions. Designing activities that involve teamwork can be a difficult task for any teacher in these conditions. Teamwork may bring behavioral problems and poor classroom management, which can influence class development and the teacher dealing more with the student's conduct rather than teaching the class. Additionally, dealing with administrators' constant supervision can cause stress and anxiety for the teacher as the classroom conditions might lead to a poor perception of the teachers' performance.

Participant 3, a teacher at a private school, mentioned she faced a difficult situation with school administrators. However, her situation involves other kinds of problems:

> *"… it's very stressful sometimes because they don't even have to do with things at work but rather are personal internal things among some administrators who start to have frictions and begin to have a little lack of ethics, sometimes they get involved in matters that do not belong to them then there begins to be friction with each other and ends up being a very stressful environment." Int/P4*

Talking about how this situation has influenced the delivery of her class, participant 3 mentioned that sometimes the principal visits her to maintain order due to other teachers or administrators complaining about the noise in her class. She had to avoid activities that involved games, which were the ones that provoked the noise. She also notices that this situation has influenced the students' motivation because they know other teachers or people complain about the class and have to settle with working with the book:

> *"..they really like activities that involve games, so sometimes it gets a little noisy, and we have to remove thew. They feel like "ah well, for what if we are not even going to be able to do what we like" or it is "we can no longer do this because such a teacher or such a person gets angry," then as they already come to class with "we can do what we like or we will combine more being with the book and quiet because others are angry?"" Int/P3*

Teachers in the public and private sectors find dealing with administrators difficult. They must develop their work easily and implement different strategies to deliver their English classes. Sometimes, schools have certain policies and requirements. Teachers may have seen those guidelines as complicated when designing a functional English class.

The role of the administrators is important for developing a good work environment. For teachers, it is key to have their support in implementing activities that help motivate students to learn English.

Another challenge for teachers in public sectors is the lack of materials the school provides. The institutions' failure to provide technological devices in the classroom limits the use of diverse materials that allow them to implement technology in their lessons.

Participant 5 mentioned that they can access projectors in her school. However, she finds it difficult due to the time in advance she has to notify to use one. The teacher also faces other problems that make using technology in her class difficult:

> *"The truth is they are very special to lend them (the projector), you have to order it a week in advance, then I decided to buy my own projector, and I also have my speaker and everything, but since December at the school where I am working, near the food bank, they stole the light connections, and we have no power so I can not use my projector." Int/P5.*

Using technology makes language learning even easier for students like teenagers who are used to using technology in their daily lives. Technology can also provide more immersion in the language and a wide range of activities. It is sad that public schools do not have enough access to these tools. Participant 2 (also from a public school) has experienced the same difficulties. She

gave her opinion about what can be done to increase the support in the English class at the school where she works:

> "One of the things that would be good is that… the classrooms are well, but they could have more tools, even a few simple curtains to be able to project, and even projectors. Yes, there are, but they need maintenance because the cables do not serve. Such things or even the directives constantly approach teachers to see what materials or tools we can use apart from that, for example, books in English, etc." Int/P2.

Teachers have expressed their difficulties in teaching in those environments. The teachers from the private sector did not express any difficulty related to their tools. They expressed that the school provided them with a screen and other materials like books, posters, and copies. Comparing the private sector, we can notice that public schools have more problems using technology in their classrooms and even having a better setting to deliver their classes.

After discussing the teachers' difficulties, it is noticeable that these situations can affect the development and planning of an English class. Teachers had to arrange their class design to provide a good environment for the students and develop and acquire their own materials to help their teaching practice. This is to increase the students' motivation in language learning.

4.3 Students' motivation and engagement in learning English

Teachers make considerable efforts to enhance language learning in both sectors. Even though they are from two different contexts, teachers share an interest in developing a better learning environment for the language. Teachers from public schools are aware of their budget limitations. However, they create their own material and have bought the tools to improve their English classes and motivate students. In the private sector, teachers take advantage of the material the school provides them with. Nevertheless, private school teachers also show an interest in their students' language learning by complementing their classes with diverse activities.

The participants in this study agree that the social context in which the students develop significantly influences how they view the language, academically and personally. In this aspect, participant 6 from a public school stated that:

> "Students who do not wish to continue their academic training avoid working on the subject." Q/P6

Students from the public sector seem reluctant to learn the language. Teachers had expressed that their social context influences the importance students give to the language in their academic development. Participant 2 expressed:

> "Their beliefs influence their views on the language and how they learn it and thus the interest in the subject." Q/P2

Participant 5 said her students felt insecure about the language, making them struggle with learning and practicing it. Nevertheless, they are others that are willing to know more:

> "There are people who flatly say I don't like it, I don't like it, and I don't understand it, and I'm not going to do anything. However, there are others who do call their attention, who do study and when the class finish are asking: hey! And how I said this and how it is said that? but yeah, there are very few people. And then, when I was in the first year in the past cycle, it was like that, with fear because I didn't know anything and because I didn't understand anything and I don't know. Then it's hard to get them out of that idea." Int/P5

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In public school, teachers face similar experiences, all related to the previous experiences students had with the language, and some because they realize students do not have any experience with the language at all.

In the private sector, students show a different perspective of the language. In this sector, the students' interest is more noticeable because of the opportunities outside the school to experiment and their previous experience with the language. Participant 4, who has worked in both sectors expressed:

> *"In private, you meet guys with a little more willingness, even as with a little more language knowledge… the attitude of students in private schools unlike the public ones is that what they seek is like to excel in English, most seek to prove that they know more English than the other and in most cases it is a status symbol for them to know more English than the other." Int/P5*

Teachers from the public sector need to implement different strategies to increase the students' interest in learning the language. The participants expressed the different strategies they implement to enhance English learning. For Participant 5, using art to complement the learning topics and using games have been the best activities to increase students' interest. Equally, Participant 2 sees the use of games and the use of topics and themes related to their interests as helping to motivate students. Participant 1 mentioned the importance of enhancing students' interest and relating them with the language:

> *"What I try to do is always tell them that the things they like are always going to be able to find them also in English, then in that way I feel that the reason why it doesn't matter if such a student likes this artist, or another student likes to play video games is always going to be an equivalent in the language in this case English. Then he encouraged them to look in their own context, in this case, using social networks, TikTok, and Instagram, to start looking for content they like in English and begin to enrich a little… Also, teach them new musical genres and new artists to develop more and see that there is much more than using those two strategies to balance their interests." P1/Int.*

Teachers used their students' context to create a more exciting learning environment and promote language learning. In the private sector, teachers also provide different materials and activities to promote better language learning. Participant 3 offers opportunities to speak on diverse topics inside the classroom. She allows them to discuss their interests and monitors the topic to keep them on the educational side. Participant 4 promotes English learning by using songs and musical activities to enhance language learning. This participant also has the advantage that the school delivers other classes in English. Another exciting activity provided by his school is the presentation of a theatre play to practice the language. Regarding language learning motivation, private schools seem to have an advantage because of the experiences students and teachers have in their schools.

Different individuals support students' education, but the most important factor in this student's stage is the presence of parents in their educational development. Teachers were asked about the parents' presence and their expectations of the language. There were many differences in the perspectives teachers had. In private schools, teachers see the parents' support through their desire for their kids to learn and experiment with the language and provide opportunities to them. One of the teachers commented:

> *"In fact, almost all parents want their children to finish school already speaking English. In that sense, specifically in the matter, we have had a good response from the parents." Int/P4*

In private schools, parents seem to be very involved in their children's language education. Teachers value the support that this provides to their children and their language development:

> "Parents believe that it is crucial for their children to speak a second language, and they believe that it is important to ask more for more things and they even enroll them in private classes, which provides extra support." Int/P3

It is noticeable that economic factors could significantly influence parent support. In contrast with public schools, parents seem to make some effort to provide students with aid to enhance language learning. However, there are few of them. Participant 1 stated that:

> "I feel that very few parents really expect something from the language. I have noticed that parents who have expectations about English, which are very few, already have their children in private schools, or I have them in separate schools. I realize that when we have parent meetings and also when I talk with students who are interested in English and tell me that they are already going to courses or that they went to courses. with those students, there is support from the parents; they are interested in their child learning another language, but they are minimal, very few." Int/P1

Little is known about the parents' support for the language among the rest of the teachers from public schools. However, the teachers mentioned that economic factors significantly influenced their ability to practice the language outside of school because they were not familiar with it, which could discourage them from being interested in it.

4.4 *The impact of socio-economic factors on English teaching and learning*

As we know, public education is accessible to the majority of the population living in Mexico. However, the public sector faces many budget struggles. Teachers have to use their own money to provide materials to students, and sometimes, they have to dedicate additional resources to afford electronic materials to enhance their classes. Students also face struggles influenced by their economic status. In the interviews, some teachers mentioned that some students sometimes had insufficient money to eat, which is a shocking factor that affects their performance in school and their lives.

Compared to public schools, private schools had better access to technology and other materials. The difference in accessibility to language practice in private schools and how socioeconomic factors enhance language learning in this educational sector was very noticeable. Teachers were asked if they think their social context influences their language learning. In this aspect, the participants agree that social context significantly influences how they see the language and its importance in learning it. Participant 1 commented:

> ¿"I think that, especially in English, some students come from different economic and social backgrounds. They do not see the language as something 'useful' because they know that they will hardly have the opportunity to travel or to speak it, and sometimes the parents influence this way of thinking of the students." Q/P1.

In private schools, the difference is noticeable because of the opportunities the students have to develop the language.

> "Some of them have more opportunities to even leave the country, and some are paid private classes. Many parents want their children to develop skills." Q/P4

As discussed previously, parents' influence on language learning is important for better language development. They could provide students with other alternatives and opportunities to practice the language. However, it depends on their economic capacities and the

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chances they can provide to students to feel secure learning a language. In public schools, it is hard to find parents who offer the same opportunities to travel, study abroad, or even study the language in other schools.

Socioeconomic factors are also very noticeable in the school structure and material provided to teachers. This research previously emphasized the lack of material provided by the school administration and the lack of interest in the language, which deeply affects the development of an English class in public schools. Two of the teachers from public schools have mentioned how the location of their school has affected their educational center and how it has affected their language classes. Participant 6 has expressed:

> *"It's challenging because the school is situated in an area with high crime rates, and they have been involved in theft. So, they don't want to put fixed projectors in the classrooms, and we have to apply for the projector. And there were also 8 cannons, 6 were stolen now in the pandemic, today we only have 2, and we try to implement as much as possible with the resources that already exist and that I give to children. The number of groups and having to move from the classroom can be a negative point, especially when connecting and disconnecting the cannon, which takes about 15 to 20 minutes of class, takes away from the rest of the class." Int/ P6*

Participant 5, also commented about a similar experience that affected the school in general:

> *"The school where I teach has been without electricity since December because the electrical cables were stolen, so I cannot use my projector." Int/P5*

Being near zones with a high crime rate is a problem which impacts education different ways. Students' behavior is sometimes influenced by the context in which they interact. Therefore, bigger effort would be needed from the government to pay more attention to these situations and provide a more secure place to develop education.

One of the contrasting points between public and private schools is the support for acquiring or providing materials to teachers. Teachers from private schools have mentioned that their schools provide them with the necessary materials and spaces to implement their classes. This material includes screens, projectors, and classrooms dedicated to the English class. On the other hand, teachers from public schools had expressed their discomfort with their schools because they don't have support to provide material to students like an aid for copies, an adequate space to deliver their class, and appropriate books:

> *"In the public system, it is one who puts all the resources, you are the one who invests, even a simple copy, you have to pay it because the school does not have money and many times parents, well, sometimes children do not have enough to eat." Int/ P6.*

Teachers' perspectives about socioeconomic factors reveal the many differences students from both sectors experience in their educational environment. Public schools struggle with budget constraints, forcing teachers to fund classroom materials themselves, and some students face basic needs insecurity, which affects their academic performance. In contrast, private schools enjoy better access to technology and resources, offering students more opportunities to develop language skills and experiment with the language outside the country.

Parental influence plays a significant role, as wealthier families have the means to provide extra learning opportunities that are often unavailable to public school students. The lack of support and resources in public schools and issues like high crime rates and inadequate infrastructure are obstacles to educational development. To address these inequalities, the government, who is the provider of public education, needs to improve the conditions and

resources in public schools, ensuring a secure and supportive learning environment for all students.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze and compare the potential differences and similarities in the perceptions of English teachers in language teaching and learning in secondary public and private schools. The study's importance was to realize the aspects that influence the way English is taught and learned in the different sectors of schools in Mexico.

The results of this study suggested that teachers believe English teaching and learning in the public sector could benefit from various factors such as directives' support, student interest, and socio-economic conditions. Likewise, the private sector faces challenges concerning administrative roles. However, a noticeable distinction between both sectors has to do with socioeconomic support and student motivation. It seems that these tend to be greater in the private sector.

Some of the limitations of the study were the balance between the participants of the public and private sectors a larger sample size would be advisable in other studies. Future research will benefit from conducting a focus group where participants can share and discuss their different experiences teaching English with other teachers in the same and other sectors and provide different perspectives to their colleagues.

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Perceptions of First Grade Secondary School Students in Mexico in the Implementation of Games for English Language Learning Purposes

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Abstract

The purpose of this case study is to describe students' perceptions of the use of games for learning purposes in the English language classroom at a public Mexican Junior High. The study evaluated the perceptions regarding the use of bingo, wordsearch and crosswords. This cross-sectional study implemented observations, field notes, questionnaires and surveys as data collection methods to provide detailed descriptions of the participants' feelings.

Keywords: gamification, game-based learning, English language learning and vocabulary.

1. Introduction

English language learning and teaching are complex processes that require the constant implementation of activities to motivate students. Most teaching training programs provide tools to help trainees discover or start creating a teaching philosophy about how teaching and learning should be including the activities, materials, methodologies to use. There is a large number of different activities and materials for English learning purposes, one of this different activity are games.

The use of games for English learning purposes has been of great interest in research on how its implementation may or not benefit the learning and teaching process of English. This paper explores how the implementation of games works in the context of a public junior high school in Mexico.

English classes in Mexico normally focuses on the use of traditional activities and materials. We know all these aspects directly affect students' performance in the language, in this case negatively. This is because students start creating (or it is already created) the idea of how English is learned and how this process is. This idea is supported by Banks (2017) who in her study it is claimed that 48.76% of the participant teachers have students with lack of interest in English and unmotivated to learn this language at a junior high school in Mexico.

A source of motivation for this study was the lack of material in the classroom. This guided me to be creative and design my own materials and activities. Quezada (as cited in Millán & Basurto, 2020: 127) carried out research and he concluded that teacher used to complain about the lack of materials and school support. Another study carried out by Blanks (2017) reported

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similar results by concluding that Mexican English teachers complain about not enough and inadequate materials and teaching resources. In this study teachers highlighted the fact that materials (books) are not adequate for students' real English level and needs which forces teachers to look for better and different materials to use in their classes. Another source of motivation was the desire to change students' ideas of how English learning is. As Hidalgo, Cifuentes and Flores (as cited in Banks, 2017: 28) observed, English learning in Mexico is surrounded by complex and contradictory ideas and opinions that affect Mexican English learners' motivations, perceptions and attitudes towards English learning.

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the perceptions of first-grade students in a secondary school in Mexico regarding the implementation and use of games for English language learning purposes. English language learning is more than copying from the board or writing vocabulary lists. It is about experimenting and playing with the language in ways that are meaningful to students. Researching the implementation of games could help language teachers (not only at a secondary level) who are struggling in deciding what activities and materials to incorporate the English classroom and how to teach vocabulary to their students in an interactive and engaging way. Moreover, this research could shed light on the benefits of using games for a particular context. The research questions guiding the study is: How does first grades students in secondary school perceive the implementation of games in the language classroom for learning purposes?

2. Literature review

This section presents an overview of the topics underpinning the study. First, I will explain the differences between gamification and game-based learning. After that, I discuss some of the benefits and drawbacks of implementing is bingo, crosswords, and word search in English language learning and teaching.

2.1 *Differences between gamification and game-based learning*

First, it is important to start distinguishing the terms gamification and game-based learning since these are commonly misunderstood. According to Nah et al. (2014), gamification is the integration of game elements such as leaderboards, badges, points, etc. with the purpose of increasing motivation and engagement. Another definition by Kiryakova et al. (2014) describes gamification as the implementation of game elements and game thinking in non-game activities.

On the other hand, Al-Azawi et al. (2016) define Game Based Learning as the use of games as part of the learning process and use these games to enhance the learning process. Dimitra (as cited in Dahalan et al., 2023: 6) explains that there exit 7 types of GBL: memory, simulation, interactive, quiz, strategy, testing games and puzzles. It could be assumed that the game used in game-based learning is a digital game, but this is not always the case as Plass, et al. (2015) commented. This idea is supported by Grace (as cited in Adipat et al., 2021: 542) by commenting that they can be digital or non-digital. In this research, the games used are non-digital.

2.2 *Advantages and disadvantages of using games in the classroom*

It is important to highlight the benefits of using games in the classroom. As pointed out by Mubaslat (2012) games are not only fun, but they can also be challenging, and it is a way of developing cooperation between the students. They are also a tool for recalling knowledge in an entertaining and pleasant way. Another advantage is that they capture students' attention and they

lower students' level of stress and anxiety. In addition to these benefits, Mubalast (2012) pointed out that besides these benefits, there still exist teachers who believe games are only a waste of time, and they assume the only purpose is to have fun. For this study, three different types of games were used: crosswords, bingo and wordsearch.

2.3 *Crosswords in English language learning*

Moursund (2006) comments that crossword is a way to recall words by words, sentences, definitions or information. The author also commented that from an educational point of view, they help to improve vocabulary, spelling and reading skills. Orawiwatnakul (2013) highlighted that crossword puzzle they can be either used for practicing, learning or reviewing terms. According to a study carried out by Tabtimsai (as cited in Orawiwatnakul, 2013: 417) the use of crossword as an after reading activity helped students to enhance and grow their vocabulary knowledge. Nevertheless, crosswords can also be used with a different skills like listening, or writing.

2.4 *Bingo and English language learning*

Rahmasari (2021) describes that bingo is a game that encourages students to review vocabulary words. Finch (as cited in Rahmasari, 2021: 29) establishes that vocabulary Bingo game also help students to learn new words. Rahmasari (2021) also concluded based on the research carried out that Bingo is a way to enhance students' engagement and interaction in the classroom while they are playing. This activity creates a good learning environment in the classroom which promotes and facilitates learning.

2.5 *Word search puzzle for English language learning*

Vossoughi, and Zargar (2009) pointed out that many researchers suggest that playing games is a good way to learn vocabulary. They also claimed that word search puzzles are good strategies to review vocabulary without making students feel tired. According to a study carried out by Yulianti and Bharati (2017) it was observed that wordsearch games help students to increase their vocabulary for both students with high and low interest in the English language. Based on the results from a study carried out by Goumas et al. (2020) all the students who participated in the study commented that using wordsearch is more amusing than traditional ways of learning.

3. Methodology

As the tittle suggest the study aimed to describe students' perceptions towards the use of games in an English classroom in a Mexican context, and a qualitative research method was the best option to achieve this purpose. As Williams (2007) described, qualitative research has the purpose to describe, interpret and analyze data. This author also affirmed that in this type of research, the researcher has the opportunity to better understand the phenomenon and the people being studied. Bryman (as cited in Hammersley, 2012: 1) describes that qualitative research focusses its attention on words rather than in the quantification or numerical analysis of the data. This is a case study method and according to Cohen et al. (2002) it focuses on a group of individuals and how they understand or perceive an event. In other words, this type of study is strong in showing the reality. Geertz (as cited in Cohen et al., 2002: 254) reported that this type of study tries to picture "what it is like" to be in a certain situation. Case study was selected because to better explore, analyze and report how people reacted to the phenomenon, which is the

implementation of games in the English classroom. This is deductive research since according to Li et al. (2019), it starts with a theory and then trough different instruments we try to confirm or reject the theory. In this study, the theory is how games benefit English language learning, more specifically vocabulary. For this study, four data collection instruments were selected because as Hood (2009) stipulated that a case study method uses multiple sources for data collection. The four instruments used were questionaries (Q), surveys (S), observations (Ob) and field notes (FN).

3.1 *Participants of the study*

A group of twelve participants three boys and nine girls was the final sample. They were 11-12 years old at time of the study. For the majority of the students, it is their first-time learning English. Their level of English is A1. So far, they have presented both positive and negative opinions about the language and the classes in general. In order to participate the students were required to sign a consent letter where the purpose of the study was clearly explained. Considering that they are minors, the school and parents were informed of the purpose of the study, the instruments and steps of the data collection. In order to protect students' identity, participants names were changed by numbers. In order to accept participate in this study, participants were required to sign a consent letter where the purpose of the study was clearly explained.

3.2 *Research setting*

This study was carried out in the city of Irapuato in central Mexico. The school where the research was carried out is a public secondary school located in Irapuato, this school is located in dangerous neighborhoods with economic and security problems. English classes are taught three times a week for 50 min.

3.3 *Data collection instruments*

3.3.1 *Questionnaire*

The questionnaire was designed using three types of items: fill-in, open and close response questions (Brown, 2009). The questionnaire had 10 open questions, 3 close questions and 3 fill-in questions. The questionnaire was designed in Spanish to make it easier for participants to complete it. This instrument was selected because it provided written explanation of participants' perceptions and ideas about the different games implemented in the classroom.

3.3.2 *Survey*

Ponto (2015) claims that surveys are an efficient research tool because they help participants to describe, analyze and explores the interest being studied. As stated by Li et al., (2019), surveys can produce a summary of beliefs, perceptions, opinion, etc., of a population or group of people but they do not pretend to test a hypothesis. In this study, survey was selected as an instrument because it can collect written information about participants perceptions and opinions of the use of games in the classroom. Also, because of the time available, participants could complete the survey by themselves.

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3.3.3 *Observations*

According to Cohen et al. (2002), observations can be used as an instrument to gather live information in a natural setting. In this study, observations of different classes were used in order to find any discrepancies between what participants answer in the survey and what happened in the real classroom setting, or to find extra information not mentioned in the surveys by the participants. One observation was conducted before the survey was carried out and two observations after the survey was carried out.

3.3.4 *Field notes*

Field notes of each class observed were written by the researcher to support the observations and the responses from the survey. As Li et al. (2019) described, field notes can be used to recollect the observation data. The notes were written after each class finished, reporting the most meaningful data. One reason to do the notes in this was because of my positionality as a teacher and researcher.

3.4 *Data analysis procedures*

Once the data was collected through the instruments described above, it as coded and organized in a table. The information was classified using thematic analysis and patterns were identified. This processed allowed to find emerging themes that were organized and divided into 6 different themes based on the three games researched.

3.5 *Limitations of the study*

One of the biggest limitations of this study was that the researcher was also the teacher. While this situation could have some benefits in terms of rapport with the participants. Playing both roles also raises challenges which could potentially affect students' responses to the survey as they could feel observed or influenced by the presence of the teacher. That is why a different data collection instrument was used to corroborate their responses, check for any discrepancies and make the study reliable with solid results.

Another limitation was the small sample of participants, since this study was only carried out with 12 students from the same group, and at the same school level. This limitation directly affects the study as results cannot be generalized to different English teaching contexts such as working with younger (kindergarten/primary) or older students (high school/university, adult learners) or for a different language.

4. Findings and discussion

The results were based on the information gathered from the surveys, observations of different classes and field notes written by the teacher about what was observed in the classroom. A thematic analysis was required to explain the data collected. Scharp and Sanders (2019) pointed out that thematic analysis is a way of recognizing, exanimating and reporting the data collected in qualitative research by the use of patterns named themes. I decided to use thematic analysis to look for patterns of their responses.

The following themes emerged: 4.1 Bingo as a tool for practicing listening and learning vocabulary. 4.2 Identifying words through word search puzzle. 4.3 Crosswords as a way for

practicing spelling. 4.4 Games as a tool for developing cooperation and competition. 4.5 Games more than having fun. 4.6 The dark side of games.

4.1 *Bingo as a tool for practicing listening and learning vocabulary*

While analyzing the responses gathered about the use of bingo, it can be said that 100% of the participants reacted positively to the use of this game in the classroom. Participants commented that one of the benefits of the use of this game is that they feel words can be easily remembered. Three participants out of twelve commented something similar by mentioning that bingo is a good game that helps them to enhance their memory retention about the vocabulary.

"… así ubico más mi vocabulario y me lo aprendo más fácil"

In that way I recognize the vocabulary and I learn it easier. (S/Q8/Participant 7)

From this it can be said that this tool facilitates the learning process and the recognition of vocabular. Besides the benefit this game has on vocabulary learning. Another participant commented that it is also a way for practicing listening and identify how words are pronounced. This is because they have the opportunity to listen to the teacher reading out loud different vocabulary words, but at the same time identify how they are written and compare with its pronunciation.

"…también al momento de divertirnos aprendemos a escuchar las palabras en inglés"

At the moment we are having fun we learn to listen to the words in Spanish. (S/Q8/Participant 11)

From both quotes it can be concluded that participants like the game, they can practice their listening ability, they can recognize written words and enhance the learning process. This game has the advantage to be adaptable to any English vocabulary and level. Teachers can use this game at the beginning or at the end of the lesson.

4.2 *Identifying words trough wordsearch puzzle*

Now moving to what participants think about the use of wordsearch, thanks to the survey we can gathered that they think its implementation is beneficial for vocabulary. More specifically, some participants commented it is a way to learn how words are written and increasing vocabulary retention:

"…podemos memorizar palabras y su escritura"

We can memorize the words and its writing. (S/Q9/Participant 12)

Apart from learning vocabulary and how these words are written, participants commented they can also visually identify words. Which is related to know how they are written.

The answers from participants show the benefits of using wordsearch and the impact it has on students' learning and improvement of vocabulary. But is this an efficient activity for learning? Participant 7 said

"…yo opino que es una manera muy eficiente para mi"

I think it is a very efficient way for me. (S/Q9/Participant 7)

So far, it can be highlighted that wordsearch help students to memorize, learn, identify and increase their vocabulary about different topics. From the observations it can added that students get engaged in the class and seem to have fun and enjoy the class. It is important to also highlight that 91.6% of the participants reacted positively to the use of wordsearch.

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4.3 *Crosswords as a way for practicing spelling*

All of the participants seem to respond positively to the use of this material for English language learning purposes. Five participants out of twelve (41.6%) mentioned that crosswords have helped them to remember how words are written.

"Está bien porqué así aprendemos a escribir bien las palabras en inglés..."

It is ok because in that way we learn to write correctly the words in English. (S/Q10/Participant 3)

Wordsearch has the benefit to force students to write the words correctly to fit in each space. Also, since they need a clue to know what word to write, they can also read small definitions of the word hidden or just use images. From the observations and field notes, it was also noticeable students were engaged in working.

4.4 *Games as a tool for developing cooperation and competition.*

From the data gathered through the observations and the field notes, it can be said that while participants are using the games in the classroom, it was noticeable they look for help with other classmates and supported each other while working. They commented explicitly in different classes they like to work with another classmate. The observations demonstrated that they like to work with the classmate next to them or behind them. This is closely related to communication and interaction between student-student which is important from creating a good environment in the classroom. This is also supported by the responses in the survey.

One participant commented in two occasions that games are a way to compete with their classmates and make the class challenging.

"...es entretenido y podemos competir entre todos y todas"

It is entertaining, and we can compete with each other. (S/Q6/Participant 10)

From this comment it is explained how this type of game provides to the students the opportunity to share time together for having fun bur also for competing with each other which facilitates learning.

"Está chido porque competimos y mientras jugamos aprendemos"

It is cool because we can compete and while we are playing, we are learning. (S/Q8/Participant 10)

This competition is positive since it creates an interactive, communicative and mainly a motivational environment for the students and all of them keep focused and interested on working.

4.5 *Games are more than having fun*

Based on the previous answers provided by the participants, we can say that games are more than having fun, they are great tools for learning, not only vocabulary. Besides these two incredible advantages, participants recalled more. One of the most mentioned was that time flies and the class is more enjoyable.

"...es muy divertido y así se pasa el tiempo más rápido...y así aprendemos mucho más"

D. J. Muñoz Ramirez – Perceptions of First Grade Secondary School Students in Mexico...

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It is funny and time flies faster and, in that way, we learn more. (S/Q4/Participant 1)

From this participant we can highlight how students enjoy the learning process when using these types of games, and they actually feel they are learning more. When students feel there are progressing in something they feel they are not good at all booster their motivation.

"Bien, siento que no me aburro tanto"

Good, I feel I do not get bored that much. (S/Q5/Participant 7)

In this comment it can observed how this game benefits students since it is entertaining in the class and the topic.

"siento que así aprendo más y me intereso más por el tema"

I feel I learn more, and I am more interested in the topic. (S/Q6/Participant 9)

From participant 7 and 9 it can be said that games help to increase students' interest in English. There are no doubt students tend to get bored in any class at some point but participant 7 said that games help students to avoid boredom during the classes.

"Muy bien ya que me despejo un poco cuando me divierto y puedo aprender más"

Very good because I "free my mind" and I can learn more. (S/Q5/Participant 10)

When teaching you need to realize you are working with people, they can get bored, stress or tired and providing time for them to have a relax time where they can enjoy and feel good is important. As teachers we need to knowing having fun does not mean we cannot learn.

4.6 *The dark side of games*

While there are many benefits of using games, there are aspects to consider and problems that may arise. Not all students like the games teacher use in the classroom. From the survey and different observations some comments were captured.

Participant number 7 share their opinion towards the use of crossword in the classroom:

"Me parece bien, pero a la vez mal, bien pues porque me parece eficiente, pero mal porque no me gustan tanto."

It looks good to me but also bad because, good because it is efficient and bad because I do not like it all. (S/Q10/Participant 7)

From this extract we can conclude that not all students like the same game. There is a variety of likes and dislikes in the same classroom. For some students a game may represent more like a challenge.

During the observations some students struggle with listening since they are truly beginners. That is why they needed to repeat the word more times, in order to play successfully. These frustrations where not answered in the survey, but they were captured by observing and taking notes. Students tend to say what they feel or think outload. We can see this by listening the following.

"Ay, ya me perdí"

Ay, I got lost (Ob/student)

In this comment, participant feels lost because of the difficulty the game represents to the participant.

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"¿Qué dijo?"

What did you say? (Ob/student)

A similar situation happened in this second comment in which the participant expresses feeling lost because his/her misunderstanding of the vocabulary mentioned during the game bingo. Even students seem enjoy playing, they may get frustrated too since playing bingo involves listening and for the majority of the students, it is a big challenge listening to English.

Now moving to wordsearch, 91.6% of the participants reacted positively. Nevertheless, Participant 8 commented the following.

"Puede que sea bueno, pero a mí no me gusta mucho, se me hace muy difícil"

It may be good, but I do not like it that much, it seems very difficult. (S/Q9/Participant 8)

It is important to also consider this last extract, since it may benefit students to learn vocabulary, but not all students can feel that happy to play it. They may look engage, but it does not mean that students are enjoying the class.

5. Conclusion

The main purpose of the study was to investigate students' perceptions towards the use of games for English language learning. The research question was answered after a deep analysis of the data collected through different instruments. It can be concluded that these three types of games have multiple benefits on English students such as learning vocabulary from a more enjoyable, engaging, and non-traditional way. It also helps students to change their already settled perceptions about learning a language and how they can navigate this process, make students aware that they can learn by having fun and playing with the language. These three types of games are helpful for learning vocabulary and practicing English skills like listening, writing but also spelling. Learning vocabulary is important, although it could be perceived as boring or repetitive. Despite the positive aspects, it was also found some negative thoughts about games, such as boring or difficulty.

The implications of this study pointed at important aspects that teachers may not ignore while choosing a game for the classroom such as considering their students, what type of games they like, and if they can be able of playing that game based on their mental and physical abilities.

Finally, it is important to highlight that besides games, there exist an extensive list of different ways of teaching English, not only through vocabulary. Being a teacher involves being creative, so teachers always need to be asking themselves what else is besides games.

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The Emotional and Social Long-term Effects on Pre-service Teachers on the University of Guanajuato in Mexico

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered various facets of daily life, particularly impacting higher education. This study investigates the emotional and teaching long-term effects of the pandemic on pre-service English teachers at the University of Guanajuato. The sudden shift to online teaching and learning imposed numerous challenges, exacerbating stress and anxiety among students while affecting their pedagogical training. This research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of these impacts by examining the experiences of pre-service teachers during the pandemic. By identifying effective strategies for supporting pre-service teachers in similar crises, this study contributes to the existing literature on teacher education in times of crisis. It offers valuable insights into improving teacher training programs to better prepare future educators for unexpected disruptions. The findings highlight the importance of resilience and adaptability in teacher education, emphasizing the need for robust support systems and innovative teaching practices. This research not only enriches academic knowledge but also provides practical recommendations for enhancing teacher preparation in the face of global challenges.

Keywords: COVID-19, pre-service English teachers, emotional effects, teaching effects, online education, teacher training, University of Guanajuato, resilience, adaptability, educational crisis.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically transformed multiple aspects of everyday life, including higher education. In particular, the emotional and pedagogical effects of the pandemic on prospective English teachers have been profound and complex. This study focuses on exploring these impacts on students at the University of Guanajuato, with the goal of better understanding how this global crisis has affected their training and professional development. During the pandemic, pre-service English teachers faced an abrupt transition to online teaching and learning. This change not only altered the way they received their training, but also significantly impacted their emotional well-being. The uncertainties and challenges associated with the pandemic increased levels of stress and anxiety, affecting their ability to adapt to new teaching methodologies and digital platforms (Bao, 2020; Crawford et al., 2020). The relevance of this study lies in its existing potential on teacher education in times of crisis. By examining the emotional and pedagogical experiences of pre-service teachers during the pandemic, this study provides a comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities that arose. This not only feeds academic knowledge about the impact of the pandemic on education,

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but will also offer valuable lessons for improving teacher education in the future (König, Jäger-Biela & Glutsch, 2020; Moorhouse, 2020).

The proposed research is of great importance on both theoretical and practical levels. Through a detailed analysis of the emotional and pedagogical effects of the pandemic on pre-service English teachers, this study aims to provide a solid foundation for future research and improvements in teacher education programs. In doing so, it will contribute significantly to the educational literature and offer practical recommendations to support future educators in contexts of uncertainty and change.

This study is based on the aim of exploring the emotional long term effects on pre-service English teaching during online classes which had to be carried out as a strategy for continuing education during the pandemic by COVID-19. The initial purpose of this research is to analyze what were the negative and positive emotions that pre-service teachers went through and how it impacted their academic and professional development. The research question is formulated with the objective of analyzing these emotions and bringing them to the forefront so that they can take on importance. Therefore, the research question that we obtain according to the premise is:

What are emotional and teaching long term effects on pre-service English
Teacher s during the covid-19 pandemic in the University of Guanajuato?

Given the nature of the topic, focused on the collection of information about the experiences of future teachers, the choice was made to apply a qualitative approach that allowed expressions in natural language (Gerring, 2017). Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), as quoted in (1998), The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods, argue that "research design should be a reflexive process operating through every stage of a project" (p. 24).

The qualitative approach to research offers flexibility and adaptability, allowing for an accurate capture of social interactions, cultural influences and situational contexts. This approach ensures the transparency, validity and reliability of the data collected. In doing so, it enhances the credibility of research within the qualitative paradigm, facilitating effective and meaningful data collection.

On its part, according to Cotty (1998), as cited in Qutoshi (2018), phenomena are conceptualized as manifestations in the form of the lived world, made up of subjectively interconnected experiences.

The phenomenological method was used since it was considered adequate to be able to go deeper into the experiences of the participants of the study. This method also allows us to clarify the purpose of the research in a natural and coherent way. The flexibility inherent in phenomenology aligns directly with the different nature of the experiences we seek to understand. Furthermore, the choice of this method is based not only on its adaptability, but also on its ability to provide detailed and reliable results, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the subjective experiences of the participants.

According to Qutoshi (2018), this method allows us to delve into the phenomenal manifestation of events as they occur in the lived world, offering a rich and contextualized understanding of subjective experiences. Phenomenology, by focusing on the essence of experiences, allows for detailed investigation and, at the same time, the possibility of drawing meaningful conclusions in a clear and coherent way

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2.1 *Open-ended interview*

According to Züll (2016), the use of open-ended questions in studies can motivate respondents they feel freer to share their opinions as opposed to using closed-ended questions that limit them. Therefore, interviews with open-ended questions give us the opportunity in this study to be more descriptive and specific about the emotions they faced during the online classes because of the pandemic. The interviews were audio-recorded in real time to ensure accuracy in the transcription and subsequent analysis of the data. Subsequently, a macro coding (Appendix 3) of each student's data was performed for evaluation and more specific data collection. This process yielded concise and meaningful results for the study; for macro coding, the data were analyzed at a broader level, identifying general patterns and themes that emerged from the interviews (Appendix 1). This helped to gain an overall understanding of the participants' experiences. On the other hand, micro coding was carried out to classify the responses from the most repeated to the least repeated. This process allowed for a more detailed analysis, identifying the most common responses and variations in the participants' responses. Micro coding helped to provide a concise and detailed response to what was collected in the interviews (Appendix 4)

2.2 *Context and participants*

Five active students from the University of Guanajuato who are in their seventh semester of the bachelor's degree in English Teaching volunteered to answer questions about the study. They were approached in a transparent manner and provided with detailed information about the objectives, methodology, and potential impacts of the research. In addition, the confidentiality of the information provided by the participants was assured and they were guaranteed their right to withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

These interviews were conducted in person at the facilities of the Language Unit of the University of Guanajuato, located in the city of Guanajuato Capital, where the English teaching career is located Previously, the volunteer participants were informed about the confidentiality of their data and answers, guaranteeing that they would not run any risk (Appendix 2).

2.3 *Data analysis (procedure)*

Thematic analysis (TA) is a method for identifying, analyzing and interpreting patterns of meaning ("themes") within qualitative data" (Clarke & Braun, 2017: 1). This approach, integrated into the research, made it possible to identify aspects that could be crucial for the complete development of the study, thus providing a detailed understanding of the results obtained. In addition, thematic analysis has acted as an effective tool for uncovering connections and relationships among the responses, thus contributing to a more holistic understanding of the phenomena explored in the research.

Codes are then typically developed to represent the identified themes and applied or linked to raw data as summary markers for later analysis (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2011: 9). The ability to analyze data at both the micro and macro levels has allowed for a comprehensive approach, where both specific details and relevant general themes have been captured. Thematic analysis was chosen for its ability to provide a systematic and flexible approach to identifying patterns of meaning within the qualitative data collected in this study, allowing for a deep and clear understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives.

3. Literature review

3.1 *COVID-19 pandemic and online classes*

The educational and emotional experience of pre-service teachers during the pandemic has been complex, marked by challenges and opportunities for growth. Research is needed to understand the impact of online classes on students' physical and mental well-being during COVID-19 and to raise awareness (Sharma & Sharma, 2021).

The online classroom modality has taken on unprecedented importance, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The flexibility and accessibility inherent in this educational modality allow students to participate from anywhere with internet connection. Social connection platforms and the Internet ecosystem allow the convergence of various elements of learning (such as text, audio and video) in the same communication channel; therefore, they can facilitate the online learning process by making teaching more dynamic, interactive and effective, (Caridà et al., 2021). Online classes themselves assign very marked roles since there is a physical distance and the teacher must become the builder of solid relationships between students in order to make the new modality more bearable (Caridà et al., 2021). In addition, online classes encourage students to adapt to new technologies and digital skills, better preparing them to face the challenges of the modern world and today's job market, some teachers and instructors note that chat groups, video conferencing, voting tools, and document sharing spaces allow them to more effectively and efficiently reach students. They emphasize that they will continue to adopt the online model even in the post-pandemic era (Li, 2022). However, it is important to recognize that this modality also presents challenges and limitations. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many students felt isolated and disconnected. A study by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic led to increased feelings of isolation and loneliness among students due to prolonged social distancing and remote learning measures (Panchal et al., 2021). Online classes create a sense of community where students can embrace discomfort and share worries with their peers and teachers (Li, 2022).

3.3 *Motivation in online classes*

Tohidi and Jabbari (2012) define motivation as "powering people to achieve high levels of performance and overcoming barriers in order to change" (p. 820). According Tohidi and Jabbari (2012), motivation is "a force which cause people to behavior particularly and according to management point of view, the aim of creating motivation in employees is to have a behavior in which brings the highest benefits for the organization" (p. 820), Although "motivation is of particular interest to educational psychologists because of the crucial role it plays in student learning" (Tohidi & Jabbari, 2012: 823). In another hand, "motivation can influence what we learn, how we learn and when we choose to learn" (Schunk & Usher, 2012, as cited in Hartnett, 2016), maintaining high levels of intrinsic motivation can be challenging due to social distancing and lack of direct interaction with learners, as Martens (2004) as cited in Hartnett (2016). Online learners are often required to be more intrinsically motivated because the learning environment typically relies on intrinsic motivation and the associated characteristics of curiosity and self-regulation to engage learners, during the pandemic and transition to online education, motivation plays a crucial role in the performance and satisfaction of pre-service teachers, motivation has been shown to play an important role in determining whether a student persists in a course, the level of engagement shown, the quality of work produced and the level of achievement attained (Hartnett, 2016).

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3.4 *Emotions: Stress and anxiety*

Emotion is identified as important to student adjustment to the role of online learner (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2007 as cited in Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012). The creative innovation arising from the development of online learning offers a unique opportunity to investigate emotional presence and the learning process (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012). During the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition to online classes, students' emotions may be particularly exacerbated due to uncertainty, sudden change in routine, and social isolation, and those working in an online modality routinely face changes in emotions due to instructional changes from online teaching or learning (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012). It is important to recognize both positive and negative emotions, as it depends on the emotion of the students, learning outcomes will be obtained (Baumeister, et al., 2007 as cited in Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012), in general, but especially in relation to online learning environments, it can be assumed that students' acceptance and use of technology are crucial conditions for the emotional experience and quality of the learning process and its outcomes (Stephan, Markus & Gläser-Zikuda, 2019).

The effect of online learning and technology on the physical, mental, emotional and social health of students has been reported to cause impacts on self-esteem, personal perception of worth and the generation of unnecessary stress (Halupa, 2016, as cited in Sharma & Sharma, 2021).The situation generated a number of health-related concerns while causing anxiety among students due to the change in the way of learning from face-to-face to virtual (Qayyum, Latif & Rassool, 2023). According to Qayyum, Laif and Rassool, "anxiety is one of the basic human emotions characterized by feelings of tension, worrisome thoughts, and distress" (2023: 98). During the COVID-19 pandemic, students saw entire semesters of their professional career move to the online medium, leading to numerous concerns, including virtual classroom anxiety, technology-related anxiety, and issues with assessment and grading, among others (Qayyum, Latif & Rassool, 2023). In another study, stress is caused by uncontrolled physical, environmental, and social demands, and can lead to illness if not managed properly. If a person experiences stress, it will affect both their life and that of students, impacting educational progress (Wahyu & Simanullang, 2020). Stress arises due to the existence of stressors (Wahyu & Simanullang, 2020: 155). For this reason, "the mental and physical stress among the students in the current scenario could be prevented by taking preventive measures and controlling the prolonged use of mobile and laptop" (Sharma & Sharma, 2021: 100).

4. Results and findings

This section will present and discuss the findings found experiences of teacher trainees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Long-term emotional and teaching effects will be explored, focusing on issues such as anxiety, stress, motivation, and online teaching effectiveness. These findings offer detailed insights into how the pandemic has impacted teacher training and provide relevant information for improving online classroom management in the future.

4.1 *Motivation and engagement impact in online classes during the covid-19 pandemic*

For English teachers in training, the change from face-to-face to virtual mode had a negative impact on their motivation and commitment to the career, some English teachers in training express the following:

> Was unmotivated because I didn't understand anything about the topics. Extract 2.
> Participant 3

> I was unmotivated because I didn't understand nothing about the topics and was difficult to ask for my doubts to the teachers or be oriented by the teachers. Extract 03. Participant 04

In these excerpts, we can see that the lack of physical interaction, the difficulty in understanding the topics, and the abrupt transition from face-to-face to virtual classes have had a significant impact on student motivation and engagement. Therefore, "was unmotivated because I didn't understand anything about the topics," Participant 3), demotivation was present in the online classes as another challenge to cope with ("was difficult to ask for my doubts to the teachers or be oriented by the teachers," Participant 4). This discrepancy could be attributed to, where communication is mainly through digital media, it can be more difficult for students to ask questions and receive the necessary guidance to understand the topics, complicating the academic performance of the teachers in training since there was no specialized help to be able to face the online classes. Another participant in the study added an important factor to his lack of motivation in the online classes, this participant expressed the following through the impact that motivation had during the online classes:

> I was expecting face-to-face classes and when the pandemic happens, I feel unmotivated. Extract 4. Participant 5

It was also found that for the lack of motivation to take online classes was that from the beginning the classes were designed to be face-to-face, so the abrupt change of modality was demotivating. Participant 5 in Extract 4, commented that after changing the modality to virtual classes, his motivation was no longer the same and it had a negative impact since he had already had the previous idea that they would be face-to-face classes. The sudden transition to online classes due to the pandemic may have generated uncertainty and demotivation, especially for those pre-service teachers who were accustomed to a more traditional learning style.

Another important finding was that not only did some of the participants feel demotivated, but also the online classes provoked negativity in their environment, such negativity was concentrated in the decrease of motivation and rise of negative emotions such as anxiety and stress, which caused the environment within the virtual classrooms to be unbearable and the student's productivity and performance to decline.one of the participants mentioned the following:

> I didn't felt part of the collage environment. Extract 1. Participant 2

This excerpt indicates that the lack of connection may have contributed to a decrease in motivation (as mentioned in Participant 2) "I didn't felt part of the collage environment"), as the sense of belonging and community experienced in a face-to-face environment may not be as strong in a virtual environment. Virtual and face-to-face academic experiences are of course not the same, so the environment varies and, in this case, often affects the emotions of teachers in training in a negative way, feeling disoriented and believing that they have no help to move forward after adversity.

In general, the results highlight that the lack of motivation was significant when facing the online classes, it was presented suddenly and not having a solid experience with the virtual modality, it hindered the perspective and performance of teachers in training, so this factor had much to do in the academic performance since it was not only the lack of motivation that could be felt, but also the support that was missing thanks to the transition from face-to-face to virtual classes.

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4.2 *Anxiety and stress levels*

Emotional levels related to anxiety and stress were also an important reason why going through the online classes for the teacher trainees was complicated. According to the pre-service English teachers, they also experienced significant levels of anxiety and stress in coping with the online classes:

> I think a hate online class a felt like anxious and stressful. Extract 6. Participant 5

> I went through a very negative feeling; I could say that anxiety and stress were very high during this situation. Extract 7. Participant 2

> I think between 8 to 9 because I was get used to the traditional modality. Extract 8. Participant 3

These excerpts show the real emotions that the preservice English teacher faced during online classes due to the Covid-19 pandemic ("anxiety and stress were present at elevated levels," Participant 3; and they even came to "hate online classes" due to anxiety and stress, Participant 5). These extracts reveal negative emotions during online classes due to the pandemic. The pre-service teachers' testimonies clearly reflect the emotional challenges they faced during online classes. Feeling anxious and stressed was a common experience, and this may be attributed in part to the sudden transition from a traditional to an online learning environment. In addition, their feeling may have been exacerbated by unfamiliarity with the online modality and uncertainty about how to adapt to this new environment, another possible explanation for this is that negative perception may have further contributed to their anxiety and stress levels, as a negative attitude toward a situation may increase the perception of difficulty in coping with it.

Moving to another point, there was one participant who felt levels of anxiety and stress very different from the results previously obtained this participant express the following according to the interview question:

> Well, I would say that stress and anxiety levels were regular. Extract 5. Participant 1.

This extract is interesting since it allows us to reframe the perception of how bad online classes could have been. Participant 1 indicates that his anxiety and stress levels were regular, so there was no presence of shocking emotions that could have hindered the teachers' training. However, although the emotions were regular in this case, it can be defined more concretely that anxiety and stress were very important during this phase of the teacher trainees since they were emotions that were present in a large group of pre-service teachers.

During the pandemic, pre-service teachers experienced significant levels of anxiety and stress when facing online classes. These emotions impacted their academic process and development, as they hindered their ability to concentrate and perform at their best. However, these experiences also allowed them to identify and learn to better manage stress and anxiety, which has been helpful in coping with online classes.

4.3 *Online classes long terms effects on teaching*

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on education, forcing a rapid shift to online learning around the world. This sudden shift has created several challenges for pre-service teachers, but it has also provided opportunities for growth and the development of new skills, a participant said:

> Of course, the use or digitals resources; I think is a thing that now everyone knows how to use. Extract 9. Participant 1

What is surprising is that the experience of the pandemic in the professional training of teachers was positive and useful. The participant 1 in extract 9 forcefully clarifies that it

increased their knowledge and management of virtual tools, indicating that online teaching has led to greater familiarity and competence in the use of digital tools, which can be beneficial for future teaching.

Another important finding was that with online classes we can confirm that teachers in training will be able to have more knowledgeable in different areas of their learning about teaching, one participant mentions in the following statement that:

> Covid pandemic realize me that we have a lot of sources that I can face to challenge such a learn autonomously, learn in online environment. Extract 10, participant 4

In autonomous learning, therefore it also made its presence felt when going through the classrooms and line by pandemic. This aspect could be considered important since it would facilitate the professional performance of teachers in training, in addition to the fact that autonomous learning is a fundamental aspect for a teacher to have a better development and be a better facilitator in their classes.

From a slightly different perspective but with the same results another participants express an interesting perspective about the knowledge that the online classes offered to him, this participant expresses the following:

> Well, the pandemic force me the use of news things, as the digital tools. Extract 11, participant 5

In comparison to the other participants who positively stated that they had learned to use digital tools, participant 5 mentioned that the online classes had forced him to use this type of resource. Therefore, this testimony highlights how the pandemic has been a catalyst for the adoption of emerging technologies in teaching, which may lead to greater innovation and effectiveness in teaching in the future.

A general observation from the results suggests that the shift to online classes during the pandemic has helped teachers-in-training acquire digital skills, which will enable them to be more efficient in their future classes and deliver higher quality education. These skills will also benefit the learning of their future students.

4.4 *Efficiency and confidence on teaching after online classes*

The transition to online classes during the pandemic has had a significant impact on the confidence and effectiveness of prospective English teachers. Adapting to a new teaching environment has required an adjustment in teaching approach and raised doubts about the ability to perform effectively, some participants expressed that:

> Confidences as were teacher lower because for the same factors that I now practiced like the voice tone, classroom management I felt insecure about if I will give classes. Extract 12, Participant 2

> I was not completely confidence about my teaching, and it had been I difficult get back to be less shy in the classes. Extract 13, Participant 5.

In these excerpts about their teaching efficiency and confidence, participants reflect on how the pandemic and online classes have impacted their confidence as teachers. Participant 2 in extract 12 mentions that, due to the same factors he now practices, such as tone of voice and classroom management, he felt insecure about whether he would be able to teach. This suggests that the transition to online classes has required an adjustment in his teaching approach, leading to doubts about his ability to perform effectively. On the other hand, Participant 5 in extract 13 expresses that he was not completely confident in his teaching and found it difficult to become less

shy in class again. This lack of confidence may have been due to the virtual nature of the classes, where direct interaction and immediate feedback can be more challenging.

In summary, participants have experienced a decrease in their confidence as teachers due to the transition to online classes during the pandemic. This transition has required adjustments in their approach to teaching, which has led to doubts about their ability to perform effectively. The lack of direct interaction and immediate feedback in the virtual environment has also contributed to a sense of insecurity and difficulty regaining confidence in the classroom.

5. Conclusion

In summary, the research examined the long-term emotional and teaching effects on prospective English teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic at the University of Guanajuato. The study sought to understand the implications of this crisis on the training and well-being of student teachers. The results provided detailed insight into the personal and professional repercussions of the pandemic, as well as how stress and anxiety were presented in the teacher trainees, with the objective of identifying areas for improvement and developing effective support strategies for future teachers. These findings will serve as a basis for future research and actions aimed at strengthening student teacher preparation and well-being in times of crisis.

This study on the emotional and teaching effects during the COVID-19 pandemic on prospective English teachers at the University of Guanajuato has the potential to be extrapolated to diverse academic areas. For example, it could be applied in the training of health professionals, where stress and coping circumstances are also prominent. In addition, the study could be relevant to the training of business leaders, as the pandemic has redefined work dynamics and team management. Also, in the field of educational psychology, this study could shed light on how crises affect students' learning and emotional well-being in different contexts. Extending this research to other academic areas would be beneficial because it would provide a more complete understanding of the impacts of the pandemic and allow for the development of more effective support strategies in a variety of educational and professional contexts.

Limitations of the study include its exclusive focus on prospective English teachers at a single university, which restricts the generalizability of the results. In addition, the availability and accessibility of participants during the pandemic may have affected data collection. Future research is suggested that expands the sample to include in-service teachers, students from other disciplines, and different educational institutions. In addition, it would be beneficial to explore how online teaching strategies and emotional support can mitigate the negative effects of the pandemic on education. Longitudinal research could also provide a deeper understanding of the evolution of emotional and teaching effects over the long term.

I found this research intriguing, especially given the lack of focus on students' mental health during the abrupt transition to online learning. It suggests the need to recognize and address how our emotions influence our academic development, particularly in the context of teaching English. Emotions play a critical role in shaping us as individuals and can be a significant obstacle to achieving our educational goals. It is crucial to give them the attention and care they deserve in order to optimize our academic performance and well-being.

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Appendix 1

1-How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your motivation and commitment to the LEI to complete your education?

2-What levels of stress and anxiety do you consider when you deal with post online classes? How do you consider that influences your academic performance currently? 3-What strategy did you employ to cope with stress and academic difficulties during the pandemic?

4-How do you feel the lack of social interaction and face-to-face career practice impacted your psychological well-being as a student?

5-What changes have you experienced in your career expectations and career goals due to the pandemic?

6-How important do you consider the teaching of English today, post-pandemic (more? less? why?)?

7-What is your perception of your efficiency and confidence in your ability to teach English post-pandemic?

8- -What would you indicate is your level of satisfaction with the quality of online education offered during the pandemi

9- Post-pandemic, what do you see as your ability to meet challenges and changes in your future teaching career?

Appendix 2

_____, Guanajuato. A ____ de octubre del 2023. Asunto: carta de consentimiento

"The emotional and social long-term effects on Pre-service teachers post-pandemic in Mexico: Strategies for quality improvement in virtual education"

PRESENTE
Yo _____ por la presente, doy mi consentimiento para participar en el estudio titulado "The emotional and social long-term effects on Pre-service teachers post-pandemic in Mexico: Strategies for quality improvement in virtual education", llevado a cabo por Paola Gallardo como parte de La universidad de Guanajuato

El propósito de estudio "The emotional and social long-term effects on Pre-service teachers post-pandemic in Mexico: Strategies for quality improvement in virtual education" es investigar los efectos a largo plazo en la salud emocional y social de futuros docentes en México tras la pandemia, específicamente en el contexto de la educación virtual. La duración estimada de la entrevista es de 10 a 15 minutos ya que abarca nueve preguntas y tiene como único fin recopilar información sobre la experiencia de los estudiantes en la enseñanza de inglés durante las clases virtuales para fines de investigación.

La entrevista se llevará a cabo de manera presencial en las instalaciones del Centro de Idiomas de una universidad en Guanajuato en la Ciudad de Guanajuato Capital. La duración estimada de la entrevista será de diez a quince minutos. Durante la entrevista, se grabará el audio con fines educativos y para la recolección de datos destinados a la investigación "The emotional and social long-term effects on Pre-service teachers post-pandemic in Mexico: Strategies for quality improvement in virtual education."

Es importante destacar que los datos de los entrevistados estarán protegidos en todo momento, y se mantendrá la confidencialidad de la información proporcionada. La participación en esta entrevista es completamente voluntaria, y los entrevistados no corren ningún peligro al participar. El proceso se lleva a cabo con el máximo respeto a la ética y la privacidad de los participantes, y sus datos serán utilizados exclusivamente para los fines de la investigación mencionada.
Los participantes en la entrevista tienen el derecho de retirarse en cualquier momento sin enfrentar penalizaciones ni consecuencias negativas. Su participación es completamente voluntaria, y si en algún momento sienten que desean interrumpir la entrevista, pueden hacerlo sin ningún problema. Su comodidad y elección de participar o no son respetadas en todo momento.

El consentimiento informado es un proceso en el cual se proporciona a los participantes de un estudio información detallada sobre la naturaleza del estudio, sus objetivos, los procedimientos involucrados, los riesgos y beneficios, así como sus derechos como

Appendix 3

Research Technique	Raw Data Extracts Unit of meaning	Code from Data	Interpretation	Data ID
Interviews	1.- yes that has impacted me in a very meaningful way.	impact of covid-19 in online classes	a pesar de que la pandemia en cuanto a la educación era mala, había algo en lo que estaba aprendiendo a pesar de la adversidad de forma que si impacta de forma significativa	JH_1.1
	2.- Well, I would say that stress and anxiety levels were regular, during the online classes stress was very minimal.	REGULAR Stress		JH_1.2
	3.- I always tried to distract myself with interactive things, even if they were only inside my house I kept myself busy and learning to be able to face better the online classes	Autonomous Learning	De forma autónoma seguir aprendiendo para poder tener un mejor performance en las clases en linea	JH_1.3
	4.- I would say that it was pretty moderate	social interaction moderate mood	fue moderado, no hubo mucho problema no tener interacción social pero se resiente más cuando cambia a presencial, ahí se nota la diferencia	JH_1.4
	5.- Now that we had experience the pandemic and the covid, it does	YES, the perspective change	nosotros ahora con una visión más amplia sobre la docencia esa perspectiva de cómo las clases en linea	JH_1.5

Appendix 4

CLASSIFICATION

CODE FROM DATA	DATA IDENTIFICATOR
The importance of learn english is the same	JH_ DL CIN BPTZAI STBAN
Were good it but can improve	JH_ DL CIN BPTZAI
loss of social skills	BPTZAI STBAN CIN
YES, the perspective change	JH_ DL BPTZAI STBAN
DIGITAL RESOURCES MAKES THE DIFFERENCE	JH_ CIN STEBAN

C O A S

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