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DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY
ENGLISH MAJOR

MODALITY: RESEARCH REPORT

"VIRTUAL OR FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES: PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH TEACHERS FROM PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA"

Research report before obtaining the bachelor degree in National and Foreign Language Pedagogy, English Major.

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PUJILÍ-ECUADOR
FEBRUARY 2023

TUTOR'S ENDORSEMENT

In my capacity as a supervisor of the research report entitled "Virtual or Face-to-Face Classes: Perceptions of English Teachers from Public Educational Institutions in the Post-Pandemic Era", and researched by Carlos Efraín Mena Alvarez, ID number 1723751804, and Francisco Sebastián Terán Sotelo, ID number 1004814602, for obtaining the bachelor's degree in National and Foreign language Pedagogy, English Major.

I CERTIFY THAT:

This research report has been fully revised and has the requirements and merits to be submitted for evaluation by the assigned revision Committee and its presentation and defense.

Pujilí, February, 2023

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COMMITTEE APPROVAL

The research report entitled "Virtual or Face-to-Face Classes: Perceptions of English Teachers from Public Educational Institutions in the Post-Pandemic Era", has been revised, approved, and authorized for printing and binding, before obtaining the bachelor's degree in National and Foreign language Pedagogy, English Major; this meets the substantive and formal requirements to hand in for the presentation and defense.

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GRATEFULNESS

DEDICATION

*With all my heart, I want to dedicate this project
to Jesus Christ who strengthens me. To the most
important people in my life, my parents, Segundo
and Gloria, who have supported me during my
professional training process and with their
prayers have accompanied me in my difficult
moments, which has not let me give up along the
way. To my siblings, Edison, Norma, Ximena,
Alexandra and Joselin, to my siblings-in-law,
Jaqueline, Jorge, Luis, Fernando and Ricardo, as
well as my dear nephews who have been the reason
to fight and overcome any adversity with the love
and family togetherness. To my dear teachers who
have helped me, advised me and taught me not
only to be a good professional but also a good
human being, to my endless love Micaela, thank
you to all of you! This is for you.*

Carlos

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this project to my family. My father Mauricio who always supported me to continue facing the adversities that have come and those that will come. My mother Miryam, who always took care of me and listened to every moment of my life, by teaching her values and advice, I am the person I am. My sister Gianella who always provided me some guidelines in my childhood, adolescence and adulthood. And my grandmother Sofía who always hugged me and made me feel better when I was lost. All of them are the ones who encouraged me to be where I am.

Francisco

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI
PUJILÍ EXTENSION
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY
ENGLISH MAJOR

THEME: VIRTUAL OR FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES: PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH TEACHERS FROM PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA.

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic is an infectious disease that has caused a healthy, economic and educational crisis throughout the world. In this sense, COVID-19 has become in a big challenge for educators, especially for English teachers as foreign language (EFL) who have been forced to seek innovative strategies to carry out the teaching practice and as result, they have developed skills in the use of the technology to teach English in virtual environments. However, the vaccination program against COVID-19 has allowed to control progressively the pandemic and return to face-to-face English classes. Hence, the present study is aimed to determine the perceptions of English teachers from public educational institutions regarding the transition from the virtual to face-to-face English classes in the post-pandemic era 2022 in order to provide suggestions that allow to encourage the combination to the skills developed by English teachers during the pandemic with traditional English teaching methods EFL in hybrid classes. Thus, this study arose from the necessity to analyze what are the opinions of English teachers of the public sector regarding the English classes in the post-pandemic era, because it is important to go beyond academic part, but also to take into account the human side of English teachers. Hence, three educational institutions of Cotopaxi province such as Technical University of Cotopaxi – Pujilí Extension, Educational Unit "Juan Abel Echeverria" and Educational Unit "Marco Aurelio Subía Martinez – Batalla de Panupali" have been taken as sample to develop this study. The qualitative approach with descriptive character oriented to exploratory method was used to collect and describe data. Likewise, a semi-structured interview of twelve questions was applied to seven participants from basic, middle and higher education who have been selected through a purposive sampling technique, and a thematic analysis method was used to analyze the data collected. The main results have showed that the participants agree that it is possible to combine the strategies used in virtual education with the teaching methods of face-to-face English classes and thus improve the educational process, for which the support of Education Ministry of Ecuador should be important. For this reason, it could be concluded that it is considered essential to take advantage of the skills in the use of technology by English teachers and combine them with traditional teaching methods to achieve a quality hybrid education in English teaching EFL which it would help to energize the classes, facilitate the teacher's work and thus promote the taste for the English language, preventing monotonous and boring classes.

Keywords: Virtual, face-to-face, COVID-19, education, post-pandemic era, teachers' perceptions.

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE COTOPAXI
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PROGRAMA DE PREGRADO
DEPARTMENTO DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS INGLÉS

TEMA: CLASES VIRTUALES O PRESENCIALES: PERCEPCIONES DE LOS DOCENTES DE INGLES DE INSTITUCIONES EDUCATIVAS PUBLICAS EN LA ERA POSTPANDEMIA.

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RESUMEN

La pandemia del COVID-19 es una enfermedad infecciosa que ha provocado una crisis sanitaria, económica y educativa en todo el mundo. En este sentido, el COVID-19 se ha convertido en un gran desafío para los educadores, especialmente para los docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) quienes se han visto obligados a buscar estrategias innovadoras para llevar a cabo la práctica docente y como resultado han desarrollado habilidades en el uso de la tecnología para enseñar inglés en entornos virtuales. Sin embargo, el programa de vacunación contra el COVID-19 ha permitido controlar progresivamente la pandemia y volver a las clases presenciales de inglés. Por lo tanto, el presente estudio tiene como objetivo determinar las percepciones de los docentes de inglés de las instituciones educativas públicas sobre la transición de las clases de inglés virtuales a las presenciales en la era postpandemia 2022, con el fin de brindar sugerencias que permitan incentivar la combinación de las habilidades desarrolladas por los profesores de inglés durante la pandemia con métodos tradicionales de enseñanza de inglés EFL en clases híbridas. Así, este estudio surgió de la necesidad de analizar cuál es la opinión de los docentes de inglés del sector público respecto a las clases de inglés en la era postpandemia ya que más allá de la parte académica hay que tomar en cuenta el lado humano de los docentes de inglés. Po lo que, se han tomado como muestra tres instituciones educativas de la provincia de Cotopaxi como son la Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi – Extensión Pujilí, la Unidad Educativa "Juan Abel Echeverria" y la Unidad Educativa "Marco Aurelio Subía Martínez – Batalla de Panupali" para desarrollar este estudio. Para la recolección y descripción de datos se utilizó el enfoque cualitativo con carácter descriptivo orientado al método exploratorio. Asimismo, se aplicó una entrevista semiestructurada de doce preguntas a siete participantes de educación básica, media y superior que han sido seleccionados a través de una técnica de muestreo intencional, y se utilizó un método de análisis temático para analizar los datos recolectados. Los principales resultados han mostrado que los participantes están de acuerdo en que es posible combinar las estrategias que se utilizan en la educación virtual con los métodos de enseñanza de las clases presenciales de inglés y así mejorar el proceso educativo, para lo cual, sería importante contar con el apoyo del Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador. Por ello, se pudo concluir que se considera fundamental aprovechar las habilidades en el uso de la tecnología de los profesores de inglés y combinarlas con los métodos tradicionales de enseñanza para lograr una educación híbrida de calidad en la enseñanza del inglés EFL que ayudaría a dinamizar las clases, facilitar el trabajo del docente y así promover el gusto por el idioma inglés, evitando clases monótonas y aburridas.

Palabras Clave: Virtual, presencial, COVID-19, educación, era postpandemia, percepciones de los docentes.

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Theme: Virtual or Face-To-Face Classes: Perceptions of English Teachers from Public Educational Institutions in the post pandemic era

Starting Date: October 2022

Ending Date: February 2023

Place of Research:

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Research line of the career (if applicable):

Innovation in teaching and learning the English Language as a foreign language.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

At the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, a very unusual phenomenon is produced (Huremović, 2019). This phenomenon is known as a pandemic, a term used to refer to large epidemics caused by a globally spreading infectious disease that the world has suffered historically around every one hundred years according World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). In this sense, the Great Plague of Marseille in 1720, the Cholera Pandemic in 1817, the Spanish Flu in 1918-1920 have greatly affected humanity (Puyan, 2017) (Vögele et al., 2021). The last pandemic known as COVID-19 which is an infectious and highly contagious respiratory disease produced by the SARS-CoV-2 virus belonging to the coronavirus family was discovered in a laboratory in the Chinese city of Wuhan at the end of 2019, giving rise to its name COVID-19 (Sharma et al., 2020).

In this sense, the authorities of each nation, concerned about the situation, sought alternatives that would allow daily work to be carried out and make the population aware that COVID-19 was a reality with which they had to live (Andriani & Bram, 2022). Thus, as of February 28, 2020, the date when the first case of the new disease or COVID-19 in Ecuador was announced, the former president of the republic Lenin Moreno in a meeting with his cabinet and the Operations Committee the Emergency Department (COE) for its acronym in Spanish reported on a series of measures such as teleworking or virtual classes stating the COVID-19 Educational Plan in public sectors in order to avoid direct contact of people and reduce the number of infections (Moreno and Creamer, 2020, as cited in GK, 2020).

In this way, while the virus spread quickly, and schools were closed, harming thousands of teachers and students (UNESCO,2020). Technology was taking center stage as face-to-face activities moved to virtual environments such as distance education and online classes in order to avoid contagion. This is how the need to resort to emergency remote teaching (ERT) arose (Hodges et al. 2020; Xie and Rice 2021). Academic activities would be carried out from home as a form of virtual education that would try to emulate face-to-face teaching synchronic by promoting daily interaction between teachers and students (Rapanta et al., 2021).

The challenges marked by the pandemic became an opportunity for innovation since teachers found themselves in need of finding effective teaching strategies according to the needs of their students (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Kaba, 2017; Škobo & Dragičević, 2020). Thus, the progress of educational process in virtual classes allowed the development of skills in the use of ICT, such as the use of platforms for virtual conferences, applications, and web pages for presentation of the class, the interaction or the evaluation, which made it possible to energize the classes and make them attractive to the students (Rapanta et al., 2021).

In 2022, the restrictions were gradually lifted, the end of the pandemic seemed to be getting closer, which meant new challenges for English teachers since they had been working on teaching English virtually for a long time with didactic techniques supported by technology. For this reason, the return to the new normality in the post-pandemic era to educational institutions of Cotopaxi province could mean a big problem (Roy, 2020).

In this sense, the following question arose: What are the perceptions of English teachers from public educational institutions in the Cotopaxi province regarding the transition from virtual to face-to-face English teaching in the post-pandemic era? Hence, the present study was carried out with the aim to determine perceptions of English teachers from public educational institutions in the Cotopaxi province to provide suggestions to conserve the skills in the use of ICT developed by the teachers and how to hold teaching English (EFL) in hybrid classes in the post pandemic era.

The unawareness of teacher's perceptions about the transition from virtual to face-to-face classes could be caused by the fact that COVID-19 pandemic is a recent phenomenon. Therefore, there is little research related to the factors that are involved in the transition from the virtual to face-to-face classes, especially in public educational institutions in the Cotopaxi province. In this way, the lack of knowledge of the new factors and scenarios to which English teachers are exposed to teach means that it is not possible to determine adequate strategies to carry out effective education in the post-pandemic era.

Furthermore, the of scarcity of studies related to the transition from virtual to face-to-face education has limited the amount of information in relation to the skills in the use of technology developed by English teachers in the virtual environment and how these could be used as benefits in the face-to-face environment. So, it is not possible to determine the type of skills could be applied or combined in the new post-pandemic face-to-face modality.

Finally, the lack of information on this topic could be due to the little interest shown by researchers in knowing what English teachers think about the benefits of conducting classes in face-to-face environments compared to online education in the post-pandemic era. As a result, it is not possible to know the advantages and disadvantages of face-to-face education in terms of online education in the new normal. Therefore, this study aims to know English teachers' perceptions in order to provide suggestions about how to hold teaching English (EFL) in hybrid classes. That contributes significantly to the preserve the skills in the use of technological tools developed in virtual classes to promote the use or combination of tools and strategies of virtual education and face-to-face English teaching EFL in the Cotopaxi province in the post-pandemic era.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1. General Objective

To determine perceptions of English teachers from public educational institutions in the Cotopaxi province regarding the transition from virtual to face-to-face English teaching in the post-pandemic era 2022.

3.2. Specific Objectives

To establish theoretical foundations about perceptions of English regarding the transition from virtual to face-to-face English teaching in the post-pandemic era.

To identify the educational reality of three public institutions in the province of Cotopaxi through the design and application of an interview guide about perceptions of English teachers regarding the transition from virtual to face-to-face English teaching in the post-pandemic era.

To define conclusions and recommendations about the advantages and disadvantages of returning to face-to-face classes compared to virtual education from the perceptions of English teachers from public educational institutions in the province of Cotopaxi in the post-pandemic era.

4. ACTIVITIES AND TASK SYSTEM IN RELATION TO THE OBJECTIVES PROPOSED.

Table 1: Activities and task system about the objectives proposed.

Specific objective	Activities	Verification Means
To establish theoretical foundations about perceptions of English regarding the transition from virtual to face-to-face English teaching in the post-pandemic era.	- Bibliographic review.	- Theoretical Framework Document.
To identify the educational reality of three public institutions in the province of Cotopaxi through the design and application of an interview guide about perceptions of English teachers regarding the transition from virtual to face-to-face English teaching in the post-pandemic era.	- Design and apply a semi-structure interview guide	- Semi-structure interview guide questionary

To define conclusions and recommendations about the advantages and disadvantages of returning to face-to-face classes compared to virtual education from the perceptions of English teachers from public educational institutions in the province of Cotopaxi in the post-pandemic era	- Analysis and discussion of results.	- Conclusions and recommendations

Note. In this table is represented the activities and verification means related to each specific objective

5. JUSTIFICATION

This project was carried out with the purpose of exploring the perceptions of English teachers regarding the transition process from virtual to face-to-face English classes in the post-pandemic era. The study was carried out in three public educational institutions such as Technical University of Cotopaxi – Pujilí Extension, Educational Unit "Juan Abel Echeverria" and Educational Unit "Marco Aurelio Subía Martínez - Batalla de Panupali" Cotopaxi - Ecuador. This research arose from the need-to-know what teachers think about virtual teaching and what are their perspectives on the new scenarios and challenges in face-to-face education. Therefore, the data collection was carried out on the premises of the educational institutions between July 29, 2022 and November 11, 2022, for which an informed consent was given to the participants in order to apply a guide of a semi-structured interview which has allowed the collection of information on the perceptions of teachers and through the analysis of the results, the report has been prepared with which it has been possible to determine the feasibility of combining the strategies and skills developed during the pandemic in a hybrid education in the post-pandemic era.

The realization of the present study is considered a success because it highlights the importance of knowing the thoughts or opinions of English teachers about the challenges, they have to face in the new normality in terms of teaching EFL English in a face-to-face since they play an important role in education (Makovec, 2018). Therefore, it is

considered important to preserve the skills developed during the pandemic and combine them with traditional English teaching methodologies in the classroom, thus preventing them from being lost and even improving them, since they benefit both the teacher and the students to boost the educational process (Gherheș et al., 2021). On the other hand, the difficulties that arose to achieve the objectives were the limited availability of time of the participants to carry out the interviews since they postponed the dates despite having previously set them. Similarly, the participants had difficulty attending the agreed place due to the distance from their place of residence, which forced some interviews to be carried out virtually (Sah et al., 2020).

This research project lasted approximately 180 days, beginning in July 2022 and ending with its presentation and support in February 2023. In this sense, human, material, and financial resources were used for the purpose of comply with the activities planned according to the schedule and thus achieve the objectives set. Consequently, to the previously indicated, it can be mentioned that the execution of the present research project "Virtual or Face-To-Face Classes: Perceptions of English Teachers from Public Educational Institutions in the post pandemic era" is viable.

6. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL FOUNDATION

6.1. Background

Rapanta et al, (2021) conducted a study to analyze the experiences of expert teachers in higher education related to the use of digital technologies in online classes that allow reflection about teaching methods by the combination of physical and technological tools in face-to-face classes in the post-pandemic era. This was an exploratory study that appealed a Mixed-method approach. The data collection method used for this study was expert interviews applied at the beginning of 2021 to four experts in higher education selected by proven expertise in online education. The interview consists of five questions distributed by email after explaining the research objective to the participants as co-authors in this research prioritizing the pedagogical aspect instead of digital education of superior education in the transition process towards face-to-face classes after the

pandemic. The documental revision and the analysis of the answers of the experts, revealed that the pandemic obligated the emergence of Remote Teaching (ERT) which differs from Online Learning - Teaching (OLT) because ERT tries to simulate the face-to-face classes in virtual environments, which represents a great opportunity to improve online education as long as teachers are highly trained to teach using technological tools, which could be gradually integrated into physical tools and teaching methods in a harmonious way that represents active, flexible and meaningful learning. So, the authors suggest investigating the challenges that higher-level educational institutions will have to face once the pandemic is over in relation to the use of technology and curricular design in post-pandemic education.

Gherheș et al., (2021) conducted a study to distinguish the different perceptions and attitudes that may exist in the beneficiaries of the educational process about online classes and the return to face-to-face conventional education. This research was sociological with a quantitative approach. Researchers applied a sociological survey for 604 students of the Polyethnic University of Timisoara between December 2020 and February 2021. Participants were divided into two groups where they answered an 8-question questionnaire related to advantages and disadvantages of e-learning against face-to-face learning. The study shows that there is a superior desire for face-to-face learning instead of e-learning. But some participants highlight time efficiency, convenience, and accessibility as benefits of online classes. Besides, students assumed that the lack of interaction was the main drawback of e-learning, due to they missed interacting with their classmates. So, the authors concludes that it is necessary the adaptation to the teachers to the new online education environment which was considered as an alternative way to continue studying since the interaction in face-to-face learning cannot disappear completely. For this reason, it is essential to keep in mind the benefits of e-learning education.

Anggrawan et al., (2019) led a study to analyze the advantages and consequences of online learning of English grammar based on the meaningful improvement in learning outcomes compared to the face-to-face education modality. This was experimental research which used a Mixed-method approach. Researchers applied sampling strategies

in a proportionate and aleatory way to collect sample data from the participants. Also, the achievement index and the admission test index were used to distinguish how much knowledge students had. The study shows that some variables arose during the data analysis, independent variables which are online learning, face to face and learning styles and dependent variable which is learning outcomes. The study involves both the comparative and descriptive analysis. So, the study points out that there is not a meaningful distinction between learning outcomes of participants who took English grammar online learning and the ones who took it in face-to-face learning. So, the authors conclude that learning outcomes of English grammar from online learning, can substitute the ones of face to face learning due to online English grammar learning participants are superior in the cognitive aspect instead of face-to-face English grammar learning participants. Finally, it is important to recognize that there are multiple learning styles. Hence, it is necessary to carry out more research considering the interaction regarding online learning and learning styles about learning outcomes of English grammar.

Mateus et al., (2022) conducted a study to explore the perception of teachers from several countries of Latham on pros and cons of using media in the educational context post-Covid19. This research was descriptive and used a qualitative approach. For that, it was resorted to a literature review of official documents from four ministries of education that contained government strategies applied to virtual education during the pandemic in the countries of Argentina, Peru, Chile, and Ecuador, during the months of March 2020 to May 2021. In addition, the researchers divided the population into two groups to apply the focus group method in teachers from public and private schools of the four countries, which were carried out through digital platforms and institutional agreements. The questions were selected according to the necessity to know the mastery of the teachers about media education. The results of the research show that the four countries where the focus group method was applied implemented distance education alternatives via digital platforms and the development of study programs such as Let's learn together at home in Ecuador broadcast by press, radio and television. Therefore, the researchers express the need for relevant training for teachers in the management of ICT as well as strategies that allow overcoming the connectivity gap, the lack of appropriate learning environments and work overload the according to the context of the different countries, so this study

provide suggestions to improve the schedule of the digital education based on media. So, the authors conclude that the four countries sought to protect the right to education using distance education strategies using communication media and digital platforms. However, not all of these countries have met their expectations due to the lack of components or tools, the problem being more visible in the public schools that serve the majority of the population, in addition, in the four educational systems the technological deficiency was notorious, lack of training of teachers and students in the use of ICT. Then, greater training in the digital field is suggested.

Sevy-Biloon (2021) conducted a study to examine the advantages and disadvantages shown by students' viewpoints about online classes or face to face education EFL in this post-pandemic era. This research was qualitative that appealed a phenomenological approach. The researcher took a group of 69 students of English pedagogy from National University of Education in Ecuador. It was applied an online questionnaire with eight questions open-ended in a semi formal structure. The questions were related to students' learning preferences, students' perceptions about online learning versus face-to-face learning. At the beginning of the research twenty class were observed in the intermediate level in the teaching of English EFL, it could be noticed that some students did not activate their video cameras and only some students participated. Students who did not activate their cameras mentioned they did not have working video or internet connection was not good and even they were doing different activities instead of participating in classes. Other students mentioned that they prefer to have classes online and not go to the university since some of them live far away, and in an online way they have more time to complete their tasks. So, the author concludes that before the emergence of Covid19, technological tools were used at a rapid rate, but after that, they have changed the way of how students learn, and how teachers use technological tools in their classes. Students have different opinions about online classes versus face-to-face classes, some of them consider online classes useful to their learning styles and needs. However, some of them prefer to come back to face-to-face classes in order to interact both with the teacher and classmates.

6.2. Theoretical framework

6.2.1. Education

Education is a social process where people are constantly trained by learning values, behaviors and knowledge that allow them to live in a diverse world. Hence, It is the responsibility of parents, teachers and children to move forward with this training process so that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to society (Idris et al., 2012). Education seeks to develop the potential of both teachers and students, becoming the source of wisdom, hope, and respect for learning (Smith, 2021). It differs from those thoughts that suggest that education is a bank where knowledge is deposited where students are treated as objects or tools to work with instead of considering them as human beings with whom to interact (Freire, 1970). In this sense, education is a right of all citizens up to the third level of education and it is an unavoidable and inexcusable duty that the state must guarantee to the population without any excuse or discrimination (Constitución de la República del Ecuador, 2008, Artículo 26).

The educational process involves all areas of knowledge being considered as a social phenomenon. Hence, teaching English as a foreign language is part of educational process due to it must evolve in parallel with the needs that are constantly present in society (Sevy-Biloon, 2021). For this reason, the appearance of the COVID-19 pandemic has allowed the world to experiment with three types of education that are detailed below.

Online education

It is important to consider that before the pandemic, educational institutions had begun to work on digital platforms using online teaching-learning technology (OLT), which consisted of classroom-based instruction outside the classroom (Kara, 2020). This type of education allowed the students to receive courses in which they could learn at her own pace, in flexible environments synchronously or asynchronously (Anderson, 2008). So,

OLT refers to a type of formal education that uses technological means for interaction between teachers, students, and resources (Simonson et al., 2019).

Virtual education

On the other hand, although virtual education for English teaching EFL shares characteristics with online education such as the use of technology for the acquisition and transmission of knowledge, virtual education has been considered as an alternative to emergency remote teaching (ERT) which refers to a temporary change that emerged due to the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Hodges et al. 2020). The goal of virtual ERT is to provide reliable, temporary, quick, and lasting access to education (Mohmmed et al., 2020). Thus, classes are based on online activities through synchronous virtual meetings that resemble face-to-face interaction (Rapanta et al., 2021).

Face-to-face education

With the emergence of the covid 19 pandemic, English teaching EFL has had to go through a process of transition from one modality to another. Therefore, to understand the changes that have occurred in English teaching EFL. It is necessary to analyze how students learn (Sevy-Biloon, 2021). Traditionally, English teaching EFL has been held in a face-to-face classroom where the teacher and students had a real and close interaction through the use of physical teaching-learning materials (Rapanta et al., 2021).

Hybrid and blended education

Both terms, hybrid and blended education mean when the educational process involve and combine traditional and online learning style (Singh et al., 2021). However, there is a difference between them, due to hybrid education is developed in synchronous educational process that focuses on using the technology combining it with traditional teaching strategies inside the classroom, so students have more opportunities to learn creatively while simultaneously the teacher monitors the class work. Thus, he or she explains, gives instructions in a traditional way but also being supported by technological

tools which allow to provide the information in a better and clearly way (Abi Raad & Odhabi, 2021).

On the other hand, blended learning refers to a mixed education that use both the traditional teaching methods and the support of technology where the students learn in face-to-face classes in a semi presential education having a real interaction by listening to the teacher and asking questions. Then the technological tools are used by students to develop autonomous work, so, the teacher provides explanations by online ways or uses a platform where students use it to access to resources or materials that they must start to learn by their own pace. In this way, face to face classes and autonomous work are complemented each other in order to help students with their learning process (Batista-Toledo & Gavilan, 2022).

6.2.2. Challenges of English teachers in face-to-face education post-pandemic

Regarding challenges of English teachers in post-pandemic era, Andriani & Bram (2022) mention that it was required that teachers to work remotely. As a result, online education was established during the pandemic. The facility, internet, knowledge, students' language skills, discipline, motivation, attitude, assessment, interpersonal relationships, and interaction were all difficulties for English teachers when offering online classes. Therefore, the challenges may be mostly brought on by a lack of prior online learning experience.

6.2.3. English teaching

In the early twenty-first century, English has taken on a new role as a requirement of a globalizing world. Although globalization has had a profound influence on many aspects of people's lives, it may not acquire such a status without a common language fostering engagement and communication among people; it means, absolutely English which its function as an international language has altered dramatically as globalization has spread (Tosuncuoğlu & Kırmızı, 2019).

In that regard, English teaching has made it possible for countries to be in contact. Weixuan (2014) mentions that English language teaching is an act of training and understanding this language. In this sense, it is concerned with students considering; getting a unique environment where they have the same opportunities to participate in the classroom, psychological conditions that must help them feel safe and control themselves and the integration of language by constantly promoting practice and transmission of information, in this way, the teacher and students work together and have a dynamic role.

English as a foreign language (EFL)

Another important way to review the topic of English is with the term English as a foreign language EFL. In this sense, EFL refers to the study of English by persons who live in areas where English is not their first language or their native language. Thus, EFL is consider as the acquisition of English as target language (Larasaty et al. 2021).

English teaching methods

English teaching methods respond to the diversity of students and their learning needs. Methods refer to several ways of teaching based on a procedure where language resources are presented to students. Methods change according to students' needs, mother tongue, cultural background, age and purpose of teaching (Jeya, 2012).

In this sense, the most common teaching methods are: Grammar Translation Method which allows students to acquire knowledge focusing in the structure of sentences (Jeya, 2012). Direct Method emphasizes oral language by concentrating on daily language correlating meaning with the target language as the children acquire the language (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). On the other hand, the Audio-lingual method is focused in that the students listen to recordings of real language conversations (Jeya, 2012). Finally, Suggestopedia method implies the relaxation of students through music, breathing techniques, physical movements in the classroom and the teacher's voice (Kharismawati, 2014).

Technological tools for teaching English

It refers to the kind of tools used in virtual and online classes. Thus, due to the pandemic, educators and institutions all around the world have started to change the way they teach and learn. To enhance their online courses, teachers have started to make better use of technological resources. In India, Jena (2020) explains that these are the ways that the pandemic has actually improved educational possibilities. In Chile, Sepúlveda-Escobar and Morrison (2020) explain how the pandemic has fostered new discoveries and enabled educators to increase their technological proficiency, it includes the technological tools such as google meet, zoom and WhatsApp.

Regarding to the interesting technological tools to teach English are highlighted the following:

Nearpod: It is an e-learning tool that offers different activities to interact student with their classmates and with the teacher who transmits the information during the session, thus, it helps to get satisfactory outputs by a variety of tasks like typing in a collaborative board, record their voice, solve puzzles (Sanmugam et al., 2019).

Kahoot: it is a website and app that is used to add dynamism to the class, it is used as quizzes which can be complemented by teacher´s feedback. It is important to mention that is not required much experience by students or teachers to used it (Plump & LaRosa, 2017).

Quizzes: It is an excellent online assessment platform that help students to test their knowledge and monitor their progress in learning English. Also, the questions show multiple answers where more than one is correct and thus, students can reflect about the possible answers (Rahayu, 2018, as cited in Amalia, 2020).

Flipgrid: It is a platform for online video discussions that has the goal of empowering students and promoting social engagement by recording a video

about a specific topic which can be shared and commented by the rest of the classmates (Stoszkowski, 2018).

Padlet: It is a free application that has as tools a collaborative space where users can upload files, photos, add links and many other options that make the class more interactive and effective (Fisher, 2017).

WordWall: It is a platform that offers activities that catch the students´ attention during the lessons and enhance the contents of them. Besides, passive students become active because there are a variety of puzzles, minigames and quizzes to help them to understand the topics (Mazelin et al., 2022).

Liveworksheets: It is an online platform that contains a variety of activities about any topic, they can be used by teacher or even they have the opportunity to create their worksheet and make the contents enjoyable (Mukti et al., 2021).

Teaching English (EFL) in public educational institutions

Before COVID-19 pandemic, Public educational institutions in Ecuador used textbooks based on three principles: Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Alvarez & Torres (2021) mention in their study that Ecuador´s textbooks use CLIL that implies use of foreign language and then create spaced where students are engaged to use the language meaningfully. CLT that involves real contexts where students use language in an authentic way. Finally, CEFR that focuses on English skills taking into account learners' context and ages. In a few words, these textbooks that contain 72 modules, are used with additional resources such as audios that can be downloaded on the Ministry of Education website.

Afterwards, the COVID-19 pandemic appeared and made everyone work online way because it was impossible to be in contact since population did not know how to face this

global problem, they only could have social distancing to avoid spreading the virus. In this sense, Public educational institutions in Ecuador needed to apply new measures to keep working in the educational process. The Ecuadorian educational system faced difficulties as a result of this closure. Learning materials were transferred to digital platforms to restore some normalcy and lessen the pandemic's impact on the educational sector (Estrella, 2022).

Students and English teachers have returned to face-to-face classes with biosecurity measures but English teachers have had some limitations, they returned like a traditional environment where there are few resources that are not enough to support English teaching process and the technological resources that were used during pandemic, cannot be used completely in the classroom (Park & Yi, 2022).

6.2.4. English teachers' perceptions

Perceptions can be conceived as the different ways in which people perceive reality, and how they visualize the world based on their experiences. In this sense, various religious, geographical, cultural factors, personal backgrounds, or levels of education can affect the way that a particular individual can perceive a phenomenon or event. So, people can have similar experiences but each individual can approach them differently according to her point of view (McDonald, 2011).

In this way, the perceptions of EFL English teachers are the different points of view they have in relation to the teaching of English, as well as how they understand or internalize the knowledge they impart in the classroom, taking into account the experiences and expectations that have been previously raised. Then the teacher must develop a way to understand the information and finally organize it to have a clear idea, which allows them to create perceptions about their experiences and the events that occur in their professional practice (Qiong, 2017). The previous knowledge that English teachers have given them the experience to give their point of view on a certain topic related to their field so that people who know or have experience with a certain situation can modify the perceptions related to their area (De Lange et al., 2018).

6.2.5. COVID-19 pandemic

A pandemic is caused by an infected disease that is spread throughout a large area, country, or even the world provoking a large number of people to get contagious. In this sense, in the last period of 2019, it appeared a new virus derived from the coronavirus family caused severe respiratory affectations. So, it spread rapidly causing a pandemic that would force governments to close borders and decree mandatory quarantine in the face of the health crisis caused by the coronavirus baptized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as COVID-19 (WHO, 2020).

This type of phenomenon does not arise frequently since the last pandemic dates around a hundred years ago, therefore, the world was not prepared to face a large-scale health crisis which has forced human beings to change their lifestyle and look for new ways to continue with daily tasks, including education due to the teaching-learning process was one of the main affected by the pandemic. (Bonilla, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a serious economic and social crisis throughout the world, which has affected the actors of the educational process worldwide during February 2021 (UNESCO, 2020). This has caused a significant change in the way of teaching English whether face-to-face, online, or virtual as a result of the lockdowns and interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Richards, 2020).

6.2.6. Post-pandemic era

The pandemic has been controlled in much of the world, which is why we currently speak of the post-pandemic era, that is, the time in which various obstacles that arose during the crisis caused by COVID-19 have been overcome and it has produced a progressive return to the new normality in all areas of life and also in the teaching of the English language. In this way, Park & Yi (2022) suggest that it is important to visualize education in the future once the pandemic has been controlled, so the teacher must have a vision, preparation, and experience to face the teaching of EFL English in the post-pandemic era.

7. METHODOLOGY

The present study was aimed through qualitative approach with descriptive character because that kind of methodology helped to collect and describe qualitative or non-numerical data based on opinions, believes, experiences or events whether a person or a social phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Hence, it facilitates on comprehending a social phenomenon in their natural environment (Ahmad et al. 2019). In the same way, the study has used an exploratory method which provide guidelines that imply to examine a topic which is little studied or there is not enough data that help to understand completely what people think of a specific phenomenon. So, it allows to study the recent phenomenon caused by pandemic due to it has not occurred before making it possible exploring the most relevant perceptions regarding the teaching of English post COVID-19 (Singh, 2019). For this reason, this methodology supports the study the perceptions of English teachers from public educational institutions in the Cotopaxi province regarding the transition from virtual to face-to-face English teaching in the post-pandemic era are unknown.

7.1. Research context

The present research was conducted in public educational institutions in urban and rural areas of Cotopaxi - Ecuador. In this sense, the study was held between June 2022 January 2023.in Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi – Pujilí Extension located in Cotopaxi province, Pujilí, Center Parish, Ecuador, Unidad Educativa "Juan Abel Echeverria" located in Cotopaxi, Latacunga, Eloy Alfaro, Ecuador. And, Unidad Educativa "Marco Aurelio Subía Martínez - Batalla de Panupali" located in Cotopaxi, Latacunga, Tanicuchi, Ecuador.

7.2. Participants

The present study counted with a group of seven participants from different public educational institutions from Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi – Pujilí Extension will

participate in this study four English Teachers, two male, and one female. About 30 – 62 years old. Regarding Educational Unit "Juan Abel Echeverria" two English teachers participate in this study. Both of them are female, they are around 45 years old. Related to Educational Unit "Marco Aurelio Subia Martinez-Batalla de Panupali the study will count with the participation of two English teachers one male and one female. They are around 30 – 45 years old.

In order to protect the identity of the participants it has been considered to provide a code for all them which has used to identify them through research process. (See table 2).

Table 2: Participants codes

Degree	Code	Genre	Age
MSc.	F001	Female	36
MSc.	M002	Male	31
MSc.	M003	Male	62
Lic.	F004	Female	43
Lic.	F005	Female	45
Lic.	F006	Female	30
Lic.	F007	Female	45

Note. In this table is represented the respective code of each participant to identify them in the research.

7.3. Data collection and procedures

Regarding the data collection, a semi-structured interview was applied with the intention to know the perceptions of English teachers regarding the transitional process from virtual education to face to face classes. For this reason, the semi-structured interview was divided into two blocks and has 12 open questions aimed at English teachers focusing on the teaching of English both in virtual and face-to-face environments. It helped to collect relevant data orally directly from the participants regarding their perceptions about the transition from virtual education to face-to-face classes. Thus, semi-structured interviews allow interviewees the freedom to respond based on their criteria and without feeling pressure of any kind (Maxwell, 2012).

7.4. Purposive sampling technique

An intentional sampling will be used because it is a technique used for qualitative research which allows us to obtain clear knowledge of a phenomenon in terms of experiences or perceptions of a small population. Then, the participants will be selected based on our criteria, which we consider will contribute significantly to the purposes of the research (Tongco, 2007).

7.5. Data analysis method

The data collected from interviews has been analyzed through a thematic analysis which allowed classifying the information in order of importance and category to have a clear understanding of the information that is presented regarding English teacher perceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Regarding the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from interviews, it was considered to use a deductive approach because it allows to have predetermined topics that have been related to what it was expected to reflect in the research. Also, it was followed a series of six steps of Thematic Analysis that allowed to structure, classify, synthesize, interpret and validate relevant information for carrying out the research (Caulfield, 2022). In this sense, the thematic analysis steps are described below.

7.5.1. Familiarization

It is the first step where the researcher familiarizes or has a general overview of the data before analyzing of individual items. So, it implies transcribing the recordings, read and take notes. (Caulfield, 2022). The transcription of the data collected is essential since this process allows to obtain in a textual way the information obtained from the participants orally, taking into account each detail mentioned in the interviews in order to maintain the veracity of the information, this process can be done by hand or with the use of the computer (Bailey, 2008).

7.5.2. Coding

Once the familiarization has done it is important to code the main expressions of the participants in order to describe them. Hence, the researchers have to check the transcript taking into account the most relevant or interesting data. Finally, the data is organized into groups with the codes that allow the researcher to recognize the main points and similar meanings (Caulfield, 2022). After all this, it can be highlighted in a few words that coding implies the organization and label the qualitative data and then recognize various themes and how they are related to each one Medelyan, 2020). The coding process include teacher interview questions as established bellow (See table 3).

Table 3: Questions extracts and codes of categories

Questions	Extract	Codes (categories)
Could you tell me about your personal life, that is information related to your demographic data, name, age, gender, place of residence, and so on?		Demografic context
Could you tell me about your professional life as an English teacher?		Educational context
How have you felt the transition and the process of adapting to the new normality in the post-COVID-19 era in the teaching of English, do you consider the decision to return to face-to-face classes timely?	El volver a la presencialidad implica adaptarse al transporte. Nos acostumbramos en casa. Puntualidad y asistencia de estudiantes. La decisión de regresar no ha sido ni buena ni mala, sino necesaria [Back to face -to -face implies adapting to transport. We get used to at home. Punctuality and student assistance. The decision to return has not been good or bad, but necessary].	Return to face-to-face classes Adaptation Motivation

Do you think that the role of English teachers would be different post-COVID-19?	El rol en el blended learning invita a ser activos, planificar pensando en la interacción, virtualidad fortalece presencialidad y viceversa [The role in blended Learning invites you to be active, plan thinking about interaction, virtuality strengthens face -to -face and vice versa].	Teacher's role
What are the challenges you have had to face in the return to face-to-face education as an English teacher in the post-COVID 19 era compared to virtual education?	Fue un desafío total ver la transición de lo virtual a lo presencial en las bajas calificaciones [It was a total challenge to see the transition from the virtual to the face-to-face in the low grades].	Challenges English language needs
What kind of skills, knowledge, or dispositions should English teachers have in post-COVID-19 education?	Habilidad de diagnosticar. Venimos de un retroceso. Conocimientos seria detectar vacíos, re planificación del currículo, adaptarlo, cambiarlo [Ability to diagnose. We come from a setback. Knowledge would be to detect gaps, re planning of the curriculum, adapt it, change it].	Skills Knowledge Guidelines
How have you perceived the behavior, commitment, motivation, interaction, and effort of your students in teaching English in the return to presence after COVID-19 compared to virtual education?	Hay estudiantes que, si desean y tienen interés, se les motiva, retroalimentando las falencias. Estudiantes quieren interactuar, pero hay mucha bulla. Compromiso, algunos si y otros no. La virtualidad les acostumbró a qué copien [There are students who, if they want and have interest, are motivated, feedback on shortcomings. Students want to interact, but there is a lot of noise. Commitment, some yes and others not. Virtuality used to copy them].	Afective and emotional
What have been your perceptions regarding the use of technology in teaching English in the post-pandemic?	Docentes y estudiantes nos capacitamos para el uso de tecnología. Plataformas tienen documentos de apoyo académico, instrucciones, horarios lo cual ayuda consolidar mejor las actividades académicas [Teachers and students train	Use of technology post-pandemic Activities and tasks

	ourselves for the use of technology. Platforms have academic support documents, instructions, schedules which helps to consolidate academic activities better].	
Could you mention what kind of technological tools and teaching resources have you used in virtual education for teaching the English language during the pandemic for different purposes such as communication, interaction, presentation material, learning material, homework assignment, and evaluation? Have you had any difficulties using them?	No he tenido dificultad, implementaba kahoot, quizzes, liveworksheets, hojas de google para trabajo colaborativo. mini tutoriales, pero los chicos se bloqueaban y se frustraban [I have not had difficulty, implemented Kahoot, maybe, live worksheets, Google leaves for collaborative work. Mini tutorials, but the boys blocked and frustrated].	Virtual teaching Likes Technological tools
Do you consider that the application of technology in the classroom to promote interaction and collaborative work in the teaching of the English language in the post-COVID-19 era is feasible?	Excelente idea, pero lastimosamente hay instituciones que no tienen los recursos necesarios, escasez de infraestructura y material tecnológico [Excellent idea, but unfortunately there are institutions that do not have the necessary resources, shortage of infrastructure and technological material].	Collaborative learning Resources
What do you consider to be the main advantages and disadvantages that could be highlighted regarding the teaching of the English language in the return to face-to-face education in the post-pandemic era compared to virtual education?	Ventaja es interacción presencial, entre los chicos hablen, participen, pasen al pizarrón lo que en forma virtual era más complicado. Decían se me fue el internet o apagaban las cámaras, no se sabía si era verdad o mentira. desventaja es el desinterés de ellos [Advantage is face -to -face interaction, among the boys they speak, participate, pass to the board which was virtually more complicated. They said the internet left me or the cameras went out, it was not known if it was true or lie. disadvantage is their disinterest].	Face to face education Advantages and disadvantages

	Sería una de las mejores estrategias para avanzar. Ayuda no solo a alumnos, sino a docentes para que se preparen en plataformas tecnológicas, juegos, plataformas de evaluación, para tener un conocimiento amplio y que los estudiantes vayan adaptándose a futuro [It would be one of the best strategies to advance. It helps not only students, but teachers to prepare on technological platforms, games, evaluation platforms, to have broad knowledge and the students adapt to the future].	
Do you consider the possibility of a hybrid teaching-learning process of the English language in post-COVID-19 education feasible?		Hybrid education Blended learning

Note: in this table was made the codes of categories of data collected which allows the analysis of information

7.5.3. Generating themes

In this step, the codes are analyzed to recognize patterns and begin with themes which are broader than the codes, in this sense some codes are within a single theme. Besides, some codes can be discarded because could not be important or do not appear very often. It is worth say that when the information is provided in a precise way, it can help the reader to be conscious at the moment to visualize a person who is involve in the process, in this way, the comprehension is clear in depth (Creswel, 2012).

7.5.4. Reviewing themes

Once the themes have been selected, it is necessary to review them. It allows to classify them according to the data collected in order to avoid leaving out important themes in the study and discard or change topics that are not so important or unnecessary (Caulfield, 2022).

7.5.5. Defining and naming themes

It is important to list the potential themes. Thus, the researchers must define and describe exactly what they mean with each theme and how it helps to comprehend the data so the name of the theme must be clear (Caulfield, 2022).

7.5.6. Writing up

It is the final step where the data is analyzed, so, for that it is important to have an introduction to establish the research question, objectives and approach. Furthermore, the methodology should be included to describe how the data was collected and tell how the thematic analysis was conducted. The findings are respectively in each theme so the themes are described according to how often they arise and what they mean. Finally, the conclusion explains the most relevant by showing how the analysis has answered the research question (Caulfield, 2022).

8. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The COVID 19 pandemic appeared between the years 2019-2020 causing a huge health, economic and educational crisis never seen before throughout the world. Ecuador was no stranger to this reality and as soon as the first case was presented in the country, measures were adopted by the COE and government authorities such as teleworking and virtual education to protect people's lives. However, the pandemic has been controlled and the return to normality has been carried out progressively, which is why the following question has arisen. What are the perceptions of English teachers from public educational institutions in the Cotopaxi province regarding the transition from virtual to face-to-face English teaching in the post-pandemic era?

For this reason, the present study was address to determine the perceptions of English teachers from public educational institutions in the Cotopaxi province regarding the transition from the virtual to face-to-face English teaching in the post-pandemic era of

2022. In this way, a qualitative approach with descriptive character oriented in an exploratory method was used because it allowed to collect qualitative data based on opinions, believes, experiences to the English teachers. It has been considered important due to it made possible provide suggestions to conserve the skills in the use of ICT developed by the teachers and how to hold teaching English (EFL) in hybrid classes in the post pandemic era in order to boost the educational process.

The results have showed that though teachers had challenges initially, they could adapt to the virtual classes which left them good perceptions of several technological tools for teaching English. Besides, the participants shared that the use of technology would be useful in post-pandemic classes. Hence, in order to use ICT, it is necessary to make adjustments that make it possible to make the most of this type of resource in hybrid classes in the post-pandemic era.

A positive attitude can be seen on the part of the participants regarding the return to face-to-face classes in the post-pandemic era and although the transition process has meant facing new challenges, they consider that the return to the classroom is neither good nor bad, but rather necessary. According to that, M003 mentions "Entonces la decisión de regresar a clases presenciales por parte de las autoridades, obviamente no es que ha sido ni buena ni mala, sino que era necesaria" [Then the decision to return to face -to -face classes by the authorities is obviously not that it has been neither good nor bad, but was necessary]. Furthermore, it has been considered necessary that the role of the teacher be that of a leader who guides knowledge in the return to face-to-face, since in virtual reality this role was assumed by the parents. Thus, F007 mentions that "Los estudiantes tenían la ayuda de los padres de familia en casa, ellos de una de una u otra manera, ellos podían verle que hagan las actividades" [The students had the help of parents at home, they in one way or another, they could see them do the activities].

Finally, the participants mentioned that it is possible and a good strategy to use technological tools in hybrid classes, since this would help to energize the class. Regarding to that, F004 mentions "Creo que sería una de las mejores estrategias para poder avanzar en la era tecnológica con los chicos, y este aprendizaje híbrido no solo nos

ayuda a los alumnos, nos ayuda a nosotros como docentes a irnos preparando en plataformas tecnológicas, en plataformas educativas, en plataformas de juegos, en plataformas de evaluación, para de esta manera nosotros tener un conocimiento amplio e ir enseñando a nuestros alumnos" [I think it would be one of the best strategies to advance in the technological era with the boys, and this hybrid learning not only helps us students, it helps us as teachers to prepare on technological platforms, on educational platforms, on platforms Games, on evaluation platforms, in this way we have broad knowledge and teach our students].

8.1. Category: Educational context

The educational context involves all the scholar community that is an environment where they received elements that support their learning process, so students work according these elements to get a proper development when they are learning and interacting with the teacher and classmates in order to have a productive scholar life (Getie, 2020).

This study has 7 participants who are divided into 5 females and 2 males, it can be mentioned that all of them work at public educational institutions in different levels of education such as primary, secondary and higher education that are located in rural zones from the Cotopaxi province. On the other hand, about their teaching experience, they have different years, M003 has worked 26 years, M002 10 years, F001 17 years, F004 15 years, F005 19 years, F006 5 years and F007 14 years. In this sense, it possible to consider that the participants who have more years, they probably are susceptible to detect and diagnostic quickly possible learning problems because they have worked with different groups with different ages, so, they have been involved in different contexts. On the other hand, the participants who have less years, they have probably recognized learning problems and needs but they are still getting used to that kind of situations, so they are constantly discovering the best ways to deal with it.

That is why, teaching experience is essential in the educational context because the teacher will decide how to deal with a variety of groups of students, he or she will provide

proper instructions for the students who must follow them to help them to promote a good learning environment (Bolarinwa et al., 2020).

Table 4: Description of participants codes

Code	Meaning	Observation
F001	English Teacher	Public university, 17 years of experience
M002	English Teacher	Public university, 10 years of experience
M003	English Teacher	Public university, 26 years of experience
F004	English Teacher	Public secondary, 15 years of experience
F005	English Teacher	Public secondary, 19 years of experience
F006	English Teacher	Public secondary, 5 years of experience
F007	English Teacher	Public primary, 14 years of experience

Note. In this table is described the professional information and codes of the participants to identify them in the study research.

Table 5: Categories and subcategories

Themes (categories)	Subcategories
Educational context	
Face-to-face- learning (Affective-motivational component)	Adaptation
	Motivation
	Interaction
	Colaborative learning
	Behavior
Teachers' role	Challenges
	English teaching needs
Virtual English teaching technological tools	Technological tools
	Methods/strategies
	Materials
	Activities and tasks
	Likes
Hybrid Education	Hybrid education
	Blended education

Note. In this table are showed the themes that are going to be analyzed.

8.2. Category: Face-to-face-learning

Face-to-face learning is classroom learning that is dependent on the presence of the teacher in class. Thus, students engage each other in spontaneous verbal communication in a permanent physical environment (Nasution et al., 2021).

8.2.1. Subcategory: Adaptation

Regarding the transitional process from virtual classes to face-to-face classes once the pandemic has been overcome since the government has impulse a vaccine program against COVID-19 virus in order to return the face-to-face activities. It can be mentioned that, the decision of returning to the classrooms it was considered as correct since it was not good or bad, but it was necessary. In this sense, M003 mentions that "La decisión de regresar a clases presenciales por parte de las autoridades, obviamente no es que ha sido ni buena ni mala, sino que era necesaria regresar el asunto porque ya se han ido cumpliendo una serie de factores, de hechos y de variables como el asunto de la vacunación" [The decision to return to face -to -face classes by the authorities is not that it has not been good or bad, but it was necessary to return the matter because a series of factors, facts and variables such as the matter have already been met of vaccination].

The transactional process has been not easy due to the return to the face-to-face classes has implied an adaptation process due to both the teachers and students were used to work from home in the virtual modality with the use of technology. However, the education in the post pandemic era has meant to return to the classrooms to work traditionally which involves many factors such as the use of traditional teaching materials, the planning for-face-to face classes, the transportation. According to the adaptation M003 claims "Regresar nuevamente a la presencialidad implica otras situaciones que hay que adaptarse, como por ejemplo el transporte y trasladarnos a los lugares de los sitios de educación. Dos años han sido largos en donde nos acostumbramos entre comillas a estar en la casita, ¿qué sé yo?, de nuestra cama a la computadora" [Returning to face -to -face implies other situations that must be adapted, such as transportation and move to the places of education sites. Two years have been long where we get used to in quotes to be

in the house, what do I know? From our bed to the computer]. These factors have affected the English teaching process specially in the attendance and punctuality issues so the teacher must be aware and empathic about students´ personal situations to come to classes.

Thus, M002 mentions that "Yo pienso que los profesores en general deberíamos primero aprender a ser empáticos, porque por el simple hecho de que no todos los estudiantes tienen los mismos, no sé, quizás la misma disposición para venir a la universidad a aprender (…) entonces, cuando un estudiante no puede llegar a sus clases a tiempo, nosotros debemos analizar el porqué de la situación". [I think that teachers in general should first learn to be empathic, because by the simple fact that not all students have the same, I don't know, perhaps the same disposition to come to university to learn. (…) so, when a student cannot reach their classes on time, we must analyze the reason for the situation]. In this way, it has not allowed to develop the English classes normally because if the students do not arrive on time, it difficult to develop the lesson plan activities totally or students could get blackouts (Seattlepi, 2021).

8.2.2. Subcategory: Motivation

Regarding motivation, it can be mentioned that there are some students with a low level of knowledge because they probably have problems outside the classroom, both family and economic, that worry them and make it difficult for them to concentrate and do the activities and therefore feeling demotivation. In this sense, M003 mentions that "El nivel de los estudiantes en cuanto al conocimiento del idioma inglés ha bajado, ha bajado. Entonces, yo pienso que les falta un poquito de motivación. No sé si hay problemas familiares, no sé si problemas económicos". [The level of students regarding the knowledge of the English language has fallen, it has fallen. So, I think they lack a little motivation. I don't know if there are family problems, I don't know if economic problems].

It is important to mention that the teacher needs to find ways to motivate students, either by adding games to learning activities or even activities where allow everyone to

participate, be part of the group, since depending on the circumstances, not all students have the same opportunity to access this type of situation. According to that, F006 mentions "Nosotros tratamos, no, con la ayuda de, de los jóvenes pasantes que puedan de pronto ellos interactuar con, con juegos, con, con actividades las cuales ellos se sientan motivados también y puedan participar, pero son pocos, es poco el número de estudiantes que, que accede a este tipo de, de situaciones y siempre como docentes tratamos de, de motivarles, tratamos de, de hacer que ellos traten de, de cambiar estas actitudes" [We try, no, with the help of, the young interns who can interact, with games, with activities in which they also feel motivated and can participate, but they are few, the number of students is small that accesses this type of, of situations and always as teachers we try to, to motivate them, we try to make them try to, to change these attitudes].

So, motivation is an important element in the classroom which was unexpected to be considered completely because teacher had problems to face them. Students must be in a place with the right conditions that they need, monitoring their learning process, not only control them but also creating a good environment where they feel sure about themselves (Rapanta et al., 2021).

8.2.3. Subcategory: Interaction

Regarding interaction, it is considered very important because students need to be in the same place, talking or asking to the teacher, in this way, they can feel motivated by physical contact with people around in the same classroom or different ones, therefore M003 mentions that " Es muy importante indicar que el contacto físico directo entre docentes y estudiantes es muy importantísimo y muchos de los estudiantes realmente veo que están entusiasmados el estar en contacto físico y no solamente con el docente, sino con sus compañeros de curso y los compañeros del resto de, en este caso nosotros, el resto de la Extensión Pujilí porque hay una oportunidad de tener una mejor interacción en el asunto¨ [It is very important to indicate that direct physical contact between teachers and students is very important and I see that many of the students are really enthusiastic about being in physical contact and not only with the teacher, but with their classmates and the

classmates of the rest of the class. , in this case we, the rest of the Pujilí Extension because there is an opportunity to have a better interaction in the matter].

However, while students interact each other, they can be very noisy, interrupting concentration, the interaction is positive but at the same time it can become an obstacle in the classroom. For this reason, F001 claims "El hecho de haber salido de la virtualidad, de haberse encontrado con amigos como que eso ha generado en los estudiantes un, digamos así, un aspecto positivo que quieren estar conversando, interactuando, pero eso a su vez ha generado también problemas en el comportamiento en el aula y yo mismo he podido determinar que los estudiantes hacen mucha bulla" [The fact of having left virtual reality, of having met friends, has generated in the students a, let's say, a positive aspect that they want to be talking, interacting, but that in turn has also generated behavior problems in Classroom, and I myself have been able to determine that the students make a lot of noise].

In this sense, interaction is another element important in the classroom since, it is a useful way to improve knowledge because students can discuss, ask and learn between them, as peers or as groups where each one contributes meaningfully (Rapanta et al., 2021).

8.2.4. Subcategory: Collaborative learning

Regarding collaborative learning, it is a way of completing activities in pairs or teams which allows to achieve learning outcomes where each student contributes to development to the work, they organize which part of the work is done by each student. So, the final result reflects the creativity, and effort of the members of the group (Ibrahim et al., 2015). In this sense, the use of technology in the classroom it could be considered as a useful strategy to work collaboratively due to it would allow to carry out interesting communicative tasks. In this way, F001 express "Hay actividades comunicativas muy interesantes como GAFI, Student A-Student B, Interviews, trabajo en parejas" [There are very interesting communication activities such as GAFI, Student A-Student B, Interviews, work in pairs]. Furthermore, the collaborative learning by the use of ICT facilitates the acquirement to the English as a second language because it helps to

dynamize the educational process. In this way, F007 considers "Se forma en grupos y por medio de canciones, por medio de dinámicas ellos aprenden de mejor manera este segundo idioma, que es el inglés" [It is formed in groups and through songs, through dynamics they learn this second language, which is English, in a better way].

The collaborative learning method encourages students to rely each other in their search for knowledge, making the learning process more meaningful and interesting. When students learn in a group, they do not feel alone and have the possibility to discuss and interact. (Ibrahim et al., 2015).

8.2.5. Subcategory: Behavior

Behavior is essential in the classroom because it depends on how students behave so that the teacher can establish a good learning environment, without interruptions. So, F006 claims "Hemos palpado eh, el comportamiento bastante diferente en los estudiantes, a comparación de, de años de años atrás, debido a que hemos notado que el comportamiento es bastante, bastante complicado, hay estudiantes que, que sólo vienen de pronto ah, ah molestar a los demás de pronto a hacer chistes, hacer bromas" [We've seen, uh, quite different behavior in students, compared to, from years of years ago, because we have noticed that the behavior is quite, quite complicated, there are students who, who just suddenly come ah, ah annoy others suddenly to make jokes, make jokes].

Besides, virtual classes can be one of the causes that students are impolite, they stopped doing some habits like be clean, be considered with the rest of classmates and then instead of that, for example, they do not clean the spaces where they eat or they are disorganized and that is why the teacher must face that kind of situations that can make other students uncomfortable. So F006 says "La virtualidad sí afectó si le afectó bastante el estudiante porque les vemos sin estos hábitos, sin esto, incluso se podría también decir hábitos de aseo ya que se ha notado de pronto en el ingreso a las aulas que muchos de los estudiantes tienden ah, ah dejar sus cosas desordenadas (…) son bastantes problemas que como docentes tenemos que, que lidiar y tratar de, de, de mejorar, no, en cuanto al comportamiento" [The virtuality did affect the student a lot because we see them without

these habits, without this, one could even say hygiene habits since it has suddenly been noticed upon entering the classroom that many of the students tend to ah, ah leaving their things untidy (…), there are many problems that as teachers we have to deal with and try to improve, no, in terms of behavior].

In this way, students´ behavior was a difficulty for English teachers because on virtual classes, students could not be monitored completely and even the teacher could not know exactly what they were doing instead of paying attention, so that, the sustainability of education was hindered. (Gherheș et al., 2021).

8.3. Category: Teachers´ role

About teachers´ role, English teacher have an important role in the classroom since they are the ones who provide the guidelines and explanations that help students to have an effective learning, in this sense, they learn step by step always with a guide (Makovec, 2018).

It can be mentioned that English teachers´ role must have an active role since they are constantly planning and analyzing which material or resources are proper for the students since the same not always be effective, contents or topics change, so M003 claims that "Los profesores, al igual que los estudiantes luego del COVID y el retorno a la presencialidad, ha hecho de que nos volvamos un poco más dinámicos, más activos, a diferencia de que de antes de la educación virtual, que si bien es cierto los docentes estábamos activos dentro de los aspectos intelectuales, generando materiales didácticos, pero las actividades no se podía realizar de forma más ampliamente activa debido a la distancia" [Teachers, like students after COVID and the return to face-to-face, have made us become a little more dynamic, more active, unlike before virtual education, which although it is true that teachers we were active within the intellectual aspects, generating didactic materials, but the activities could not be carried out in a more widely active way due to the distance].

Teacher´s role had to be rethought because it was necessary to redesign learning tasks that supported students in a different environment, in this sense, it was considered an active role, teachers used new pedagogical resources to improve the learning process (Rapanta et al., 2021).

8.3.1. Subcategory: Challenges

Challenges are always present in the education, it means, virtual classes or face to face learning, the schedule, the contents and the materials must be adapted before use them in the classroom in order to carry out a class in a clear way, but materials like worksheets difficult to save time or organization because are a traditional material or even listening activities cannot be developed properly due to the environment where is so probable that students just talk or interrupt the class with noise. Therefore, F001 mentions "Cargar papeles e incluso hasta el punto de llevar papelotes, que es un recurso didáctico ósea antiguo, las copias impresas, no poder proyectar el audio en la bulla que hace en el caso de la enseñanza del inglés" [Carrying papers and even to the point of carrying flipcharts, which is an ancient bone teaching resource, printed copies, not being able to project the audio in the noise that makes in the case of teaching English].

Some challenges appeared for English teachers, like socio-economic gaps because on virtual classes, there were available many resources to use in a class, making it more dynamic and also supporting the teacher with the process of marks, however, in face-to-face classes, those learning materials could not be available completely and even teachers had to resort to traditional ways to impart a class (Rapanta et al., 2021).

Other type of challenges to consider is low knowledge by students because it was common that on virtual classes, students had relatives that help them to do the tasks so they did not it by their own and when they returned to face-to-face classes, it was recognized that they did not show the same knowledge that in virtual classes. Therefore, F004 says ¨En la era virtual hay que ser francos y sinceros, había muchos alumnos que tenían familiares ya con un alto grado de conocimiento, entonces simplemente se veía que ellos eran los que daban, les daban haciendo los deberes y el momento en que

llegamos a la presencialidad y se decidió trabajar (…) en el aula, sí, porque en el aula era más práctico que mandarles a hacer los deberes, se vio el bajo conocimiento, se vio que no era lo que ellos reflejaban en forma virtual" [In the virtual era you have to be frank and sincere, there were many students who already had relatives with a high degree of knowledge, so it was simply seen that they were the ones who gave, they gave them doing their homework and the moment we arrived in person and it was decided to work (...) in the classroom, yes, because in the classroom it was more practical than sending them to do their homework, the low knowledge was seen, it was seen that it was not what they reflected in a virtual way].

8.3.2. Subcategory: English teaching needs

About English teaching needs, it is important to mention that to teach English, the teacher must be conscious about the possible inconvenient that can arise while students are not honest, it means, they can cheat with their homework or test by using technological tools, especially social media where is easy to send the answers, and then when they are asked, they do not know what to answer. So M003 mentions that "Los estudiantes donde se haya dado cierto tipo de habilidades con la tecnología, pero un cierto tipo de habilidades que son fraudulentas como el sentido, por ejemplo, de que los estudiantes se les pedía intervenciones en la modalidad virtual y los estudiantes simplemente no actúan no actuaban" [Students where certain types of skills with technology have been given, but a certain type of skills that are fraudulent, such as the sense, for example, that students were asked to intervene in the virtual modality and students simply do not act did not participate]. Therefore, the teacher must be conscious regarding possible difficulties in the classroom (Santana, 2015).

8.4. Category: Virtual English teaching technological tools

There can a variety of technological tools that support the English teaching because the contents are presented in a dynamic way and then catching the interest of students who are more engaged to carry out academic activities. Some examples like Kahoot which presents the information in a colorful or google docs which allow students to work in

teams by editing and sharing in the same document in real time. However, technology can interrupt the learning process, social media like Facebook that can distract students easily.

In this sense, F005 considers that "Kahoot, por ejemplo, el programa Quizzes, live worksheets, también he implementado hojas en Google para trabajo colaborativo y etc. Solo cito como ejemplos, el único inconveniente fue que a veces los estudiantes, ellos como que saben utilizar un WhatsApp o Facebook correctamente, pero no así las herramientas digitales para hacer un trabajo, por ejemplo, al elaborar un PowerPoint, a trabajar en recursos compartidos con carpetas de Google" [Kahoot, for example, the Quizzes program, live worksheets, I have also implemented sheets in Google for collaborative work and so on, I only cite as examples. The only drawback was that sometimes the students, they kind of know how to use WhatsApp or Facebook correctly, but not the digital tools to do a job, for example, when preparing a PowerPoint, to work on shared resources with Google folders].

It can be highlighted that technological tools not only support English teaching with specific activities like online whiteboards, record voice, sending messages in groups or collaborative writing, but also in general ways like organizing a whole class with the respective materials to use by the teacher. Teachers needed to get trained in order to learn about how to use technological tools that allow them to adapt the contents using online platform and thus, getting new ways of assessment (Sevy-Biloon, 2021).

8.4.1. Subcategory: Methods/strategies

There can be multiple methods and strategies according to how the teachers thinks of students can understand better or how the contents can be presented clearly, so it can be mentioned that students take into account the information but also if it is presented in a visual way, making them react to how they received the information. Therefore, F001 mentions "Nos hemos acostumbrado también a reaccionar con los dibujitos, en vez de cualquier cosa, entonces otra forma de comunicación y de pronto cómo afecta eso también es otra incógnita porque los estudiantes ya no están leyendo mucho, sino más bien leyendo

visualmente" [We have also gotten used to reacting with the little drawings, instead of anything, then another form of communication and suddenly how that affects is also another unknown because the students are no longer reading much, but rather reading visually]. Education has some aspects where the teachers must be conscious of how they show the learning content, helping students to understand it in a clearly way (Gherheș et al., 2021).

8.4.2. Subcategory: Materials

Regarding materials, it is important to consider that the way of how the activities can be presented, influent on the students, since it must be more organized and according to the difficulty since all students do not have the same level. So, Liveworksheets is a website that offers a lot of material to teach English instead of books, giving thus, a variety of presentations of contents. So, F001 claims that "Live Worksheets, que ayudó creo mucho a muchos profesores de inglés porque no podíamos trabajar con los libros de inglés. Entonces Live Worksheets encontramos bastante material para la enseñanza según el nivel y se podía aplicar eso" [Live Worksheets, which helped a lot of English teachers I think because we couldn't work with the English books. So Live Worksheets we found a lot of material for teaching according to the level and that could be applied].

Online materials can offer several advantages because students can enjoy the way of how contents are designed according to what they know, also when the activities must be delivered, they can carry out at their own pace, since sometimes, to deliver them, the teacher asks for a date and a place, but with online materials, the limitations such as transportation or having to move to the agreed place, disappear (Gherheș et al., 2021).

8.4.3. Subcategory: Activities and tasks

Activities and tasks are the main way to practice what is learned, so they must be interactive in order to make students motivated and promoting tasks which are not boring.

In this sense, F005 mentions that "agregar actividades interactivas dentro de software donde el estudiante se mantiene activo y motivado".

In the same way, some technological tools such as Liveworksheet and Google Drive were used for assessment and easy activities were designed according to the level of difficult of students who had internet connection in virtual classes. So F007 claims "Lo que hemos trabajado en, por ejemplo, en evaluación hemos trabajado con las Liveworksheet, el Google drive, ahí hemos estado realizando actividades, las más facilitas, para las más fáciles sería para los estudiantes que tenían acceso a internet" [The Google drive, there we have been carrying out activities, the easiest ones, for the easiest ones it would be for the students who had access to the internet]. Students can prefer activities that promote interaction, so they feel more active at the moment to work, but teachers need enough time to prepare or plan these kind of activities (Rapanta et al., 2021).

8.4.4. Subcategory: Likes

Preferences can help the teacher to select which resources or technological tools support better the contents of a class and which he or she is more familiarized such as Jamboard, Flip Grid, Voice Street, Google Docs and Whatsapp because they offered a lot of characteristics that allow create interesting activities and promote communication between the teacher and students. Therefore, F001 considers that "Yo ya me sabía muchas de las herramientas (…) y dentro de esto hay variedad, entre las que más de he utilizado Jamboard, Flipgrid, Voice Street. También se ha utilizado el Google Docs para lo que es la escritura colaborativa, se utiliza también Zoom, que ayuda bastante para la interacción haciendo en los breakout rooms y WhatsApp, que ha sido una herramienta de comunicación muy útil" [I already knew many of the tools (...) and within this there is a variety, among which I have used Jamboard, Flipgrid, Voice Street the most. Google Docs has also been used for collaborative writing, Zoom is also used, which helps a lot for interaction in breakout rooms, and WhatsApp, which has been a very useful communication tool].

Students can show preferences about how they want to learn, technological tools allow them to work with their classmates without interact so directly, in the case they are shy or they do not have confidence to talk face to face or in public (Gherheş et al., 2021).

8.5. Category: Hybrid education

Hybrid education involve aspects of traditional classes and technological tools but specifying that everything is carried out inside the classroom following the scholar schedule of face-to- face-classes in a synchronous way (Singh et al., 2021). Hybrid education specifically in teaching English EFL is an important option to keep teaching and learning as long as the teacher interact with the whole class, reinforcing the topics with technological tools and practice constantly. In this sense, F005 mentions "Yo pienso que sí, una educación híbrida para inglés, me refiero a lo siguiente y como me baso en un ejemplo usted explica una clase, usted interactúa en la clase (…) entonces yo haría una clase que sentaría la clase introductoria con una clase y mi trabajo asincrónico sería dejarles el comentario de un video" [I think so, a hybrid education for English, I am referring to the following and since I am based on an example you explain a class, you interact in the class (...) then I would make a class that would sit the introductory class with a class and my asynchronous job would be to leave you the comment of a video].

Hybrid education takes the most beneficial of virtual education and face to face education and thus, supporting the education system in the new normal where teachers and students have needed to adapt how they work (Gherheş et al., 2021). In this sense, there are educational institutions such as universities that are appling hybrid modality in their classrooms in order to boost the English classes and achieve a meaningful learning. According to that, M003 claims "Ahora estamos creo que, con el Empower para la enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés, en donde utilizamos la plataforma de Cambridge y realmente personalmente considero que este Empower se está trabajando en una modalidad virtual y presencial combinada en donde que permite que el aprendizaje del idioma inglés sea un poco más efectivo" [Now we are, I think, with the Empower for teaching and learning English, where we use the Cambridge platform and I really personally believe that this Empower is being worked on in a combined virtual and face-

to-face modality where it allows the learning of the English language be a little more effective].

Hybrid education can contribute meaningfully in the technological era since provide assessment platforms and interactive games that help students and teacher to prepare and get a deep knowledge while they have a lot of practice (Gamage et al., 2022). Therefore, F004 claims "Creo que sería una de las mejores estrategias para poder avanzar en la era tecnológica con los chicos, y este aprendizaje híbrido no solo nos ayuda a los alumnos, nos ayuda a nosotros como docentes a irnos preparando en plataformas tecnológicas, en plataformas educativas, en plataformas de juegos, en plataformas de evaluación, para de esta manera nosotros tener un conocimiento amplio e ir enseñando a nuestros alumnos" [I think it would be one of the best strategies to be able to advance in the technological era with the boys, and this hybrid learning not only helps the students, it helps us as teachers to prepare ourselves on technological platforms, on educational platforms, on platforms of games, in evaluation platforms, so that in this way we have a broad knowledge and go on teaching our students].

It is important to take into account the benefits of hybrid English classes since this education model would help to enhance the skills of teachers and students since there will be activities that require the use of traditional teaching materials as well as activities through the use of technology such as conversations with native speakers, this is important because not all students learn in the same way. F006 considers that "Ojalá en algún momento se pueda dar y tratar de, aplicar, estas dos modalidades que y sacar lo mejor de ellos, sacar las ventajas de la virtualidad, las ventajas de la presencialidad, unificar y si de pronto motivar a los estudiantes" [Hopefully at some point it will be possible to give and try to apply these two modalities and get the best out of them, take advantage of virtuality, the advantages of face-to-face, unify and if suddenly motivate students].

Furthermore F006 adds that "De pronto habrá algunos estudiantes que, que aprenda eh, de pronto o mejor con el uso de recursos, el uso de, de, de juegos, de pronto, en lo que se refiere a las herramientas que internet nos proporciona, habrá otros que de pronto en las

aulas, no en las aulas con las con lo que nosotros utilizamos de pronto material, carteles, flashcards" [Perhaps there will be some students who learn, uh, suddenly or better with the use of resources, the use of, of, of games, suddenly, in regards to the tools that the Internet provides us, there will be others who soon in the classrooms, not in the classrooms with which we suddenly use material, posters, flashcards]. Each student is a different world because not everyone learns in the same way, so it is important to adapt to the needs of students to achieve meaningful learning (Gherheș et al., 2021).

Hybrid English classes, by combining the best of technological tools, have been considered a significant contribution in language teaching, which is why several first world countries have chosen to implement this type of education in their educational system (Doghonadze et al., 2021). In this regard, M002 considers that "Me parece que es interesante porque, bueno, tomemos en cuenta a otros países que son que son muy grandes, extensos, como China, Estados Unidos, Alemania, ellos tienen esa modalidad hace años y les ha resultado, pero no sé si en la actualidad en nuestro país nuestros estudiantes se comprometan a seguir esta modalidad" [It seems to me that it is interesting because, well, let's take into account other countries that are very large, extensive, such as China, the United States, Germany, they have had this modality for years and it has worked for them, but I don't know if it is currently in our country our students commit to follow this modality].

For this reason, to make possible a hybrid education in the public sectors, it is important to be aware that Education Ministry must provide the necessary resources that allow English teachers to work in hybrid classes with the students in a better way taking advantage from all what technology can provide in the educational context. So F007 expreses "Es muy importante lo que es la tecnología, nosotros debemos no sé, las autoridades deben facilitarnos o debe haber desde el Ministerio de Educación que debe haber en cada institución un laboratorio de inglés en la escuela y en el colegio, porque de esa manera ellos van a aprender de mejor manera" [It is very important, what technology is, we must I don't know, the authorities must provide us or there must be from the Ministry of Education that there must be an English laboratory in each institution in the school and in the college, because of that way they will learn better].

Therefore, Hybrid education is considered the education of the future since technology advances every day, so constant training favors being prepared for the future (Abu Hasan & Hashim, 2022). F004 adds that "Como le dije, yo empecé a practicar en clases presenciales, trabajos en línea para que ellos mismos sepan la presión y a lo que vamos a futuro, porque dentro de la universidad usted sabe que las clases presenciales que envió al trabajo en línea tienen hasta tal hora, a tal fecha y si no salados" [As I told you, I began to practice in face-to-face classes, online work so that they themselves know the pressure and what we are going for in the future, because within the university you know that the face-to-face classes that you sent to the online work have until such time , to such date and if not salted].

In this way, it is important to mention that hybrid teaching is an excellent option since it allows to enhance the abilities of the students. Therefore, it is important to carry out an adequate planning of the classes in the hybrid education modality. F001 mentions that "Entonces planificar un proceso adecuado es importante, pero definitivamente eso es lo que veo que devela creo la educación, el aprendizaje del idioma inglés en el futuro, esta modalidad combinada" [So, planning an adequate process is important, but that is definitely what I see that education reveals, I think the learning of the English language in the future, this combined modality].

In this way, hybrid education would help not only to enhance the class, but would also favor the preservation of skills in the use of technology developed by teachers, since it is considered important to take advantage of these skills and contribute to quality education (Sevy-Biloon, 2021). Therefore, F003 mentions that "Correcto, yo estoy de acuerdo con esa situación. De hecho, la tecnología que hemos aprendido no podemos dejarla en el olvido" [Correct, I agree with that situation. In fact, the technology we have learned cannot be forgotten].

9. RESEARCH IMPACTS (TECHNICAL, SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, EDUCATION OR ECONOMIC)

This project has a positive impact on the educational field and especially on the teaching English EFL, since by making teachers aware of the importance and benefits of taking advantage of the skills in the use of technological tools developed by English teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, by combining technological technologies in virtuality with traditional teaching methods in hybrid English classes, it is possible to enhance the process, make it more fun and improve the achievement of learning outcomes, thus allowing to achieve a quality education. In addition, since education is a social process, this study has an impact on the social ambit, since by improving the quality of education it is possible to comprehensively train useful professionals for society. (Gherheș et al., 2021).

10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1. Conclusions

It can be concluded that the pandemic caused by COVID-19 allowed both teachers and students to develop skills in the use of technology which contributed to the development of a synchronous educational process in Emergency Remote Teaching ERT which tried to resemble face-to-face classes, and thus, differing from traditional online education, and at the present time, the use of the technology in the English classes is the way to move forward to the future.

The reality of educational institutions from the perceptions of English teachers makes it possible to show that the participants agree that there is an imbalance in terms of resources that make it possible to combine technological tools and traditional teaching methods, since on the one hand, in higher education it is mentioned that for English classes they work in a face-to-face way and virtually with platforms such as Cambridge, in secondary and primary institutions they would like to implement the hybrid modality since it is

considered the education of the future but they see it as distant due to the lack of resources and support from the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education.

The decision to return to face-to-face classes is considered correct and necessary since interaction with students is important. However, one disadvantage is that by being used to virtual education, students have lost study habits and have come to classrooms with a lack of knowledge and it is necessary to level them. Therefore, the participants agree that the combination of technological tools and traditional teaching methods in a post-pandemic hybrid education would favor the teaching of English and enhance the skills of the students, for which they consider the hybrid modality of education as a good strategy and that it is feasible to apply it in the classroom.

10.2. Recommendations

It is recommended that authorities and English teachers are conscious about the importance to use materials or resources that involve technological tools in the classroom, in this way, it is more probably to engage students during the learning process.

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education take an interest in the benefits of the use of technology in the teaching of EFL English and promote programs where students are equipped with laboratories or at least one electronic device with internet, which allows them to carry out carry out a quality hybrid education that guarantees the achievement of learning achievements in the education of the future in the post-pandemic era.

It is recommended as much as possible that teachers try to use technological tools in their face-to-face classes since the skills developed by English teachers during the pandemic cannot be spoiled, but rather it is necessary to encourage them to conserve and apply in a hybrid modality that allows avoiding monotonous and boring classes and guarantees a quality education in terms of teaching EFL English.

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12. ANNEX

Annex 1: Data collection instrument

English Teacher Interview Guideline

Instructions

• The interviewer will introduce himself with her name and surname and will explain to the interviewee that the purpose of the interview is to collect data for research purposes only through work practice.

• It will possibly explain the reason and the importance of the interviewee's participation, as well as thank them for their collaboration.

• It will be explained that the information is confidential and therefore their participation will be anonymous.

• It will be mentioned that his honesty in answering questions would be highly valued and that he is free not to answer any question that makes him uncomfortable.

• That the questions have to do with aspects related to his teaching activity**.**

Informative Data

Interviewer: ………………..…… Interviewed : …………................

Date: …………………….......... Place: ………………….............

Objective

To distinguish the perceptions of English teachers about Teaching English (EFL) in the return to face-to-face classes post COVID19 compared to the virtual education in public educational institutions in the Cotopaxi province.

The Interview is Divided by Segments

General Information Block

Personal information

1. Could you tell me about your personal life, that is information related to your demographic data, name, age, gender, place of residence, and so on?

Specific information block

Institutional Information

2. Could you tell me about your professional life as an English teacher?

Teaching component

3. How have you felt the transition and the process of adapting to the new normality in the post-COVID-19 era in the teaching of English, do you consider the decision to return to face-to-face classes timely?

4. Do you think that the role of English teachers would be different post-COVID-19?

5. What are the challenges you have had to face in the return to face-to-face education as an English teacher in the post-COVID 19 era compared to virtual education?

6. What kind of skills, knowledge, or dispositions should English teachers have in post-COVID-19 education?

7. How have you perceived the behavior, commitment, motivation, interaction, and effort of your students in teaching English in the return to presence after COVID-19 compared to virtual education?

8. What have been your perceptions regarding the use of technology in teaching English in the post-pandemic?

9. Could you mention what kind of technological tools and teaching resources have you used in virtual education for teaching the English language during the pandemic for different purposes such as communication, interaction, presentation material, learning material, homework assignment, and evaluation? Have you had any difficulties using them?

10. Do you consider that the application of technology in the classroom to promote interaction and collaborative work in the teaching of the English language in the post-COVID-19 era is feasible?

11. What do you consider to be the main advantages and disadvantages that could be highlighted regarding the teaching of the English language in the return to face-to-face education in the post-pandemic era compared to virtual education?

12. Do you consider the possibility of a hybrid teaching-learning process of the English language in post-COVID-19 education feasible?

 Annex 2: Informed consent

Informed Consent

Title of Research: Online or Face-to-Face Classes: Perceptions of English Teachers from Public Educational Institutions in the Cotopaxi Province in The Post-Pandemic Era.

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Introduction and Purpose of the Study

With the outbreak of the virus known as Covid -19, the world was forced to look for various ways to carry on with daily life. Thus, the educational field is not oblivious to this reality. So, the teaching of the English language was transferred to the virtual modality, which allowed the development of skills and abilities in the use of technology. However, the pandemic is being controlled and has been gradually presenting new challenges for English Teachers about English as a foreign language (EFL) at public educational institutions in the Cotopaxi province in the post-pandemic era.

In this sense, the purpose of this study is: To explore the perceptions of English teachers about the teaching of English as a foreign language in the return to face-to-face classes in

the post COVID19 era compared to virtual education in public educational institutions in the Cotopaxi province.

Description of the Research

The present study is focused on knowing what are the perceptions of English teachers from public educational institutions about the return to face-to-face classes in comparison to virtual education due to there is not enough amount of information related to this topic and it is consider important in order to achieve a clear understanding about the challenges, pros and cons that the English teachers must face in this transition process.

Subject Participation

This study comprises an estimated number of seven participants: four elementary-middle school English teachers and three higher education English teachers located in the Cotopaxi Province. The participants are experienced in the field of teaching EFL English and were selected because they have firsthand experience teaching in face-to-face and virtual environments. Therefore, the participants have the necessary perceptions to lead the present study.

So, the participants are going to play an important role in this study, because they are the main source of information that provide relevant thoughts about the transition process from virtual education to face to face classes. In this sense, the participants are going to answer a semi- structured interview which consists of 12 open-ended questions related the return to face-to-face classes in the post pandemic era. In this way, the participants will have an estimated time of 15-20 minutes to answer the semi-structured interview.

Potential Benefits

Participants could achieve a better understanding about the innovation of teaching English EFL by using technological resources in face-to-face environments. Besides, it could establish a precedent for future research about the use of strategies and methodologies to teach English in the post pandemic era.

Confidentiality

All data collected from your participation will be anonymous. Hence, the participants' names will be replaced by codes in all stages of the research and for any reason the information will be revealed, researchers are engaged to carefully protect the personal

data and it will be used only for research purposes. Once the information has been fully analyzed, it won't be used for any other purpose.

Authorization

By signing this form, you authorize the use and disclosure, publication, and/or presentation of the information provided in the semi-structured interview via records and findings found during the research process for the development of this educational study,

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. The researchers will be completely grateful for your participation. However, if you decide to withdraw from your collaboration with the study at any time, you are free to do so without any kind of penalty.

Cost

Your participation is voluntary and therefore you will not receive any type of financial remuneration for your collaboration with the investigative process.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this research program

☐ **Yes**

☐ **No**

I understand that I will be given a copy of this signed Consent Form.

Participant's name: C.I.	Signature:	Date:
Carlos Efrain Mena Alvarez **Researcher's name:** 1723751804 **C.I.**	Signature:	Date:
Francisco Sebastian Teran Sotelo **Researcher's name** 1004814602 **C.I.**	Signature:	Date: