

IMPACT OF IN-PERSON CLASSES ON LEARNING ENGLISH**Impacto de las clases presenciales en el aprendizaje del Inglés****Impacto das aulas presenciais na aprendizagem de Inglês**

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This research presents the main results obtained, in relation to the objective of examining the impact of in-person on the English language learning. **Materials and methods:** The methodology used has a descriptive design with a mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative), the data obtained from the surveys carried out with students of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages degree at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, Chone extension were processed. using the IBM SPSS system, on the other hand, teachers from the same university institution were also interviewed. **Results and discussion:** From the information obtained from the study, it was determined that students prefer the in-person modality; however, another significant percentage of respondents answered that they opt for the flexibility of choosing between both methods depending on the circumstances. **Conclusions:** Likewise, the teachers interviewed showed a preference for face-to-face teaching because they perceived a lower level of interest on the part of students during virtual classes. Based on these results, it is suggested that the hybrid learning modality be strengthened as an alternative that favors to all language major students.

Keywords: in-person, virtual, hybrid modality, English learning.

RESUMEN

Introducción: En la presente investigación se exponen los principales resultados obtenidos, en relación con el objetivo de examinar el impacto de la presencialidad en el idioma inglés. **Materiales y métodos:** La metodología utilizada tiene un diseño descriptivo con un enfoque mixto (cualitativo y cuantitativo), los datos obtenidos de las encuestas realizadas a estudiantes de la carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros de la Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, extensión Chone fueron procesados por el sistema IBM SPSS, por otro lado, también se entrevistaron a docentes de la misma institución universitaria. **Resultados y discusión:** De la información obtenida del estudio determinó que los estudiantes prefieren la modalidad presencial, sin embargo, otro porcentaje significativo de encuestados contestaron que optan por la flexibilidad, de elegir entre ambos métodos dependiendo de las circunstancias. **Conclusiones:** De igual manera, los docentes entrevistados mostraron preferencia por la enseñanza presencial debido a que perciben un menor nivel de interés por parte de los estudiantes durante las clases virtuales, en base a estos resultados se sugiere fortalecer la modalidad híbrida de aprendizaje como una alternativa que favorece a todos los estudiantes de la carrera de idiomas.

Palabras clave: presencialidad, virtualidad, modalidad híbrida, aprendizaje del inglés.

RESUMO

Introdução: Esta pesquisa apresenta os principais resultados obtidos, em relação ao objetivo de examinar o impacto do ensino presencial na língua inglesa. **Materiais e métodos:** A metodologia utilizada tem um desenho descritivo com abordagem mista (qualitativa e quantitativa), os dados obtidos nas pesquisas realizadas com alunos do curso de Pedagogia de Línguas Nacionais e Estrangeiras da Universidade Eloy Alfaro Laica de Manabí, extensão Chone, foram processados pelo sistema IBM SPSS, por outro lado, também foram entrevistados professores da mesma instituição

universitária. Resultados e discussão: As informações obtidas no estudo determinaram que os alunos preferem a abordagem presencial; no entanto, outra porcentagem significativa de entrevistados respondeu que prefere a flexibilidade de escolher entre os dois métodos, dependendo das circunstâncias. Conclusões: Da mesma forma, os professores entrevistados demonstraram preferência pelo ensino presencial por perceberem menor nível de interesse por parte dos alunos durante as aulas virtuais. Com base nesses resultados, sugere-se que a modalidade de ensino híbrida seja fortalecida como uma alternativa que beneficia todos os alunos do programa de idiomas.

Palavras-chave: presencial, virtual, híbrido, aprendizagem de inglês.

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INTRODUCTION

English has been considered the most widely used language in the world, which is why many educational institutions integrate it into their curriculum. In the teaching and learning process, the teacher and the student represent two of the most important elements on which the correct or poor development of this method whose purpose is the communicative purpose will depend. (Beltrán, 2017)

It is essential that this language be taught, at all levels and sublevels of the educational system, to guarantee that all people have the opportunity to function in social, work and educational settings. (Andrade et al., 2022), being a universal language, it should not be relegated, on the contrary, its use and teaching should be promoted, which opens doors in this globalized world.

The teaching of the English language in face-to-face mode is taught explicitly or implicitly depending on the needs of the student and the expertise of the teacher, it is interrelated, the teacher, the student and the content of the language are in constant change of information, the student provides data on the development of the language and the teacher calibrates the methodology and procedures to apply. (Valencia, 2021.p. 92)

Covid 19 pandemic caused classes to be suspended in Educational Institutions and their activities to be carried out in digital environments, generating a change with difficulties in the life of the educational community. (Napoli et al., 2021). Students went from being physically present to interacting behind a screen, which limited their social interaction.

Human beings need to interact with others to create emotional and cognitive bonds and reduce stress; the mere presence of a group of people allows us to maintain brain health throughout life.

For Ortiz et al (as cited in Vygotsky (1978)) Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory conceives social interaction as indispensable for learning and cognitive development. In this perspective, social interactions allow the creation of an interactive space of progressive transformation of the cognitive competencies that constitute the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the distance between the actual level of development, determined by the ability to independently solve a problem, and the level of potential development, determined through the resolution of a problem. under the guidance of a teacher or in collaboration with another more capable classmate (2017, p. 54)

Cognitivism is a theory adapted to the educational reality of the English language that places the student as the center of the learning process, bilingualism together with cognitivism makes learning become acquisition of knowledge, meaningful learning and learning by discovery. (Altez et al., 2021)

On the other hand, the use of new technologies was enormous challenges for teachers and students who for the first time were facing a new educational reality, because not all students had access to connectivity due to different factors such as geography, climate, interruptions in the internet service, electricity and socio-economic conditions. (Agüero et al, 2023)

Digital teaching skills in these moments of exceptionality have been configured as an element of vital importance from the educational field, at any of its levels, different studies show that students do not have the digital skills necessary to acquire their own training. (Romero et al., 2021)

Distance or virtual education has its advantages in the availability of time, access to education at any time and place, educational resources with greater availability, and flexibility. Although, for Guaña et al. (2015), meaningful education would be achieved if a model of autonomous behavior and motivation were implemented in which the student independently searches for the knowledge they want to acquire, avoiding distractions in non-face-to-face environments.

For Carrasco (2020), the main finding in his quantitative research demonstrates that although there are differences in educational performance between virtual or in-person modalities, these are marginal and statistically not significant, the variability of academic results has a greater impact on the characteristics of individuals or as a group, however the virtual modality is a plausible alternative in emergencies and is an element to consider for the training continuity of educational management.

It is important to consider some challenges associated with the use of technology in virtual learning, as some students may experience difficulties staying motivated and organized without the structure and in-person support of a traditional educational environment, ensuring access is essential. to technology and a reliable internet connection to be able to fully participate in virtual learning. (Cevallos, et al, 2024.)

The incorporation of information and communication technologies in education is characterized by the use of hypermedia, the construction of knowledge, student-centered learning, personalization and the teacher facilitator, one of the forms of application of these technologies in education, it is virtuality as a complement to face-to-face activities. (Vargillas and Bravo, 2020)

Another option presented by technological innovation is hybrid education according to Gonzales, "it is a teaching method that is based on the use of educational technologies linked to the Internet, this education model combines an in-person part with a distance part using various platforms in line". (2022, p. 6)

With this new form of education, students experienced educational environments different from the usual ones. However, the question arises as to whether presence is essential for the development of English language learning.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is descriptive with a mixed approach that combines qualitative and quantitative elements. IBM SPSS software was used to process the surveys. "This tool allows, through codes, applications and menu options, to organize and analyze the data to make projections concerning the research topics" (Rivadeneira et al., 2020, p. 24).

The study was carried out in two phases: the first phase included interviews with teachers of the English major at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, Chone Extension; while in the second phase, students in the eighth semester of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages degree at the same university institution were surveyed.

The theoretical foundation of the research and information collection methods is that "mixed" type research enriches research from triangulation with greater breadth, depth, diversity, interpretative richness and sense of understanding, with this mixed method it is studied in depth. a specific situation" (Chávez, 2018) .

Qualitative research must not only converge with quantitative research, but it requires it in an indispensable way, since ultimately in reality both determinations are constantly intertwined: quantitative and qualitative. (Guadarrama, 2017).

On the other hand, research instruments such as interviews take on importance in that they imply that a qualified person (interviewer) applies the questionnaire to the participants; The first asks questions to each interviewee and writes down the answers. (Sampieri, et al. 2014)

Surveys are instruments of descriptive research designs that are generally quantitative, these studies are dedicated to breadth and precision, their objective is to achieve the identification of differences or similarities with respect to the appearance of an event in two or more groups (Vara , 2015).

RESULTS

Analysis of the interviews carried out with teachers of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages program

During the interviews carried out with the teachers of the English major at ULEAM Ext. Chone, several relevant points were highlighted regarding the Impact of presence in the English language. One of the teachers mentioned that he prefers in-person education since, in the virtual mode, many students tend to turn off the camera and get distracted, which makes the learning process difficult. On the other hand, they mentioned that having in-person classes impacts in many ways, not only on the advancement and development of students'

learning, but also on their moods and social life, since, by having in-person classes, they talk with more people and friends, share thoughts, perspectives and knowledge, this way they do not close themselves in a bubble of loneliness.

Another teacher explained the challenge of teaching in person due to the large number of students per classroom, which makes management during evaluations difficult. To address this challenge, the teacher has implemented an effective strategy, making use of the class hours available when the evaluations approach, dividing the students into two groups, which allows him to program more effectively, control the students and improve the organization of evaluations.

They also addressed the preference that some students have when returning to in-person interaction for in-person interaction instead of online learning, as well as the impact that the transition from virtual to in-person teaching can have on group dynamics and interaction. Among the students, finally, the need to adapt pedagogical strategies to the specific needs of the students to achieve meaningful learning was mentioned.

Table 1 Content validity

Reliability statistics	
Cronbach's alpha	number of elements
.784	2

Note. Elaborated by Ángeles Muñoz, processed data from SPSS

The two elements found in reliability statistics focus on two variables which are the advantages and disadvantages of studying English in person. This value gives a reliability measure of 0.784, reflecting a high consistency between the items, which measures the same construct acceptable.

Below are survey results compiled from a variety of questions.

Table 2 How do you think being in person affects your learning of English?

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
Valid	positively	14	58.3	58.3	58.3
	Don't know	10	41.7	41.7	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Note. Elaborated by Ángeles Muñoz, processed data from SPSS

This graph highlights that a higher percentage of participants perceive that in-person attendance has a positive impact on learning English. On the other hand, it is observed that there were no negative responses, which could indicate a general trend towards positive perception. However, it is important to note that a significant number of students indicated that they did not know if in-person attendance affected them, which suggests a certain ambiguity or lack of clarity in their perceptions.

Table 3 What do you think are the advantages of studying English in person?

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
Valid	Direct interaction with the teacher	18	75.0	75.0	75.0
	Oral practice with other students	2	8.3	8.3	83.3
	Greater motivation and discipline	1	4.2	4.2	87.5
	Increased focus on grammar and language structure	3	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Note. Elaborated by Ángeles Muñoz, processed data from SPSS

Regarding the advantages of studying English in person, it stands out that the highest percentage (75%) is related to direct interaction with the teacher. Next in importance is the focus on the grammar and structure of the language, with 12.5%. Subsequently, oral practice with other students is mentioned as a significant benefit. Finally, 4.2% consider that presence provides greater motivation and discipline. It is interesting to note that the lower percentage indicates that students prefer in-person education due to the need for greater motivation and discipline in virtual education, an aspect that they consider lacking.

Table 4 What do you think are the disadvantages of studying English in person?

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
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Valid	Fixed and limited hours	10	41.7	41.7	41.7
	Economic cost	9	37.5	37.5	79.2
	Less flexibility to adapt individual learning pace	1	4.2	4.2	83.3
	Possibility of distractions in the classroom	4	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Note. Elaborated by Ángeles Muñoz, processed data from SPSS

When analyzing the disadvantages of studying English in person, it stands out that the highest percentage of participants 41.7% identified fixed and limited schedules as a significant restriction. The economic cost is closely followed, mentioned by 37.5% of those surveyed. To a lesser extent, the possibility of distractions is mentioned 16.7% as a disadvantage, while a minority percentage 4.2% pointed out the lack of flexibility to adapt the individual learning pace as a negative aspect.

Table 5 What teaching method do you prefer for learning English?

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
Valid	In person	eleven	45.8	45.8	45.8
	Virtual or online	2	8.3	8.3	54.2
	Both depending on the circumstances	eleven	45.8	45.8	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Note. Elaborated by Ángeles Muñoz, processed data from SPSS

The preference of the students consulted regarding the English teaching method shows that 45.8% prefer the face-to-face modality. An equally significant percentage (45.8%) opts for flexibility, choosing between both methods depending on the circumstances. In contrast, a low percentage of 8.3% shows a preference for the virtual or online modality.

Table 5 Correlations

		What do you think are the advantages of studying English in person?	What do you think are the disadvantages of studying English in person?
What do you think are the advantages of studying English in person?	Pearson correlation	1	.663 **
	Sig. (bilateral)		<.001
	N	24	24
What do you think are the disadvantages of studying English in person?	Pearson correlation	.663 **	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	<.001	
	N	24	24

** . The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-sided).

Note. Elaborated by Ángeles Muñoz, processed data from SPSS

The Pearson correlation statistical value is 0.663 where this correlation is significant, so there is a very high level of correlation between the advantages of studying English and the disadvantages of studying English, this could indicate that as the perceived advantages increase by students when studying English, the identified disadvantages also increase.

DISCUSSION

As evidenced in the graphs, this quantitative and qualitative descriptive research collected direct information from the perspectives of the students of the eighth semester of the national and foreign languages pedagogy career. The results reveal that students show a clear preference for the in-person modality, although they are also open to the virtual modality in situations where it is necessary, especially when problems arise to be in educational institutions.

On the other hand, the Pearson correlation showed a positive analogy between the increase in advantages and the increase in disadvantages associated with the study of English. However, this statistical value not only indicates the existence of this relationship, but also allows us to understand how this correlation influences the phenomenon studied.

In addition, teachers show a preference for in-person teaching because they perceive a lower level of interest on the part of students during virtual classes. They also consider that the challenge of teaching and motivating

students is greater in a virtual environment. Therefore, they prefer to focus their efforts on improving their teaching methods in physical classrooms rather than having to face the challenges posed by online teaching. In this sense, you point out that the virtual modality lacks an intrinsic study culture, since people tend to depend on the social environment to promote constructivist learning, instead of developing the self-motivation and discipline necessary to learn autonomously.

CONCLUSIONS

In-person learning environments have been the best known by students, however, with technological changes, new learning modalities have appeared, from virtual to hybrid, so both students and teachers have daily challenges, for example. innovate teaching methods.

In the results of the interviews carried out with teachers and the surveys administered to students, a clear preference for the in-person modality was determined. Despite this, students who give preference to both modalities were also evaluated, depending on the specific circumstances in which the Educational Institutions find themselves. This is because, sometimes, factors external to education, such as emergencies or government decisions, may have the non-face-to-face modality as an option as a preventive measure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is suggested that the hybrid learning modality be strengthened as an alternative that can satisfy the needs of students who value in-person education, while giving them the possibility of accessing the virtual modality in emergency situations.

Hybrid education, by combining elements of both study modalities, offers greater flexibility and adaptability to changing circumstances, thus allowing the preferences of all students to be met, both those who prefer virtuality and those who opt for in-person learning.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Declaration of responsibility of authorship

We, the authors of the aforementioned manuscript, DECLARE that we have directly contributed to its intellectual content, as well as to the genesis and analysis of its data; therefore, we are able to take public responsibility for it and accept that their names appear on the list of authors in the order indicated. Furthermore, we have complied with the ethical requirements of the aforementioned publication, having consulted the Declaration of Ethics and Publication Malpractice.

María de los Ángeles Muñoz Muñoz and Henry Xavier Mendoza Ponce: Literature review and article writing process.