

The Influence of Gender and Socioeconomic Background in the Learning Process of English as a
Foreign Language among University Students during Pandemic Times

Dayra Alejandra Medina Becerra

Trabajo de Grado para Optar al Título de Licenciada en Lenguas Extranjera

Director

Silvia Andrea Tarazona Ariza

Ma. Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

Universidad Industrial de Santander

Facultad de Ciencias Humanas

Escuela de Idiomas

Bucaramanga

2022

Dedication

To my mother, father, and sister, for their support throughout this journey, this paper is yours.

To my husband and daughter, for inspiring me to work harder every day and be a better version of me, this paper is yours.

To the participants of this study, without your time and commitment, this project would not be the same.

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge the educational effort of the professors of the program that have impacted me and my peers during this process. Besides, I thank Ma. Silvia Tarazona for her guidance and support during every stage of this project.

Content List

Introduction	11
1. Objectives	13
1.1 General Objective.....	13
1.2 Specific Objectives.....	13
2. Body of the Study.....	14
2.1 Background (State of the art).....	14
2.2 Theoretical Background	15
2.2.1 Gender	15
2.2.2 Social Stratification	17
2.2.3 Teacher's Awareness on Individual Characteristics	19
2.3 Methodology.....	20
2.3.1 Participants.....	20
2.3.2 Research Design.....	21
2.3.3 Data Collection Instruments	21
2.3.4 Activities and Schedule	22
2.4 Results	23
2.4.1 Students' Questionnaire.....	24
2.4.1.1 Socioeconomic Information.....	24
2.4.1.2 English Experience.....	27
2.4.1.4 The Influence of Gender in the Students' English Learning Process..	30
2.4.2 Students' Focal Group.....	34

2.4.2.1 Gender in the Students' Learning Process in Remote Presentiality.....	34
2.4.2.2 Social Stratification in the Students' Learning Process in Remote Presentiality.	35
2.4.3 Teachers Interviews.....	35
2.4.4 Teachers Focal Group.....	42
2.4.4.1 Gender in the English Learning Process during Remote Presentiality.....	42
2.4.4.2 Social Stratification in the English Learning Process during Remote presentiality.....	43
2.5. Discussion.....	43
2.5.1 To examine how gender and social stratification of students are perceived by teachers in the remote presentiality EFL classroom during the COVID-19 pandemics	43
2.5.1.1 Teachers' Perception on Gender as an Ascribed Characteristic.....	44
2.5.1.2 Teachers' Perception on Social Stratification as an Acquired Characteristic.....	45
2.5.2 To identify the extent to which these specific individual characteristics affect the English learning process among University students in a distance learning modality in a global pandemic	45
2.5.3 To determine if the social stratification of students is a critical aspect to succeed in the learning process of English	46
2.5.4 To measure if the gender of students plays a determinant role in the participation and engagement in the classroom activities	47
3. Conclusions.....	47
References	50
Appendixes	54

Table List

	Pág.
Table 1 <i>Participants perceptions on remote presentality</i>	49

Figure List

	Pág.
Figure 1 <i>Age</i>	24
Figure 2 <i>Gender</i>	25
Figure 3 <i>Students' Socioeconomic Strata</i>	26
Figure 4 <i>Students' English Level at School</i>	27
Figure 5 <i>Students Who Have Studied in a Language Institute</i>	28
Figure 6 <i>Equality in Terms of Gender in EFL classes</i>	30
Figure 7 <i>Students' Thoughts on their Teachers Gender</i>	32
Figure 8 <i>Participation in Terms of Gender</i>	32

Appendix List

Appendix A. Student's Questionnaire	54
Appendix B. Student's Focal Group Interview	65
Appendix C. Teachers' Interview	66
Appendix D. Teachers' Focal Group Interview	68
Appendix E. Consent Form	70

Resumen

Título: La Influencia del Género y el Origen Socioeconómico en el Proceso de Aprendizaje del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera en Estudiantes Universitarios en Tiempos de Pandemia*

Autor: Dayra Alejandra Medina Becerra**

Palabras Clave: Género, Adscrito, Adquirido, Socioeconómico, COVID-19, Sociolingüística

Descripción: Las características que se utilizan en la sociedad para etiquetar a los demás varían desde las características que adquirimos a lo largo de la vida y los rasgos con los que nacemos (Burr, 2015); estos atributos se conocen como características adquiridas y adscritas, respectivamente. En situaciones de crisis, como la actual pandemia de COVID-19, estas características pueden verse drásticamente afectadas, y así, sus efectos en los procesos individuales y sociales así lo reflejan. Más específicamente, este estudio considera la influencia del género como una característica adscrita y el nivel socioeconómico como una característica adquirida en el contexto de la emergencia por COVID-19 en las aulas de inglés como lengua extranjera en un entorno universitario. Para ello se consideró dos tipos de población: docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera y estudiantes de una universidad de Bucaramanga. El proceso de recolección de datos en la población estudiantil se llevó a cabo en dos etapas: primero, la aplicación de un cuestionario y luego la participación en un grupo focal. Los participantes- docentes, realizaron con una entrevista y un cuestionario y un grupo focal que siguió este instrumento. Los hallazgos de este estudio indican que existe una clara percepción entre los estudiantes sobre la influencia del estrato socioeconómico en la calidad de su proceso de aprendizaje del inglés. Por otro lado, el género no fue tan concluyente en su desempeño en el aula de EFL durante la pandemia. Sin embargo, se encontró que los docentes percibieron algunas diferencias en el papel que juega el género en el aula al momento de aplicar estrategias de participación.

* Trabajo de Grado

**Facultad de Ciencias Humanas. Escuela de Idiomas. Director: Silvia Andrea Tarazona. MA. Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

Abstract

Title: The Influence of Gender and the Socioeconomic Background in the Learning Process of English as a Foreign Language among University Students during Pandemic Times *

Author(s): Dayra Alejandra Medina Becerra **

Key Words: Gender, Ascribed, Acquired, Socioeconomic, COVID-19, Sociolinguistics

Description: Characteristics that are used in society to label others vary from features we acquire throughout life and traits we are born with (Burr, 2015); these attributes are known as acquired and ascribed characteristics, respectively. In situations of crisis, like the current COVID-19 pandemic, these characteristics can be drastically affected, and thus, their effects on individual and social processes reflect it. More specifically, this study considers the influence of gender as an ascribed characteristic and socioeconomic status as an acquired characteristic in the context of the COVID-19 emergency in EFL classrooms in a university setting. In order to do this, two types of the population were considered: EFL teachers and students from a university in Bucaramanga. The data collection process in the student population was carried out in two stages: first, the usage of a questionnaire, and then the participation in a focal group. Regarding teachers, they were intervened with an interview, a questionnaire and a focal group that followed this instrument. The findings of this study indicate that there is a clear perception among students on the influence of the socioeconomic strata on the quality of their English learning process. On the other hand, gender was not conclusive in their EFL classroom performance during the pandemic. However, it was found that teachers perceived some differences in the role that gender played in the classroom when applying strategies for participation.

* Degree Work

** Facultad de Ciencias Humanas. Escuela de Idiomas. Director: Silvia Andrea Tarazona. MA. Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

Introduction

People around the world are labelled under different characteristics; some of these features are defined by the society and the culture they were born in. According to Ferrante (2012), almost every feature observed by others has been used to categorize people. Characteristics such as face traits, weight, height, sexual preference, age, scores in academic areas and more, are classified depending on social constructs, that comprehend how individuals understand and perceive the world and their role in the society (Burr, 2015).

Certainly, these characteristics impact people's identities, influencing individual's own perceptions and social status in the society they live in. Fearon (1999) provides a comprehensible idea based on the results of his study, in which two points of view regarding the concept of identity are presented: Firstly, it constitutes a set of people categorized by some characteristics observed in them. Second, identity refers to fixed features a person is proud of. For instance, physical traits, academic achievements, and sexual orientation among others. Deriving from the concept of identity, the belief that established features represent, adjoins the idea of stereotyping. This conception is a method people use to represent and evaluate others under certain terms; individuals are not considered by the features they are proud of, instead, they are reduced to a category resulting in stereotypes (Pickering, 2007). Therefore, both concepts show the impact these characteristics have on individuals and how they are defined by society.

In Sociolinguistics, the previously mentioned factors are part of a wider classification known as ascribed and acquired individual characteristics. According to Wardhaugh (2015), the study of individual's daily lives and how language and media mediate in it, take part in society rules, laws and policies which address language. From this definition, it is concluded that Sociolinguistics

implies a linguistic and a sociological component in their branch of study. In the field of social studies, ascribed characteristics are those features people are born with, develop over time, and are attributed to them with no choice of their own, for instance, sex, gender, nationality, ethnicity, and others. Moreover, achieved or acquired characteristics are those with personal choice from the individuals, such as marital status, wage, education level among others (Ferrante, 2012).

Ascribed and acquired characteristics serve as a basis for the development of this study; thus, this categorization was chosen due to limited research on this field in the Colombian context. This classification is narrowed to the ascribed individual characteristics of gender and the acquired individual characteristics of social stratification for this research project. In addition, it is necessary to clarify that currently, there are few but significant differences between some of the terms used on this study; specifically, gender and sex.

According to Eckert (2013) both concepts presented differ from each other; since on the one hand, gender is not a feature individuals have at the moment they are born, it is rather a mental state or a matter of personal identity. On the other hand, sex is a category given based on biology and the reproductive potential of individuals. Even though this is not the main aspect of this study, it is important to take these differences into account in the categorization proposed in order to create an understandable conceptualization of the factors involved in the study, and to include transgender individuals.

This study seeks to explore the influence of individual aspects such as gender and social stratification in the learning process of English as a foreign language during the COVID-19 pandemic the world is currently facing. Since the beginning of the pandemic, several fields of

study such as education, health, politics among others have been challenged. UNESCO (2020) acknowledges the health emergency by stating how the pandemic influenced the closure of face-to-face facilities and activities developed within it, in around 190 countries to prevent the spread of the virus.

From the blockade of educational institutions, in situ activities were transformed into virtual and asynchronous lessons. In addition, Basilaia et al (2020) mention the use of online libraries, guidelines, resources, TV broadcasts, guidelines, online channels, and video lectures, which were the strategies proposed by educational institutions in 96 countries to contribute to the students' educational process during pandemic times.

From the new reality in education, it becomes more attractive to inquire about the influence of gender and social stratification in pandemic times. Since COVID-19 has introduced new teaching and learning dynamics, it becomes necessary to explore the role gender, and social stratification plays in the current educational context.

1. Objectives

In order to guide this study, the following objectives are proposed:

1.1 General Objective

To explore whether gender and social stratification influence the learning process of English in students enrolled at university level during the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

1.2 Specific Objectives

- To examine how gender and social stratification of students are perceived by teachers in the remote presentiality EFL classroom during the COVID-19 pandemics.

- To identify the extent to which these specific individual characteristics affect the English learning process among university students in a remote presentiality modality during a global pandemic.
- To determine if the social stratification of students is a critical aspect to succeed in the English learning process.
- To explore if the gender of students plays a determinant role in the participation and engagement in the classroom activities.

2. Body of the Study

2.1 Background (State of the art)

Focusing on the Colombian educational context, research on this area has been conducted emphasizing the role gender and social stratification have within an EFL context; however, these characteristics have not been classified as Ascribed and Acquired, but they are rather called internal and external factors of the learning process. Roldán (2016) undertakes a study which highlights the influence of emotional factors in EFL students' learning process, and how learners have not been trained properly to deal with negative emotions during their practice in the same field of study.

Furthermore, Roncancio (2018) proposes a study which attempts to recognize the factors influencing the students' English learning process. The author's statement is aligned with the general education law 115 (1994). In this project, 24 students were partaking in the intensive program at Power English (non-formal academic language center) located in Zipaquirá, Cundinamarca. The relation among the factors and the effective learning process in the Language Institute is the objective of this study. In this theoretical framework, the classification is divided

into internal and external factors. This classification is given by the author, and takes into account the role of the individual factors found in the students' English learning process.

Similarly, Diaz (2014) aims to identify the difficulties students experienced in their English learning process. The participants of this study were chosen by their teachers from different social strata and academic performances to promote variety among the students. The classification provided by the author: internal and external factors, is presented in the background of the study and depict the factors regarded for the development of the study. Rather than classifying factors from the results, this study proposes a classification before the results focusing on the influence of them on the students' learning process. In this sense, both studies presented the same categorization, with no mention of ascribed and acquired characteristics to frame the nature of the features. This lack of attention to the topic, provides a motivation to explore about this phenomenon that has not been studied according to the literature reviewed.

2.2 Theoretical Background

For the next section of the study, the role that both gender and social stratification play in Sociolinguistics is explored. In addition to this, studies of these ascribed and acquired characteristics in the EFL context are presented:

2.2.1 Gender

In recent years, gender has taken an important role in the field of Sociolinguistics. Meyerhoff (2018) places the language-sex interest in the 1980s and how the term sex was replaced by the term gender. This change is mainly based on the social identities people adopt and the data collection and analysis undertaken by the field of study of Sociolinguistics and other disciplines. The difference between these terms previously stated and the language use show how time has

evolved the way it is seen in this domain of study. Language and gender are considered a productive subject in this field and the impact linguistic behavior has on gender is directly related to gender variations; in addition, language use is related to the social networks they are part of their daily routines. The relation among language and gender varies according to gender divisions observed in society (Doç et al, 2011).

In relation to language and gender, relationship between pronunciation, style, patterns of language, lexicon, and others, are evidenced. Firstly, Gu (2013) pointed out that pronunciation is considered a sign of sex. Thus, if an individual from a female gender speaks in a way that characterizes male's speech or the other way round, this individual would be considered as bisexual. Secondly, Holmes (1998) proposes five cases to illustrate this difference (as cited in Tran, 2010). He suggests that patterns of language use in men and women are different, affective interactions are more taken into account by women than men, linguistic devices stressing solidarity are used more often by women, however, men's interaction in formal contexts is set to increase power and status, and women's interaction aim to foster solidarity, and language style. In addition to this, Lakoff (1973)'s work shows differences from men's to women's speech. He mentions the use of intonation in questions, different lexicon, tag questions, weak expletives among others, which are more linked to women than men (as cited in Han, 2014).

Studies regarding gender in an EFL learning context evidence its influence not only in the learning process, but also in the teaching process. Firstly, Zeynali (2012) reports results from previous studies taking in a learning context where women used more language structures than men; nonetheless, other studies showed no difference in the use of language structures in regard to gender. On the other hand, other research studies presented men and their preference to use more language learning structures in EFL. In addition to this review, the author proposes a study

to investigate the differences between males and females in a language learning context in Iran. Findings of the study revealed that females are more likely to use general language learning strategies than men.

Secondly, Madrid et al. (2010) proposed a mixed method study aiming to inquire about the influence of teachers' gender in EFL students. Subjects of the study from primary school until university, including teachers and students, from Southern Spain, participated in this study. It was found that supportive learning environments were constructed around female teachers while more traditional environments are related to male teachers. Thirdly, Sunderland (1998) presents a study about how girls' and boys' talk to their teachers takes place in an EFL classroom. She claims that a class aimed to learn a foreign language facilitates teacher and students' interaction regardless of their gender. Years before, Sunderland (1992) affirms that women rated highly liking to study vocabulary and grammar in EFL lessons.

The role gender takes in learning a Foreign Language is another dimension where research addresses the characteristics of this study. A lot of authors have conducted several studies; more specifically, in the area of women's studies framed in the social studies field; nonetheless, studies focused on teacher-student interaction are reduced to a few (Graddol et Swann, 1989). Swann (1992) presented a study where gender differences are strengthened in schools. Even though they are not responsible, they contribute to these differences (as cited in Männynsalo, 2008).

2.2.2 Social Stratification

From the social studies field, social stratification is a concept linked with social class; thus, these concepts are relational concepts that complement each other's meaning. According to Oyekola & Oyeyipo (2020) explained that Marx viewed social stratification from an economic

dimension considering class and wealth. On the other hand, Webber recognized wealth since he identified prestige and power as dimensions that were part of social stratification.

In the 1960s, the idea of status became an important subject of matter in Sociolinguistics. Labov adopted Weber's beliefs and was interested in making the differentiation in social connotations with grammar and phonetic characteristics (Llamas, 2016). More specifically, the relation between language and social class was structured by William Labov in 1966 in his seminal study conducted in New York, where he carried out a large-scale survey in order to establish pronunciation models in people living in the Lower East side of the city. From this study, he concluded that language is related to gender, age, and social class (Snell, 2014). These contributions provide a strong insight to the field of Sociolinguistics to take into account variables such as social class into linguistic behavior.

From the connection among education and social class, the concept of social reproduction emerges and highlights how academic institutions reproduce class differences among students. In their work, Bowles & Gintis (1976) claim that schools promote social class status; in addition to this, the school system encourages students to be part of the capitalist division of labor (as cited in Vandrick, 2014).

Apart from the role schools take, social stratification is an important concept to consider in learning a foreign language. Muñoz (2001) enunciates how common it is to find classes where students with high social stratification and status have a better performance than those students with lower stratum (as cited in Diaz, 2014). Similarly, Montero et al (2014) states that the education system reinforces social inequalities by ignoring the different linguistic competence that learners from different socioeconomic status and contexts have. The author also recognizes that teaching a foreign language is a practice that cannot be separated from social class.

Following that, these authors confirm that social class, housing, and access to different resources have an impact on the acquisition of assets as well as academic achievements (Arikan, 2011).

Social stratification in learning a foreign language is directly related to the results provided by the students. Hoffman, Paris, and Hall (1995) with Pérez Serrano (1981) pointed out how parents' social position influences one way or another students' outcomes not only the resources involved in their learning process facilitates it, but also the early stimulation they receive is vital. Moreover, Cuadrado (1986) presents how a student with a family environment lacking resources has more possibilities to have a deficient performance while learning a foreign language (as cited in Asociación Multidisciplinar de Investigación Educativa, 2014).

2.2.3 Teacher's Awareness on Individual Characteristics

EFL teachers have incorporated features of different nature into their curriculum; in this sense, teachers' awareness regarding gender have been remarkably enhanced. Nagasaka (2009) highlights how EFL teachers attempt to incorporate gender issues into their classes. These efforts have paved the way to human rights and global education studies. Nonetheless, the author adds how personal beliefs bias teachers' own awareness. Apart from teachers' awareness on gender, Vandrick (2014) study mentions how educators from a middle class make an emphasis on social rules related to middle-class. As a result, working and lower classes are not equal towards their peers in the USA. Same trend is observed in Colombia where the difference regarding social classes and how children are educated is directly related (Cataño, 1984).

From other point of view, Silva et al (2017) mentions a case study carried out by Ferreira (2015) where the role of teachers in regard to transgenderism evidenced how the lack of preparation in their training process in terms of concepts such as gender, sex, gender identities,

and sexual orientation was reflected on their teaching practices. The authors remark how teachers' beliefs influence their awareness of these individual characteristics; however, their attempts to include them in the curriculum show how committed they are to the subject of matter.

2.3 Methodology

This study was framed in a mixed methodology following an exploratory research design where results from a focal group provided qualitative results:

2.3.1 Participants

The participants of this project were divided into two sets: teachers and students. The first group of participants comprehended 8 students from a public university located in Bucaramanga, Colombia. Participants' ages varied from 17 to 19 years old; besides, the selected participants were students taking curricular English in the academic program of the B.A in Foreign Languages at Universidad Industrial de Santander. Another criteria considered, was a mixed group with men and women to ensure different views specifically in regard to gender differences. In addition, the other set of participants consisted of 4 teachers, who have been working in the same public institution in EFL area, who were chosen to inquire about their perceptions on the individual characteristics of this study.

The selection of this sample was framed under a non-probability sampling. In the words of Rea and Parker (1992), this type of sampling allows the researcher to not know the likelihood of a person participating in the sample of the study. From the non-probability sampling, four types of sampling are derived; however, the focus of this section is *convenience sampling*. It is a sample that does not suggest any problems to find (as cited in Griffiee, 2012). From this previous concept, this project set a criterion for the selection of the sample. First of all, having students

from a certain age range and the same levels kept a specific uniformity in these variables. Considering this, a set of participants firstly selected with the previous criterion, could not participate due to pandemic constraints. From this difficulty, new participants needed to be chosen. Hence, students from the B.A in Foreign Languages were chosen due to their accessibility that benefitted the development of the study during pandemic times.

2.3.2 Research Design

The limited number of documented research papers on ascribed and acquired individual characteristics regarding the pandemic situation in Colombia from the point of view of Sociolinguistics was remarked upon during the contextualization of the problem and the theoretical framework; as a result, this study had an exploratory nature. According to Saunders et al (2007), exploratory research is undertaken where there is a lack of knowledge about a phenomenon, and a problem has not been fully studied (as cited in Boru, 2018). Taking this into account and the objectives previously stated, this study followed a mixed research approach because it was the most effective manner to reach the objectives. Due to the nature of this study, both approaches: qualitative and quantitative served to inquire about the problem and to provide a description concerning the research problem.

2.3.3 Data Collection Instruments

Two instruments were used to gather the information of this study. Firstly, students' perceptions were collected through a semi-open questionnaire. This instrument had five sections in which information about their socioeconomic status, experience with English, the influence of gender in their English process, the influence of socioeconomic status on EFL, gender and social stratification in COVID-19 times. In order to collect students' data, a consent form was sent to the participants to confirm their participation. After doing this, a Google Forms questionnaire

was shared with the students via email to gather their perceptions. This instrument was sent after receiving the consent form with the students' signature.

Following the questionnaire, a focal group interview was undertaken to complement ambiguous answers given by the students. This interview was done in a recorded Zoom call with 5 out of the 8 respondents. To do this, questions were divided into two sections: Gender in the students' learning process in remote presentiality and socioeconomic status in the same modality.

Similarly, teachers' perceptions were collected with an interview that was carried out depending on the teachers' availability. Two possibilities were offered to the participants: a recorded zoom session interview with their consent and a word document where participants answered the questionnaire in an asynchronous methodology. This instrument had 20 questions divided in three sections titled: personal information, teachers' perception on gender as an ascribed characteristic in the classroom during the pandemic and teachers' perceptions on social stratification as an acquired characteristic in the COVID-19 emergency. (See Appendix A)

Following this interview, a focal group with 2 out of the 4 participants took place, this instrument had two sections titled: Gender in the English learning process during remote presentiality and social stratification in the English learning process. This instrument had 4 questions that complemented ambiguous information collected in the teachers' interview.

2.3.4 Activities and Schedule

Attempts to implement this study were firstly undertaken during the second semester of 2020; however, constraints related to the availability of the sample during the pandemic took place. Thus, the implementation of this project began at the beginning of 2021 at Universidad Industrial de Santander. First, teachers were contacted to be part of this study. Then, one of the teacher-participants was asked for permission to attend one of his classes and present the study to his

students; after doing it, a consent form was sent to their emails to the students who agreed to participate. After this, 11 emails were sent with the consent form and 8 signed consent forms were sent back. These 8 students received a Google Forms questionnaire and answered it. Later on, 2 out of the 4 participants were interviewed in a Zoom call using the instrument previously described. The remaining participants emailed their answers on a Word document asynchronously. After analyzing the answers from the first phase of the data collection, the instruments corresponding to the focal groups were designed in regard to ambiguous answers gathered in both sets of participants.

In the second data collection phase of this project, 5 out of the 8 students participated on a Zoom call where questions with obscure answers from the students' questionnaire were asked. During this focal group, most of the students were not eager to complement their peers' answers; nevertheless, they felt comfortable to say they agreed with some of the interventions. From the second set of participants, 2 out of the 4 participants joined a Zoom call where they complemented some of the answers given in the initial data collection stage. In this focal group, it was observed that teachers felt eager to interact with their colleagues.

2.4 Results

Analysis techniques after the data collection process in this study were applied in three phases. In the first part of the analysis, categorization of the information collected was carried out through the application of color-coding depending on the common features found among the data and their categorization. In addition to categorization, the second part of the data analysis concerned the interpretation of the information. In order to do this, extracts from the questionnaires and focal interviews were interpreted from the researcher's ideas and knowledge

in regard to the individual characteristics. Results from the data collected are presented aligned with the instruments used to collect it.

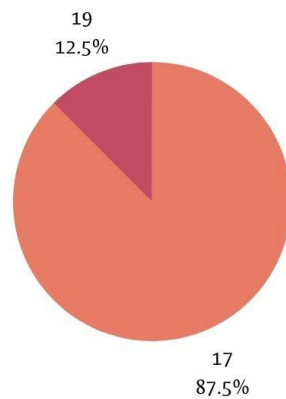
2.4.1 Students' Questionnaire

2.4.1.1 Socioeconomic Information. When asked about the level of studies, 7 out of the 8 students reported being currently at level 1 on their Foreign Languages B.A. The other one answered indicating the current semester in which the institution was. This is coherent as the sample of students was purposely selected from the first semester of the Foreign Languages program.

Figure 1

Age

What is the age of the student participants of this study?

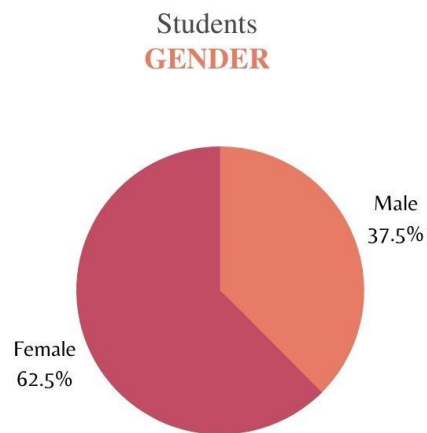


The age of the sample is homogeneous (figure 1), with most of the respondents, 87.5%, being 17-year-old students, with the rest (one student, who represents the 12.5% of the sample) being 19 years old. This would make a 17,25-mean age, though this might not be significant if we consider the 19 year old answer as an outlier.

When asked about gender (figure 2), differences are more noticeable, with 62,5% of the sample identifying as female, and 37.5% as male, which makes it a more asymmetric distribution:

Figure 2

Gender



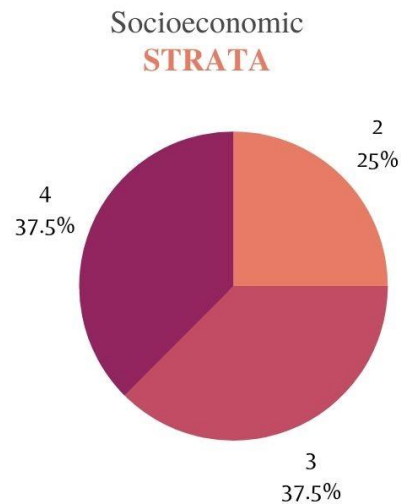
Most of the respondents live in the metropolitan area of Bucaramanga, with only one living in the neighborhood of Boconó, Cucuta. Neighborhoods of Bucaramanga include Campo hermoso, Alvarez and San Alonso; other answers include Lagos 2 and Lagos 3, in Floridablanca, La Cantera, in Piedecuesta, and San Jorge, in Girón. Considering the distribution of these neighborhoods, one could say that the sample is quite spatially dispersed, increasing the chances of a more diverse socioeconomic range.

The above is verified when looking at the students' strata (figure 3), where we can observe an almost evenly distribution within socioeconomic strata 2 and 4. However, no responses showed students living in a strata 1, 5 or 6. This is interesting as it opens some questions: Is strata

somehow more biased on the extremes, in other words, the poorest, on the one side, and wealthiest people, on the other? On the other hand, 3 quarters of the respondents reported living in an apartment, whilst the rest reported living in a house. Besides, 75% of students lived with both of their parents and their siblings, 12.5% with their mother, sister, aunt, grandmother, and nephews, and 12.5% with their mother and their sister.

Figure 3

Students' Socioeconomic Strata



All of the respondents' households had public services like electricity, water, natural gas and Internet, additionally, one of the households had telephone service. Moreover, every household had at least a television, a fridge, a stove and a washing machine, the majority of the participants had either a laptop (7 students) or a desktop computer (5 students) and only 2 had a gaming console and 1 had a tablet. When checking individual answers, it was found that every

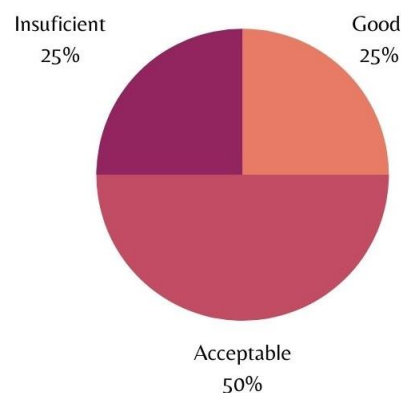
household counted with at least one technological device, whether this was a laptop, a desktop, or a tablet.

2.4.1.2 English Experience. 62.5% of the respondents attended a public school, and within them, 60% of the participants asserted having received an acceptable level of English education at the institution, the rest qualified it as insufficient. The remaining of the sample (37.5%) attended a private school, where two thirds qualified their education of English as *good*, and one third qualified EFL as *acceptable*. No correlation was found between a higher stratum and the choice of a private school, as only one third of the private school respondents belong to strata 4. This immediately indicates a higher level of satisfaction in English secondary school education from students who graduated from a private school, regardless of their strata. It is important to note that these answers are evidently biased by the nature of the population, which is people who chose to study a bachelor's degree in Foreign Languages. Below (figure 4), you can check the percentages for the whole sample:

Figure 4

Students' English Level at School

How did you consider your English level when you were at school?



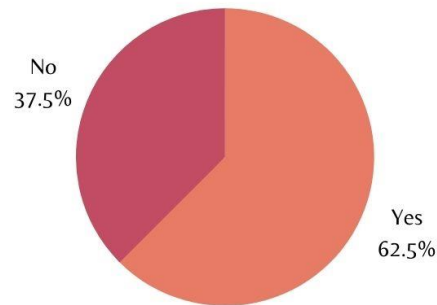
When asked about the reason, respondents who answered “good” mentioned the quality of teaching, and that their school was bilingual. Secondly, respondents who answered “acceptable” argued that even though there were good teachers, they only studied the basics of English, mostly due to the barriers some of their classmates had at learning a foreign language; one respondent reported that students who finally got a good level of English had to apply to external courses. Those who answered “insufficient”, mentioned low quality of teaching, and that English as a foreign language was not being taken seriously, and the content of the subject was not covered in depth. Considering that 75% of respondents started studying English at the first level of primary school, 12.5% at the second level, and 12.5% at kindergarten, differences between the level of school they started studying English, it would not explain the answers given by the students.

Most of the students (62.5%) have studied at a Language Institute different from the institution they are currently studying (figure 5), which has no evident relation with the socioeconomic variables. On the other hand, half of them asserted they have some sort of certification (TOEFL, IELTS, APTIS, etc.), with at least a B1 level of competence, according to the CEFR for languages, and one of the students recognized to have never been abroad in an English-speaking country.

Figure 5

Students Who Have Studied in a Language Institute

Have you previously studied English as a Foreign Language at a Language Institute?



When asked if they used the English language outside of classrooms, 62.5% of the respondents answered “Yes”. When asked about the kind of situations where they use it, most of them described leisure situations (watching movies, reading or playing video games), while only three respondents mentioned situations that actually implied practicing with other people.

Most of the students (87.5%) agreed that they liked their English classes. Reasons included being passionate about learning, learning languages, liking the English language, or the importance of English in the program. Two of the students referred specifically to pedagogy of English classes, describing it as “spoken” and “dynamic”; one of them also asserted she felt keener on expressing her ideas and experiences in her English class. Besides, one student expressed dissatisfaction, mostly due to virtual classes, which were described as monotonous and boring.

2.4.1.3 The Influence of the Socioeconomic Status in the Students' English Learning Process. All of the students included in the sample have all the means (a computer, internet

connection, computer skills, etc.) necessary for individual work in their English classes. When asked about the importance of these means, some identified the pandemic as the reason they had become essential, mainly to access the classes and other resources. Others mentioned not only having these means, but the problems they faced due to the quality of them, mentioning intermittent internet connection and power outages.

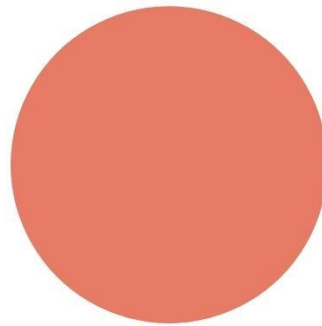
Also, all of the students agreed that socioeconomic strata had had an influence on the quality of education they had received. Some mentioned the relationship between income and socioeconomic strata, as well as how this determined if they could afford private schooling or English complementary courses, material for their classes, and a good studying environment. Although everyone asserted having all the necessary materials for an acceptable education, some mentioned knowing about other pupils who could not afford it, and as a result, could not receive the same quality of education.

2.4.1.4 The Influence of Gender in the Students' English Learning Process. Additionally, all of the participants answered affirmatively when asked if they considered that English Learning was being equal in their classes, regardless of gender. Some attributed it to an impartial behavior from their teachers towards genders, others said that gender did not have any relation at all with English Learning. However, when asked if they contemplated that a specific gender learned English “better”, at least one answer expressed men, based on class participation of this specific gender.

Figure 6

Equality in Terms of Gender in EFL classes

Do you consider that the English learning process in your class is equal regardless gender?

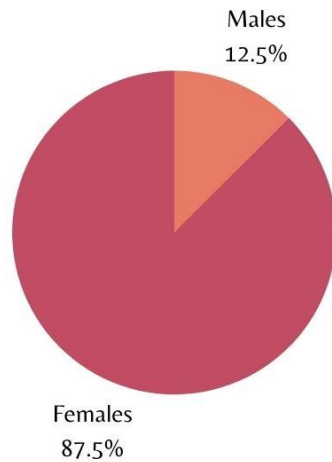


Yes
100%

To the question “Do you feel more comfortable learning with teachers that are...?” (Male or female), 87.5% answered “female” and 12.5% answered “male”. No “other” or “neither” option was given. This might be considered a bias from the start, but offers interesting information. Those who answered “male” expressed it was only because most of the teachers they had had were male, and thus they felt more comfortable around them. Only two respondents from those who answered “female” expressed that they really felt a preference for female teachers, with the rest arguing that they really had no preference. However, this last group still chose “female” when asked to make a decision.

Figure 7***Students' Thoughts on their Teachers Gender***

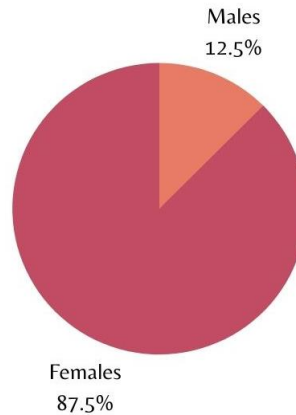
Do you feel comfortable learning with....?
(Teachers)



On the other hand, 87.5% of students answered that women participated more in class, while only 12.5% considered that there was a gender with better performance in English classes, being this “female”. Most of them (87.5%) considered that gender did not make any special difference on academic performance.

Figure 8***Participation in Terms of Gender***

Who do you consider that participate more in your English classes?



None of the students considered that gender had a main role in their English learning process during pandemic times. The results were almost the opposite when replacing “gender” for “socioeconomic strata” (with 87.5% answering “yes”). When asked why, most respondents assumed a direct relation between socioeconomic strata and income, as well as between the above and access to essential learning tools, thus they argued they could have never studied in a proper way without a computer and an internet connection; they also mentioned how some of their classmates had a serious problem with internet connection, which made their learning process more difficult, even to the point of forcing them to drop out of university.

Finally, only 3 out of 8 respondents considered a specific gender to be more prone to access remote presentiality classes. All positive answers agreed on these being the females.

2.4.2 Students' Focal Group

2.4.2.1 Gender in the Students' Learning Process in Remote Presentiality. From the questions proposed related to gender and with the objective of clarifying information considered 'biased', it was first asked about the gender of the students who participate in class. All of the participants agreed that participation in both genders is observed to the same extent. Options suggested to the students included: women, men, both of them, or students who identify with different gender, and the answer showed uniformity in terms of participation.

A similar trend is observed when proposing the question where they recognized no difference in terms of attendance. Participants of this interview expanded this idea by mentioning the importance and pedagogy of the subject that enhances students' commitment in terms of attendance. To conclude this section, students were more open to share their ideas; one of them asserted (Speaker 6) that pedagogy prevailed above gender, and another participant agreed with this idea (Speaker 3). Additionally, another participant highlighted how she felt more comfortable with male teachers; however, there was no specific explanation given to this statement (Speaker 4).

2.4.2.2 Social Stratification in the Students' Learning Process in Remote Presentiality. In the second section of the focal group, the hypothetical situation of not having the resources (desktop or laptop, tablet, cellphone, internet connection, and knowledge to manage these technological devices) to work individually in their EFL classrooms was formulated to the participants in order to inquire about social stratification. Three of the students who were participating in the focal group participated in this section and agreed on the importance of these devices and how not having them would affect the students and the institution's performance (Speaker 2, 3 & 4). Two of them expressed that they would return to their EFL classes when these resources were not vital for the students' learning process (Speaker 5&6).

2.4.3 Teachers Interviews

Subject 1.

The first subject was a female English teacher in English Teaching. At the time she had been teaching English for 8 years and was currently teaching at a public institution.

She did not consider there was any difference between genders regarding class participation, academic performance, or interest, stating gender as irrelevant to determine people's interest in these matters. Thus, she did not find any difference between genders throughout online classes. She added,

'I have had students who show the same interest to learn and participate in the class regardless of gender' (Teacher participant #1, personal communication, May 23 2021).

However, she recognized the presence of students from diverse genders (different from male or female) in her classes, and that didactic and pedagogic strategies may, in some cases, vary according to student's genders. She then stated having actually taken these differential strategies.

She had not perceived any university dropouts of any specific gender. Also, she neither considered any specific gender that accessed online classes more than others, nor observed this in her online classes.

On the other hand, regarding the role of technology in the learning process in pandemic times, she considered electronic devices as means to transfer information and interact with others as in the teaching-learning process. So that, she asserted that those, along with a high speed internet connectivity, were essential for students to be able to learn in the Pandemic, not only for attending classes (synchronic sessions) but also for doing assignments (diachronic), downloading apps, and using tools and platforms in an efficient way.

Parallel to that, as a specific and necessary device for remote presentiality, she pointed out that a computer with a high-speed internet connection was necessary. Thereby, from her point of view, the absence of these devices affected students' learning and academic process. The above depended on the possibilities each student had.

As a final reminder of the limitations this situation imposes, she expressed how some interactive activities, typical from the classroom, were impossible in the remote presentiality, and therefore, language learning was being affected.

Subject 2.

The second subject is a male English teacher who got its B.A. on Foreign Languages. At the time he had been teaching English for two months and was currently teaching at a public institution during his practicum classes.

When asked about differences between genders in terms of class participation, he asserted,

‘Some students are eager to share their thoughts and convey a positive attitude than others. I can see there might be a relation, but I do not feel sure about it; however, I recognize that gender

and personality traits play an important role but I think that personality is likely to be more important when it comes to participation' (Teacher participant #2, personal communication, May 29 2021).

Additionally, he could not observe any difference between male students' interest and female students in his classes, other than the differences due to personal life experiences.

This teacher recognized the presence of genders different from male and female in his classes, although he had not applied any differential didactic and pedagogical strategies depending on it or intended to do it, clearly asserting he had tried to reach a homogeneous interaction in his class.

Later, when questioned about differences between genders in terms of class participation, but this time during the remote presentiality, he referred to some specific situations where male students tend to impose their voices over females whenever many students tried to participate, but he stated he was not sure if gender influenced this.

To the question: Have you applied any specific strategy considering gender during the remote presentiality? the answer given was different, as the teacher wanted to ensure parity in class participation, giving the opportunity to students from both genders to participate and avoid an imbalance between genders.

Additionally, to the question: Have you noticed student dropouts of a specific gender? The subject mentioned the case of a girl who dropped out because she could not keep up with classes due to her English level; she stated she had thought it would be easier. The teacher stated it did not seem to be any reason for her to drop out other than that.

Regarding differences between genders in class attendance, the subject did not find any. He even pointed out how most students were very punctual, and at least three of them always

showed up prior to the beginning of the class. He added that ‘The latter were all males’ (Teacher participant #2, personal communication, May 29 2021).

The teacher considered that means such as a calmed and silent environment, or good microphones, were crucial, giving the example of a student that, living in a noisy household, preferred to participate through chat messages, and of some other students that used panels to hide the background, which might be a good indicator that they were not taking the class in the best of the environments. He also gave the example of other students for which he had to be constantly reminded to speak louder. As such, for this teacher means everything. He also remarked that having a cellphone is not always enough, as some class activities might require the student to have multiple apps visible simultaneously.

When asked about the influence of the absence of these means on the students' learning process, the subject mentioned the case of some students who lived in the countryside and were not able to keep a stable internet connection throughout the classes, which was making their process more difficult. He stated he was taking some measures to cope with this but remarked student motivation as a key for those measures to succeed.

The main function of internet connection in the teacher classes was to ensure every student was able to keep its camera on, and to avoid problems with the audio. He reported having found problems himself with its main internet connection, thus having to rely on mobile phone networks as a contingency plan. He also pointed out the importance of having a computer with enough processing power to run all the programs that were needed in the classes.

Finally, this teacher considered that the remote presentiality might, unintentionally, exclude students or put them in an unbalanced, anti-competitive or handicaped position, which would be, somehow, ironical, considering that it was the only way to resume classes on pandemic times.

Subject 3.

The third subject of this study was a male English who has a B.A in English Language Teaching. At the time of the interview, he had been teaching English at a public institution for 13 years.

In relation to gender in the English Learning Process, he did not find any difference in terms of participation; similarly, he considered that the performance and the interest on the subject of the students was not a dependent variable to the gender of the students. Nonetheless, he added that, ‘The presence of genders different to masculine and feminine is an aspect I acknowledge in my class’s (Teacher participant #3, personal communication, May 23 2021). Additionally, he claimed that he used discourse analysis on students to identify gender diversity in his classroom. Then, he recognized that he did not have any specific didactic and pedagogic strategies set in regard to the students’ gender. With questions related to the remote presentiality, he did not notice any difference in terms of participation, didactic and pedagogic strategies, attendance, and dropouts.

In the second section of the interview, the subject considered that,

‘ICT tools like a computer and a Wi-Fi connection are basic in this modality; other tools such as a smartphone become useful in this modality. I also consider that students should have a place with no distractions and an emotionally favorable environment for them’ (Teacher participant #3, personal communication, May 23 2021)

On the other hand, when asked about the lack about the resources needed during this modality, he asserted that having a cellphone instead of a computer and slow internet connection influences the perception that students have of the class. Finally, not having the resources to study during remote presentiality might lead students to dropout or feel frustrated.

Subject 4.

Our last subject is a male English teacher who also has a B.A in English Language Teaching. At the time of the interview, he had taught English for 11 years but was not teaching at the moment, instead, he was working as an administrative employee at a public institution.

Firstly, when questioned about differences between genders regarding class participation, he stated that, throughout his career, as a teacher and also by observing other teachers, he had observed differences. Nevertheless, even though there were differences, he was not certain about those differences being due to gender.

To the question regarding differences in students' performance due to gender, the subject mentioned how female students had a clearer tendency to be organized. Linguistic skills and the order of ideas were aspects that the subject considered to be related to females. In contrast, he described males to be quiet in regard to topics they are not knowledgeable about and because of this their discourse lacked cohesion and coherence. Similarly, the participant recognized the presence of different genders in his class. Additionally, the subject claimed that students' interest on the classes considering gender vary in regard to the affective filter where students' rapport towards the teacher influences whether the student feels encouraged to participate.

The didactic strategies used by the participant consisted of benefitting from students' qualities. Regardless of how students identify, he used mixed groups to enhance students' abilities with the help of their classmates. Also, he highlighted the use of students' interests in the class to foster critical thinking. About the institution and the methodology used during the COVID-19 emergency, the respondent asserted that the remote presentiality allowed introvert students to express themselves using ICT tools. Finally, females are, according to him, the gender that mostly joined online synchronous classes.

Moving onto the socioeconomic strata, the subject claimed that students required an acceptable internet connection, a technological device, a space with a desk and a chair, a noise-free environment, and knowledge about the ICT to create slides, join the online synchronous classes, record and edit videos and knowledge on how curate data for their lessons.

In an opposite scenario, he mentioned that,

‘A noisy environment affects students' performance in the class, generating stress to display in public their family intimacy. Also, the importance of information curation in the students' learning process along an independent study routine lies in the information treatment and organization’ (Teacher participant #4, personal communication, May 29 2021).

Besides, he considered that an internet connection and technological devices are vital for exams and activities where they share their thoughts. An example of the role of technology according to the subject, is the presence of a camera and a microphone that conveys body language and the message respectively. If one of these do not work properly, the performance of the student is obscured in contrast to face-to-face classes.

To conclude the interview, the participant claimed that accessibility is both an advantage and disadvantage to the students' English learning process during the remote presentiality. On the one hand, students who returned to their home region continued their learning process in the institution following this modality. On the other hand, students with poor internet connection found it very difficult to join synchronous online lessons.

2.4.4 Teachers Focal Group

2.4.4.1 Gender in the English Learning Process during Remote Presentiality. With the objective of clarifying ‘ambiguous’ or ‘biased’ data collected, teachers firstly answered about the didactic and pedagogic strategies used in the class considering gender, one of the respondents stated that, ‘I do not consider I implement any specific strategy in regard to the students’ gender while implementing my classes. I acknowledge the whole group when I give my classes’ (Teacher participant #3, personal communication, July 28 2021). The other participant of the interview agreed and added that he ensured parity by involving all genders present in the class.

In terms of participation, both teachers agreed that women are eager to participate in their classes. They both recognized that males in their classes are introverts and do not share their ideas to a large extent.

To finish this section, one subject of the study does not find a clear difference in performance in gender in his classes. Nevertheless, one of them claimed that, ‘The number of females with an average score above 4,5 in written exams is significantly superior in comparison with the males in one of his groups. However, males’ scores in speaking exams were similar to the females’ (Teacher participant #3, personal communication, July 28 2021).

2.4.4.2 Social Stratification in the English Learning Process during Remote presentiality. To the question about the influence of the lack of resources to attend classes during this modality. Subject 2 of this study considered that it directly affects the performance of the students. Both participants claimed that activities do not have the same impact with students whose resources are not enough to attend the online classes. From class activities that require an appropriate internet connection and a technological device apt for the assignment, both teachers stated that they offer an alternative for those students who lack resources to perform the activities.

2.5. Discussion

After presenting the results from the data gathered, a discussion around them based on the objectives set at the beginning of the study is presented. The aim is to compare the data to the theoretical framework, allowing us to draw appropriate, rigorous, and precise conclusions that will be helpful to understand the influence of gender and social stratification as acquired and ascribed characteristics on the English learning process as a second language.

2.5.1 To examine how gender and social stratification of students are perceived by teachers in the remote presentiality EFL classroom during the COVID-19 pandemics

In order to achieve this objective, 4 teachers answered an interview where their perceptions about the influence of gender and social stratification were collected and analyzed.

2.5.1.1 Teachers' Perception on Gender as an Ascribed Characteristic. From the results found in the data, all of the participants recognized the presence of different genders in their classes. Nevertheless, they do not consider gender to be a vital characteristic during remote presentiality even though they recognized differences in terms of participation and performance. In the words of one of the participants, 'I perceive girls to be more participative...I consider this could happen because of their personalities that are more open to share their ideas than boys' (Teacher participant #3, personal communication, May 23 2021).

In other words, despite considering that gender is not a determining factor, they do perceive differences in practice. Stereotypes have a role in this contradiction, as females are usually perceived as more responsible, creating a bias in students' attitudes and teachers' attitudes towards them. Nevertheless, this does not happen in every case, with at least two teachers reporting situations in which males are more participative.

Beyond this, teachers' ideas reflect the role students have in the class in these distance learning modalities; however, considering their answers when asked about the role it had before the COVID-19 emergency, it can be concluded that there was not a significant difference to point out.

Besides participation and performance, it is important to mention that instructors perceive equality considering class attendance during this modality. Some might conclude that this suggests equality between genders regarding social economical status, as results suggest that this might have some relation with students capability to attend classes, however, quantitative results are not robust enough to throw conclusive conclusions about this correlation.

2.5.1.2 Teachers' Perception on Social Stratification as an Acquired Characteristic.

Social stratification is vital for their learning process during remote presentiality. This is corroborated by a participant who claimed that not having adequate ICT tools and even an environment where students feel relaxed and engaged results in stressed and discouraged students (Teacher participant #4, personal communication, May 29 2021). From the instructors' perspective, it is understood that the new modality adapted by the institution during the pandemic presented new challenges where social stratification importance was noticeable and directly related to their performance.

The above leads to conclude that, if the wealth gap would had a significant impact on second language learning process before the pandemic, these differences became much more pronounced with the implementation of *remote presentiality*, and most probably will have an impact beyond this teaching modality. This is due to the worsening of the already complicated situation of students from lower socioeconomic stratification, whose future learning process will start from less solid foundations.

2.5.2 To identify the extent to which these specific individual characteristics affect the English learning process among University students in a distance learning modality in a global pandemic

Considering the results previously mentioned, it is observed that gender does not have an impact on the English learning process during the online learning modality adopted by the institution during the COVID-19 emergency. Nevertheless, a participant recognizes how he ensured equity in his classes (Teacher participant #2, personal communication, July 28 2021). In the same matter, Nagasaka (2009) claims that teachers' efforts to integrate gender with its corresponding issues should not be ignored.

In addition to gender, social stratification's influence impacts students' learning process where the lack of resources is directly related to their participation and performance. Muñoz (2001) supports this idea by enunciating how frequent students with higher social stratification have higher performance than those with lower social strata.

2.5.3 To determine if the social stratification of students is a critical aspect to succeed in the learning process of English

About the role of social stratification in their learning process, students expressed that social stratification did have an impact on their English learning process. They highlighted the importance of income alone with the social stratification that allowed students to access private schooling, a suitable learning environment, materials, and English courses to enrich their learning process. Nevertheless, participants of this study had the resources to learn English, but perceived a different reality for their classmates. Students' ideas are corroborated by Arikan (2011) who also adds that not only social stratification influences their English learning process but also their academic achievements.

Learning a second language in such conditions might be considered as a privilege, meaning institutions should play a more active role in trying to overcome these differences, or, in the least of cases, minimize its impact, thus allowing the fulfillment of the right to education in equal conditions. It should also be pointed out that knowing a second language has an impact on an individual's access to better job opportunities and therefore its capacity to climb between social strata.

2.5.4 To measure if the gender of students plays a determinant role in the participation and engagement in the classroom activities

Similarly, students expressed in terms of the role that gender has in class activities that they considered that equality in English learning process from teachers was noticeable. On the one hand, pupils described how their instructors practiced impartiality and others mentioned there was not a relation with gender and their English learning process. On the other hand, teachers considered that female students tended to be more outgoing and participative. Unfortunately, no correlation can be made for this sample between teachers' attitudes toward genders and differences in participation between genders. To assert that, given teacher neutrality towards gender, female students tend to be more participative) as respondent students are not necessarily pupils of the interviewed teachers.

3. Conclusions

This study aimed at exploring whether gender and social stratification influences the English learning process in students enrolled at university level during the pandemic. In order to do this, four specific objectives were proposed: *To examine how gender and social stratification of students are perceived by teachers in the remote presentiality EFL classroom during the COVID-19 pandemics, To identify the extent to which these specific individual characteristics affect the English learning process among University students in a distance learning modality in a global pandemic, To determine if the social stratification of students is a critical aspect to succeed in the learning process of English and To measure if the gender of students plays a determinant role in the participation and engagement in the classroom activities.*

From the results of this study, research shows that social stratification has a direct impact on the English learning process during remote presentiality. Even so, participants mention

differences in regard to gender, they do not emphasize on a drastic effect on the English learning process in this modality.

Participants' thoughts in regard to social stratification evidenced that the lack of adequate resources such as ICT tools: laptop, computer, and internet connection, affected their English learning process. Students and teachers who participated in this project, established a relation between social stratification and ICT tools needed for their English learning process in remote presentiality. Being the case of class activities where students who lacked resources expressed that they could not participate in the activity or felt frustrated because their participation was not the same in comparison with their peers. This perspective is similar to Bowls & Gintis (1976) work cited by Vandrick (2014) where it is evidenced how the schooling system fosters social class differences. The relation mentioned previously is similar to the effect social stratification had during the modality adopted by the institution in this project.

Results of this study confirm that they considered that an inadequate computer or cellphone and internet connection appeared to modify students' participation and performance. Similarly, Ta'amneh (2021) adds in his study that, 'Technical problems prevented some students from using EFL virtual classes effectively. Almost half of the participants with a percentage of (49.5%) faced internet problems and had a difficulty in dealing with their EFL virtual classes'.

Whereas, when it comes to the effect of our ascribed characteristic in EFL classes, participants considered gender a differentiating characteristic when it comes to performance and participation. Girls are pointed out to be more willing to share their thoughts in their EFL classes; however, not the majority of the participants considered this. From the results, it is inferred that they do not consider gender a fundamental characteristic in an EFL context during

the pandemic, they recognized the importance and the influence it had in their English classes but they do not differentiate it from the impact it had on face-to-face classes.

Finally, the new educational dynamic adopted by institutions implied changes for the learners as well. The following table shows an overall perception of the participants of this study on their English learning process during this new modality:

Table 1

Participants perceptions on remote presentiality

Participants' thoughts on gender and social stratification during the pandemics	
<p>Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The presence of different genders in EFL classrooms is recognized -The majority of the participants recognized females to be more participative and have a better performance -Most of the learners expressed to feel comfortable with female instructors -There are no dropouts from any specific gender -Didactic strategies from teachers aimed at involving all students from different genders to help others 	<p>Social Stratification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Both sets of participants highlighted the importance of social stratification during remote presentiality -ICT tools needed for their English learning process are: an adequate computer, a comfortable environment, and a proper internet connection -The relationship of social stratification and income resulted on having access to essential ICT tools -Instructors implemented plans for students who did not have proper access to resources to study during COVID-19

References

- Arikan, A. (2011). Prospective English Language Teachers' Perceptions of the Target Language and Culture in Relation to Their Socioeconomic Status. *English Language Teaching*, 4(3), 232-242.
- Asociación Multidisciplinar de Investigación Educativa. (2014). Relación entre el aprendizaje del inglés como Lengua Extranjera y el nivel sociocultural y económico de las familias. *3er Congreso Internacional Multidisciplinar de Investigación Educativa*. Segovia.
- Basilaia, G., & Kvavadze, D. (2020). Transition to online education in schools during a SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Georgia. *Pedagogical Research*, 5(4).
- Cataño, G. (1984). EDUCACION Y DIFERENCIACION SOCIAL EN COLOMBIA. *Revista Colombiana de Educación*.
- Díaz, D. M. (2014). Factores de dificultad para el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera en estudiantes con bajo rendimiento en inglés de la Universidad ICESI. Santiago de Cali: Universidad Icesi.
- Çakici, D. (2011). CİNSİYET VE DİL. Celal Bayar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 9(02), 459-471.
- Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, S. (2013). *Language and gender*. Chapter 1: An Introduction to Gender. Cambridge University Press.

Ferrante, J. (2012). *Sociology: A global perspective*. Nelson Education.

Griffiee, D. T. (2012). *An introduction to second language research methods*. New York: TESL-EJ

Gu, L. (2013). Language and gender: Differences and similarities. In 2013 International Conference on Advances in Social Science, Humanities, and Management (ASSHM 2013) (pp. 248-251).

Llamas, C., Mullany, L., & Stockwell, P. (Eds.). (2006). *The Routledge companion to sociolinguistics*. Routledge.

Madrid, D., & Hughes, S. P. (2010). Speaking the same language? Gender-based teacher performance in the EFL class. *The Open Applied Linguistics Journal*, 3(1).

Männynsalo, A. (2008). Gender in the EFL classroom differences in the teacher's reactions to boys' and girls' responses.

Meyerhoff, M. (2018). *Introducing sociolinguistics*. Routledge.

Montero, R. L., Chaves, M. J. Q., & Alvarado, J. S. (2010). Factores Sociales en el Aprendizaje de un Segundo Idioma: El Caso de la Sede del Pacífico de la Universidad de Costa Rica. *Revista Lenguas Modernas*, 1-18.

Nagasaka, T. (2009). Gender Awareness Raising & EFL.

Oyekola, I. A., & Oyeyipo, E. J. (2020). Social Stratification. *Introductory Sociology*, 125-138.

Pickering, M. (2007). Stereotyping and stereotypes. *The Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology*, 1-7.

Roncancio Ruíz, D. C., & Buitrago Bello, M. D. (2018). Factores que intervienen en el aprendizaje de inglés en la academia Power English de Zipaquirá.

Silva, M. J., Ferreira, M. E., & Ferreira, A. (2017). Gender awareness in teacher education. *Conexão Ciência*, 12(2), 147-152.

Snell, J. (2014). Social class and language. *Handbook of Pragmatics*, 2014.

Sunderland, J. (1992). Gender in the EFL classroom. *Elt Journal*, 46(1), 81-91.

Sunderland, J. (1998). Girls being quiet: a problem for foreign language classrooms? *Language teaching research*, 2(1), 48-82.

Ta'amneh, M. A. A. A. (2021). Attitudes and Challenges Towards Virtual Classes in Learning English Language Courses from Students' Perspectives at Taibah University During COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 12(3), 419-428.

Tran, T. H. (2010). Gender and Language Use in the ESL Classroom. *Online Submission*.

UNESCO (2020). Education in the time of COVID-19.

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45905/1/S2000509_en.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiQwbD65fnyAhXmTDA BHT5pA3IQFnoECA0QAQ&usg=AOvVaw0p7E9MJS8Hdqk7wQArW_Zb

Vandrick, S. (2014). The role of social class in English language education. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 13(2), 85-91.

Zeynali, S. (2012). Exploring the Gender Effect on EFL Learners' Learning Strategies. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies*, 2(8)

Appendixes

Appendix A. Student's Questionary

The Influence of Gender and Socioeconomical Background in the Learning Process of English as a Foreign Language among University Students during Pandemic Times

Nota: En la siguiente encuesta sus datos personales tales como: nombre e institución a la que pertenece NO SERÁN DIVULGADOS y solo sus respuestas serán tenidas en cuenta.

*Obligatorio

1. Correo electrónico: *

2. Contacto de WhatsApp: *

3. Fecha: *

Ejemplo: 7 de enero de 2019

4. Nivel: *

Sección 1.
Información
Socioeconómica

Dentro de esta sección encontrará preguntas enfocadas a saber un poco más sobre su información socioeconómica que van desde su edad hasta información sobre la institución de la que se graduó:

5. 1. Edad: *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- 15
 16
 17
 Otros: _____

6. 2. Género: *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Masculino
 Femenino
 Otros: _____

7. 3. Barrio: *

8. 4. Estrato: *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- 1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6

9. 5. Vivo en... *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Una casa
- Un apartamento
- Otros: _____

10. 6. Vivo con... *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Mamá, Papá, Hermanos
- Abuelos
- Tíos
- Solos
- Otros: _____

11. 7. En mi casa cuento con los siguientes servicios... (En esta pregunta se puede marcar más de una opción) *

Selecciona todas las opciones que correspondan.

- Electricidad
- Agua
- Gas
- Teléfono
- Internet

12. 8. En mi casa tengo los siguientes electrodomésticos y aparatos: *

Selecciona todas las opciones que correspondan.

- Televisor
- Nevera
- Estufa
- Lavadora
- Portátil
- Computador de mesa
- Consola x-box
- Tablet

13. 9. Me gradué de un colegio: *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Público
- Privado

Sección 2.
Experiencia con el
inglés

Dentro de esta sección encontrará preguntas formuladas para saber un poco más sobre su experiencia con el inglés:

14. 10. ¿Cómo considera que era el nivel de inglés que recibió en el colegio? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Excelente
- Bueno
- Aceptable
- Insuficiente
- Deficiente

15. ¿Porque? *

16. 11. ¿En qué nivel académico empezó a ver inglés? *

17. 12. ¿Ha perdido algún nivel de inglés en la institución en la cual se encuentra estudiando? (Responder la siguiente pregunta si su respuesta es SI)

Marca solo un óvalo.

Sí

No

18. ¿Por que?

Marca solo un óvalo.

Falta de práctica de mi parte

No se me apoyo en ningún momento de dificultad

No me gusta

No la entiendo

Otros

19. 13. ¿Ha estudiado inglés en un Instituto de Idiomas diferente al que se encuentra estudiando actualmente? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

Sí

No

20. 14. ¿Ha viajado a algún país de habla inglesa anteriormente? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Sí
 No

21. 15. ¿Cuenta usted con alguna de las siguientes certificaciones del idioma: TOEFL, IELTS, APTIS, FCE, ETC, KET, PET? Si su respuesta es sí, responda la pregunta 16 *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Si
 No

22. 16. ¿En qué nivel se encuentra?

Marca solo un óvalo.

- A1
 A2
 B1
 B2
 C1
 C2

23. 17. ¿Utiliza el inglés fuera del aula de clase? Si su respuesta es no, omita la pregunta 18 *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Si
 No

24. Responda esta pregunta (18) si la respuesta anterior es SI. 18. ¿En que situaciones utiliza el inglés fuera del aula de clase?

25. 19. ¿Le gustan en general las clases de inglés? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

Sí

No

26. ¿Por que? *

Sección 3. Influencia del Estrato Socioeconómico en su Aprendizaje del Inglés

En la siguiente sección le serán formuladas preguntas que buscan saber un poco más sobre la influencia que tiene en su aprendizaje del inglés:

27. 20. ¿Considera usted que posee los medios necesarios para el trabajo individual en su clase de inglés? (Ejemplo: conexión a internet: WiFi o datos, equipo tecnológico: computador o celular, conocimientos para usar los equipos tecnológicos a su disposición, etc..?. Si su respuesta es si, omita la pregunta 21. *

Marca solo un óvalo.

Sí

No

28. Responda esta pregunta (21) si la respuesta anterior es NO. 21. ¿En qué medida o aspectos considera que le ha interferido la falta de medios para el trabajo individual en su clase?

29. 22. ¿Cómo considera usted que los medios necesarios para el trabajo individual de su clase influyen su desempeño en el Inglés? *

30. 23. ¿Considera usted que el estrato socioeconómico ha influido en la calidad de la educación que ha recibido? *

31. ¿Por que? *

Sección 4. Influencia de Género en su Aprendizaje del Inglés

En la siguiente sección las preguntas están formuladas con el fin de saber el rol que el género tiene en su aprendizaje del inglés:

32. 24. ¿Considera usted que el aprendizaje del inglés en su clase se da de manera equitativa sin importar el género? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

Sí

No

33. ¿Por que? *

34. 25. ¿Quién considera usted que aprenda mejor según su genero? *

35. 26. ¿Se siente más cómodo aprendiendo con profesores...? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

Mujeres

Hombres

36. ¿Por que? *

37. 27. ¿Quiénes considera usted que participan más en su clase de inglés? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

Mujeres

Hombres

Estudiantes que se identifiquen con un género diferente

38. 28. ¿Considera usted que haya un género con mejor desempeño en su clase de inglés? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

Sí

No

39. ¿Por que? *

Sección 5. Género y Estrato Socioeconómico en Época de Pandemia

40. 29. ¿Considera usted que el género de las personas ha tomado un papel determinante en su aprendizaje del inglés en época de pandemia? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

Sí

No

41. Si su respuesta a la pregunta (29) fue Sí, responda la siguiente pregunta. 30. ¿En que manera siente que lo ha influenciado?

42. 31. ¿El estrato socioeconómico ha influenciado su desempeño en la asignatura o el de sus compañeros en estos tiempos de pandemia? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

Si

No

43. ¿Por que? *

44. 32. Dentro de la presencialidad remota que ha tomado la institución, ¿ha notado si algún género específico de sus compañeros se conecta? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

Sí

No

45. Si su respuesta a la pregunta (32) fue Sí, responda la siguiente pregunta. 33. ¿Cuál de los siguientes géneros en específico considera que se conecta más?

Marca solo un óvalo.

Masculino

Femenino

Otro

Google no creó ni aprobó este contenido.

Google Formularios

Appendix B. Student's Focal Group Interview



Universidad
Industrial de
Santander

UNIVERSIDAD INDUSTRIAL DE SANTANDER
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS
TRABAJO DE GRADO II

Instrumento de Recolección de Datos Grupo Focal Estudiantes

The Influence of Gender and Socioeconomic Background in the Learning Process of English as a Foreign Language among University Students during Pandemic Times

Mi nombre es Dayra Alejandra Medina (código 2150887). Soy estudiante de Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés de la Universidad Industrial de Santander. Agradezco su tiempo y disposición al decidir participar en esta entrevista grupo focal que busca complementar información ya dada por usted en una primera fase de este estudio. No hay respuestas incorrectas y deseo que se sienta cómodo durante la entrevista. La información recolectada sólo será leída por la investigadora de este proyecto y será usada únicamente con fines académicos, preservando así los datos personales de los entrevistados anónimamente. Antes de empezar, ¿me autoriza grabar esta entrevista?, tomando en cuenta el hecho de que es difícil para mí tomar nota durante la entrevista: si acepta, por favor diga sí.

Le recuerdo el carácter anónimo de esta entrevista, sin embargo, para facilitar el tratamiento de sus datos me gustaría saber su nombre y edad. La intervención de cada uno de ustedes es fructífera para el desarrollo de este estudio, siéntase libre de intervenir en cada una de las preguntas.

Esta entrevista vamos a situarnos en la modalidad de presencialidad remota que llevó a cabo en la institución desde marzo 2020 hasta julio 2021. Y dividiremos esta entrevista en dos secciones: primero, hablaremos de la influencia que el género tuvo en su aprendizaje del inglés y la influencia que el estrato socioeconómico tuvo en su aprendizaje del inglés.

Género en su aprendizaje del inglés en presencialidad remota

1. Tomando en cuenta su experiencia en la modalidad de presencialidad remota, ¿Quiénes considera que participan más en su clase de inglés: hombres y mujeres? ¿Porque?
2. ¿Ha notado que asistan más mujeres que hombres a la clase de inglés? ¿O viceversa?
3. ¿Se siente más cómodo/comoda aprendiendo con 'teachers' hombres, mujeres, de ambos géneros o que se identifiquen con un género diferente a los anteriores?

Estrato socioeconómico en su aprendizaje del inglés en presencialidad remota

1. Si no hubiera tenido los medios necesarios para llevar a cabo el trabajo individual en su clase de inglés (Ejemplo: conexión a internet: WiFi o datos, equipo tecnológico: computador o celular, conocimientos para usar los equipos tecnológicos a su disposición, etc.), ¿En qué medida o aspectos considera que hubiera interferido la falta de medios para el trabajo individual en su clase?

Appendix C. Teachers' Interview



**UNIVERSIDAD INDUSTRIAL DE SANTANDER
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS
TRABAJO DE GRADO II**

Instrumento de Recolección de Datos: Entrevista (5.0) Para Profesores

The Influence of Gender and Socioeconomical Background in the Learning Process of English as a Foreign Language among University Students during Pandemic Times

Mi nombre es Dayra Alejandra Medina (código 2150887). Soy estudiante de Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés de la Universidad Industrial de Santander. Agradezco su tiempo y disposición al decidir participar en este proceso. La siguiente entrevista tiene como propósito explorar categorías como género y estrato socioeconómico y su influencia en el aprendizaje del inglés en estudiantes universitarios. No hay respuestas incorrectas y deseo que se sienta cómodo durante la entrevista. La información recolectada sólo será leída por la investigadora de este proyecto y será usada únicamente con fines académicos, preservando así los datos personales de los entrevistados anónimamente. Antes de empezar, ¿me autoriza grabar esta entrevista?, tomando en cuenta el hecho de que es difícil para mí tomar nota durante la entrevista: si acepta, por favor diga sí.

Antes de empezar, ¿tiene alguna pregunta relacionada con el procedimiento de esta entrevista o con los investigadores?

Para empezar, voy a hacerle algunas preguntas con algunos datos que nos servirán para saber un poco sobre usted y su formación académica:

1. ¿Cuál es su nombre?
2. ¿En qué institución cursó su programa de pregrado?
3. ¿Qué programa de pregrado cursó en esta institución?
4. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva usted enseñando inglés?
5. ¿Es la institución en la que enseña inglés privada o pública?

Una de las características a explorar son las categorías adscritas, en las que este estudio se enfocará específicamente en género. Para hablar un poco sobre esta categoría le voy a formular unas preguntas relacionadas al tema:

6. ¿Considera usted que hay una diferencia entre la participación de estudiantes en actividades de clase considerando el género?
7. De acuerdo al desempeño que ha observado en sus estudiantes, ¿considera que se puede observar una diferencia en cuanto a género? ¿Por qué?
8. ¿Considera usted que se puede observar algún interés en específico por parte de los estudiantes en algún género en específico? ¿Por qué?
9. ¿Reconoce usted la presencia de géneros diferentes al masculino y femenino en su clase de inglés?

10. ¿Considera usted que sus estrategias didácticas y pedagógicas varían según el género? Si considera que si varían, ¿Por qué?
11. Durante la presencialidad remota adoptada por la institución, ¿ha notado alguna diferencia en cuanto a participación considerando el género en sus estudiantes?
12. ¿Ha tomado en cuenta estrategias diferentes según el género en esta presencialidad remota?
13. ¿Ha observado deserción escolar en algún género en específico?
14. En su opinión, ¿Es más común que se conecte a clase algún género determinado?
15. ¿Ha notado que se conecte algún género en más que otro durante la educación a distancia?

Para terminar esta entrevista, hablaremos un poco sobre las características adquiridas enfocándonos específicamente en el estrato socioeconómico. Para hablar un poco sobre esta categoría le voy a formular unas preguntas relacionadas al tema:

16. ¿Qué medios considera necesarios para el aprendizaje de los estudiantes en relación a la situación del COVID-19?
17. ¿Cuáles considera que sean los medios necesarios (dispositivo tecnológico: celular, computador, Tablet, ¿y conexión a internet) para el desempeño de sus estudiantes en su clase?
18. ¿Considera que la falta de estos medios influye en el proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes?
19. ¿Qué función considera que medios como un dispositivo tecnológico y conexión a internet tienen en su clase de inglés?
20. ¿En qué medida considera usted que la presencialidad remota adoptada por la institución ha influenciado el desempeño de los estudiantes que no cuentan con los medios necesarios (dispositivo tecnológico: celular, computador, Tablet, y conexión a internet)?

Appendix D. Teachers' Focal Group Interview



Universidad
Industrial de
Santander

UNIVERSIDAD INDUSTRIAL DE SANTANDER
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS
TRABAJO DE GRADO II

Instrumento de Recolección de Datos Grupo Focal Profesores

The Influence of Gender and Socioeconomic Background in the Learning Process of English as a Foreign Language among University Students during Pandemic Times

Mi nombre es Dayra Alejandra Medina (código 2150887). Soy estudiante de Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés de la Universidad Industrial de Santander. Agradezco su tiempo y disposición al decidir participar en esta entrevista grupo focal que busca complementar información ya dada por usted en una primera fase de este estudio. No hay respuestas incorrectas y deseo que se sienta cómodo durante la entrevista. La información recolectada sólo será leída por la investigadora de este proyecto y será usada únicamente con fines académicos, preservando así los datos personales de los entrevistados anónimamente. Antes de empezar, ¿me autoriza grabar esta entrevista?, tomando en cuenta el hecho de que es difícil para mí tomar nota durante la entrevista: si acepta, por favor diga sí.

Le recuerdo el carácter anónimo de esta entrevista, sin embargo, para facilitar el tratamiento de sus datos me gustaría saber su nombre y edad. La intervención de cada uno de ustedes es fructífera para el desarrollo de este estudio, siéntase libre de intervenir en cada una de las preguntas.

Esta entrevista vamos a situarnos en la modalidad de presencialidad remota que llevó a cabo en la institución desde marzo 2020 hasta julio 2021. A su vez la dividiremos en dos secciones:

Género en el aprendizaje del inglés en presencialidad remota

En la entrevista anterior hablamos un poco de sus estrategias didácticas y pedagógicas y si considera que varían según el género. Ahora me gustaría que nos centráramos en: el rol del género en el aprendizaje del inglés de los estudiantes:

1. ¿Que tipo de estrategias didácticas y pedagógicas usaría dependiendo del género?
Considerando características que haya observado en sus estudiantes dependiendo del género en su clase de inglés.
2. ¿Considera que existió una relación género-participación en su clase de inglés durante la presencialidad remota? ¿Que aspectos resaltaría de esa relación?
3. De acuerdo al desempeño que ha observado en sus estudiantes, ¿considera que se pudo observar una diferencia en cuanto a género durante la presencialidad remota? ¿Por qué?

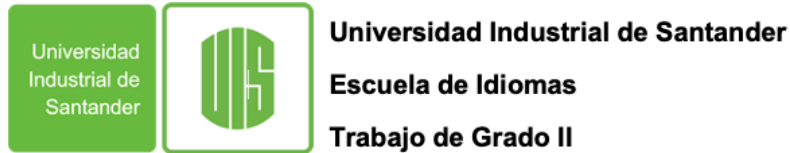


UNIVERSIDAD INDUSTRIAL DE SANTANDER
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS
TRABAJO DE GRADO II

Estrato socioeconómico en el aprendizaje del inglés en presencialidad remota

1. Si tiene estudiantes en el aula de clase sin los medios necesarios para llevar a cabo el trabajo individual en su clase de inglés (Ejemplo: conexión a internet: WiFi o datos, equipo tecnológico: computador o celular, conocimientos para usar los equipos tecnológicos a su disposición, etc.), ¿En qué medida o aspectos considera que le afecta la falta de medios para el trabajo individual durante la presencialidad remota?

Appendix E. Consent Form



Formato de Consentimiento

Formato de Consentimiento No. _____

Introducción

El siguiente proyecto de investigación llevado a cabo por la estudiante Dayra Alejandra Medina Becerra del programa de Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés tiene como objetivo de explorar categorías adscritas y adquiridas y su influencia en el aprendizaje del inglés en estudiantes universitarios. Este proyecto de investigación se lleva a cabo con el objetivo de aspirar al título profesional otorgado por el programa anteriormente mencionado.

Procedimiento

Si acepta ser parte del proyecto, se le hará llegar un cuestionario donde encontrará preguntas orientadas a las características escogidas: género y nivel socioeconómico. Este documento es redactado en español para asegurar completo entendimiento de los participantes, sin embargo los resultados encontrados en la implementación del proyecto se reportarán en inglés.

Riesgos

No hay riesgos a la hora de participar en este estudio porque es una exploración sobre un tema en particular. Sin embargo, hay algunas preguntas que abordan sus creencias personales que pudiesen llegar a generar incomodidad, en este caso, usted no está obligado a responder.

Beneficios

No hay beneficios directos para los participantes de este estudio. Por otro lado, su participación ayudará a la investigadora a obtener información que le será de gran utilidad a su proyecto y a obtener información que nutra este mismo.

Confidencialidad

Toda la información recolectada se mantendrá en completa confidencialidad y sólo tendrá acceso la persona que lleva a cabo el proyecto. Adicionalmente, no se hará uso del nombre del Instituto de Lenguas de la UIS ni de los participantes al reportar los resultados del estudio.

Participación

La participación en este proyecto de investigación es voluntaria. Como participante, usted tiene el derecho de retirarse en cualquier momento o rehusarse a participar sin que esto represente un peligro para su grado o puesto en la institución educativa en la que se encuentre. Este proyecto de investigación no forma parte de las actividades académicas programadas por el Instituto de Lenguas, ni tendrá incidencia en sus procesos administrativos o de evaluación.

Preguntas sobre el proyecto

Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca del proyecto puede contactar a Dayra Medina, estudiante a cargo del proyecto, al correo electrónico dayra.medina@correo.uis.edu.co o a Silvia Tarazona, docente de la Escuela de Idiomas, encargada de supervisar el proyecto al correo electrónico silvia.tarazona@correo.uis.edu.co

He leído, entendido y recibido una copia del consentimiento. Teniendo en cuenta esto decido participar por mi propia voluntad en esta investigación.

Firma: _____

Cédula: _____