

The impact of virtual modality on public secondary education in Colombia:  
Perceptions and contrasts in English learning during and post emergency remote teaching  
(ERT)

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### Abstract

**Title:** The impact of virtual modality on public secondary education in Colombia: Perceptions and contrasts in English learning during and post emergency remote teaching (ERT)\*

**Authors:** Edinson Fabian Olarte Moreno, Nathaly Mutis Arenas and Valentina Serrano Sarmiento\*\*

**Keywords:** ERT, DBA, COVID, Perceptions, English learning process.

### Description:

It is well-known that COVID-19 changed many people's way of life, and this is also the case for education as it was known before the pandemic. The contingency forced students and teachers to search for alternative methods for safe education from home, which, in turn, left endless doubts about the quality of this education aimed at students. This research paper explores the perceptions of public school students regarding English-language learning during and after Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), by contrasting the achievements obtained with the original guidelines proposed by the *Ministerio de Educación Nacional* (MEN).

The results of this investigation found that most guidelines proposed by the MEN were successfully implemented. These results were defined from an interpretive content analysis of a specific population. Moreover, the instruments that helped shape this analysis were a written questionnaire that consisted of qualitative and quantitative questions followed by an interview, the last was made on the zoom platform. After analyzing the results, it was concluded that there are three main implications in the English learning process during and after ERT. Also, the majority of participants stated that ERT helped them to improve their proficiency in the English language along with less preference for communicative skills.

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\*Degree Work

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## Resumen

**Título:** El impacto de la modalidad virtual en la educación secundaria pública en Colombia: Percepciones y contrastes en el aprendizaje del inglés durante y después de la enseñanza remota de emergencia (ERT)\*

**Autores:** Edinson Fabian Olarte Moreno, Nathaly Mutis Arenas y Valentina Serrano Sarmiento\*\*

**Palabras clave:** ERT, DBA, COVID, percepciones, proceso de aprendizaje del inglés.

### Descripción:

Es bien sabido que el COVID-19 cambió la forma de vida de muchas personas, y este también es el caso de la educación, y como era conocida antes de la pandemia. La contingencia obligó a estudiantes y docentes a buscar nuevos métodos y alternativas para una educación segura desde casa, lo que a su vez, dejó un sinfín de dudas sobre la calidad de esta educación dirigida a los estudiantes. Este trabajo de investigación trata de explorar las percepciones de los estudiantes de escuelas públicas sobre el aprendizaje del inglés durante y después de la Enseñanza Remota de Emergencia (ERT) contrastando los logros obtenidos con los lineamientos propuestos por el Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN).

A partir de los resultados de esta investigación se encontró que la mayoría de los lineamientos propuestos por el MEN fueron implementados con éxito en las clases. Esos resultados se definieron a partir de un análisis de contenido interpretativo de una población específica.

Además, los instrumentos que ayudaron a dar forma a este análisis fueron cuestionarios con preguntas cualitativas y cuantitativas seguidas de una entrevista. Luego de analizar los resultados, se concluyó que existen tres implicaciones principales en el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés durante y después de la ERT.

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## Resumé

**Titre:** L'impact de la modalité virtuelle sur l'enseignement secondaire public en Colombie : Perceptions et contrastes dans l'apprentissage de l'anglais pendant et après l'enseignement à distance d'urgence (ERT)\*

**Auteurs:** Edinson Fabian Olarte Moreno, Nathaly Mutis Arenas, Valentina Serrano Sarmiento\*\*

**Mots-clés:** ERT, DBA, COVID, perceptions, processus d'apprentissage de l'anglais.

### Description:

Il est bien connu que la COVID-19 a changé le mode de vie de nombreuses personnes, et c'est également le cas pour l'éducation telle que nous la connaissions avant la pandémie. Ce travail de recherche vise à explorer les perceptions des élèves des écoles publiques sur l'apprentissage de l'anglais pendant et après l'Enseignement à Distance d'Urgence (ERT), en confrontant les acquis obtenus avec les orientations proposées par le Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale (MEN). Sur la base des résultats de cette recherche, il a été constaté que la plupart des orientations proposées par le MEN ont été mises en œuvre avec succès dans les classes. Ces résultats ont été définis à partir d'une analyse interprétative du contenu d'une population spécifique. Par ailleurs, les instruments qui ont contribué à façonner cette analyse sont des questionnaires, comportant des questions qualitatives et quantitatives, suivis d'un entretien. Après l'analyse des résultats, il a été conclu qu'il existe trois implications principales dans le processus d'apprentissage de l'anglais pendant et après l'ERT.

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## 1. Introduction

Education and how it is conducted have evolved over the years to adapt to the different challenges and needs that society demands. The most recent case is the Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), implemented in response to the chaos generated by COVID-19 globally. The education of millions of children went from being conducted in physical classrooms to being emitted in virtual spaces that often lacked the appropriate standards for the desired knowledge to be fully developed. However, in some cases, this change was not synonymous with a disadvantage since the virtual environment is a familiar space to most students, where besides showing their skills, they feel comfortable, becoming beneficial for them. Thus, we arrive at the starting point, where we seek to demonstrate how virtual education was implemented in Colombia's public institutions, with an emphasis on the subject of English, and using the learning standards established by the *Ministerio de Educación Nacional* (MEN) as a guide.

Although there is a well-known gap between public and private institutions concerning basic primary and secondary education, the transition from face-to-face education to ERT also reflected the social inequalities and inequities that exist between the different sectors of the population. This phenomenon is even more remarkable when speaking of rural contexts. In the face of the state of emergency declared by the Colombian government, the internet became the major medium for maintaining continuity of the fundamental right to education. However, in several of these cases, the lack of guarantees for access to this fundamental right prevented its materialization (López & Gómez, 2020). Given this scenario, the quality standards dictated by the MEN have also been compromised. In the case of English-language learning, what is known as *Derechos Basicos de Aprendizaje: Inglés* (DBA) measures language proficiency according to the grade in which a student is enrolled. This is where it is essential to identify the role the current contingency has played in student learning

processes and determine the current compliance with the established standards for English-language learning.

Hence, the above being the major concern and interest for this investigation, it could be held to be an accurate research question that could fit the investigators' context and consideration, finding the necessary school population that could specify the situation to which the researchers emphasized. Consequently, the use of the most appropriate instruments for data collection guide us towards a better interpretation. In the same way, in this research work, the pertinent results analysis can be found based on the information obtained from participants' opinions. Therefore, the denouement of the research taken at the researcher's judgment from those results, gives way to further research and implications.

### **1.1 Problem context**

The start of the health contingency for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) marked an unprecedented milestone in the lives of people around the world. After the pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, the world as people knew it changed. The structural systems under which societies are organized changed under a plethora of uncertainties, and the educational system was one of the most affected. The so-called Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) was the preferred containment response in most countries to face the closures of schools and universities to protect the health and integrity of the youngest. According to information from UNESCO, more than 190 countries massively canceled any face-to-face educational activity affecting approximately more than 1,500 million students, 90% of the global student population (UNESCO, 2020). However, despite efforts to guarantee the continuity of the schooling process and mitigate the spread of the virus, this measure also exacerbated contemporary problems. Nowadays, millions of children and young people face situations that range from methodological and instructional difficulties to physical and mental health problems.

Unlike the online learning process designed to begin and end in these circumstances, the ERT proposed to move from the face-to-face mode to the virtual one. Specifically, according to Hodges (2020), ERT is a temporary shift from instructional delivery to an alternative form that involves remote teaching solutions that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face (as cited in Hodges & Fowler, 2020). Directors, teachers, students, and parents faced unknown contexts and situations that diminished the dynamism that used to exist in the classroom now that instruction had been passed to their homes. Even the experience of practicing teachers was challenged in a context that did not allow enough time to develop the necessary training and experience to overcome these new obstacles. In the first place, the internet connection, an essential resource to make up for the absence of classrooms, is not widely accessible to the entire student population, which limits access to equitable education. According to a report published by UNICEF and the International Telecommunications Union (ITN) in November 2020, two-thirds of the world's school-age children do not have access to the internet at home. Particularly, 58 percent of the wealthiest households have an internet connection at home, compared to only 16 percent of the poorest, a percentage that decreases even more when talking about rural contexts and the income levels of each country (UNICEF, 2020). In the case of Colombia, according to DANE and its last national population and housing census carried out in 2018, 52.7 percent of households have internet connection. Of this previous percentage, urban centers have coverage of 63.1 percent and rural only 16.2 percent (as cited in Monje, 2020).

In the second place, teaching methods and learning strategies have had to adjust to the scenarios that the pandemic has brought about. According to a study carried out in Colombia by the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, the transition, mastery, and usefulness of digital tools in the English teaching field implied teaching challenges for teachers for which they were not trained. Although most teachers have experience with technological

resources, administration, and adaptation of them both, there are flaws when it comes to monitoring individual learning processes (Triviño et al., 2021). As evidenced by Mendiola et al., (2020), managing groups of more than 40 students in a virtual environment overloads teaching work, even more, when exceptional political measures have been prolonged and institutional support has been discontinuous or has not kept up with current needs (Mendiola et al., 2020). During the two years of virtual classes, the students have also noticed a decrease in their learning levels and skills. In language learning, the abrupt change of modality has been counterproductive in the performance and learning of students, affecting the interaction processes vital to this field (Mahyoob et al., 2020).

The challenges that will arise once the health contingency ends are significant. The gaps and inequalities in educational standards for each grade must be observed and diagnosed by attending to the leveling and dropout processes. The reopening of educational institutions should be a priority as the immunization processes of the communities advance. Today, 647 million students are affected by the closures of their study centers on the eve of the beginning of the third year of the pandemic (UNESCO, 2022). According to World Bank estimates, these closures can increase learning poverty in low- and middle-income countries by as much as 70 percent, costing the current generation of schoolchildren \$17 billion in lifetime earnings (UNICEF, 2021). As reported by the secretary of the United Nations (UN), the world faces a generational catastrophe that could misspend incalculable human potential, undermine decades of progress and magnify entrenched inequalities (United Nations, 2020).

### ***1.1.1 Scopes and limitations***

Through the study's application, it was possible to discern the perceptions that ninth-grade students from a public school have about their English-teaching and learning process during and after the ERT modality derived from the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, it is also possible to determine student reactions to their return to face-to-face and blended

learning education. Likewise, the study illuminated the feasibility of the guidelines established by the *Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN)*. However, contact with the study population, the implementation of instruments, and the required permissions to handle the collected information may be limitations that could arise during the elaboration of this project.

## **1.2 Research question**

Based on the information previously gathered concerning the context and background that underlies this study, we proposed the following question: What are the perceptions of high school students from a public school in Bucaramanga regarding the impact of the emergency remote teaching (ERT) on their learning process generated by the COVID-19 pandemic? This question is the foundation of our project and the guide for the development of this research study.

## **1.3 Justification**

During the last two years, it could be evidenced that COVID-19 has changed the way education is delivered and received since school and home have become one in the same (Villafuerte, 2020). Hence, the present research focuses on exploring the perceptions of students about the English learning process during and after the pandemic. As Loreto (2021) mentioned, the pandemic sped up the digitization process and taught education that it is possible to break some traditional practices in education systems. Also, this new implementation of technologies could lead to beneficial training and a much more flexible and personalized education. However, it is important to take into account the differences and inequities that students could face in this adaptation process. Thus, it is essential to provide a space to discuss the necessities of education during, and after, the contingency. All of this is in exchange for the creation of a better educational system that can combine good technology,

high-quality pedagogy, as well as better adaptation to the new face-to-face and virtual learning scenarios that have been enhanced by the pandemic.

## **1.4 Objectives**

### **1.4.1 *General objective***

The main objective of this paper is to explore the perceptions of a selected group of students from a public school in Bucaramanga regarding English-language learning during and after the ERT by contrasting the achievements obtained with the guidelines proposed by the MEN.

### **1.4.2 *Specific objectives***

1. To identify the factors and implications in the English learning processes during and after the ERT in high school students.
2. To analyze the objectives proposed in the *Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje* (DBA) during the virtual classes.
3. To collate through students' perceptions whether there was any change in their English learning processes in the context of ERT.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

COVID-19 has changed the way people work, relate, and most importantly to this project, study and teach. This section discusses the literature review regarding ERT during and after the pandemic. Additionally, this section concerns the theoretical bases such as the differences among ERT, blended, and hybrid learning. Finally, it also includes information about the legal reference of education in Colombia.

### **2.1 Background**

Once the pandemic took control over people's lives, and decisions, it was determined that ERT became essential, but it led to the debate that society was not prepared for it. Therefore, issues with learning, acquisition and methods begin to appear. Valero et al. (2020) bibliographically research the dynamics of virtual teaching and learning brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was scrutinized that virtual education seems more like a necessity in times of instability, but there is a wide educational gap between communities in virtual education due to factors such as equitable internet access, especially when they are in rural environments, which do not guarantee quality educational processes. This research helps as a guide since it presents detailed information on the incident factors that virtual modality leaves behind and its effects on the quality in the different levels of education, and teaching adaptation.

A second paper regarding education during pandemia of Carabelli, (2020) performs a Likert-type scale, and a survey of closed and open-ended questions to 86 students of the Faculty of Humanities of Uruguay. This study sought to determine the fulfillment of the objectives of an English course by moving from face-to-face to virtual modality. It could be observed that the English reading comprehension course reached the expected objectives and skills since dynamics were similar to the ones used in the face-to-face modality. Although,



there were other circumstances that needed improvements, such as participation and social interaction. Similarly, Mahyoob, (2020) mentioned in his investigation that students do not really endure problems with technology, but their challenges were more about the speed of internet connection and dissatisfaction. He explored via online questionnaires 184 students' experiences, satisfaction levels in the course, and common problems faced, with the purpose of determining the challenges and obstacles to which students have been exposed in English language courses in Saudi Arabia. The results showed that the lack of satisfaction is due to students not being able to complete their tasks or activities. Somehow, learning became counterproductive in its virtual performance and affected the vital interaction processes in language learning.

Not going far from home, here in Colombia professor Alonso, (2021) shared his experience using ERT at a university in Antioquia. This case study's purpose was to describe real-life situations in a new educational experience. It was mentioned that since it was all without warning, new methods and strategies without much experience had to be faced. All along with beginning a process of learning the new tools obtained became the only source the professor could rely on. Also, it was highlighted that culture plays a valuable aspect in language interactions since the sense of humor that students had during this new adaptation process was meaningful to soften the progress in the course.

In this direction, it is evident that the virtual English learning process faces many problems when this modality is implemented all of a sudden. Kamal et al. (2021) examined through surveys to 103 language students with a series of questionnaires during and subsequently 21 days after being exposed to each modality that measured the different levels of language skills. All filling its purpose of looking at the changes in cognitive processes and academic performance, made by the transition from classroom to virtual study modalities. In this case, results showed that virtual modality became beneficial since students had more free

time, more frequent breaks, and more comfort. Anyhow, this article shows the advantages perceived by students, it needs to be put into consideration the influence of the results such as proper monitoring.

In order to solve and decipher earlier results, López et al. (2021) also identified the challenges, and experiences that students in initial training as teachers of an Institution of Higher Education in Ecuador focused on. In the same way, they used questionnaires and a focus group as a data collection method, these questions were aimed to know students' experiences, difficulties, and the use they gave to connection devices. This time, results showed that learning is not completed as it was just based on attendance rather than teaching which drove to the conclusion that monitoring was not well-developed, many students seemed to be inside the virtual classroom but never got involved. Also, some students expressed that this new teaching basis generates more difficulties since many present problems on the internet's quality and stability.

In conclusion, ERT started by being a non-conventional modality that became crucial to the survival of schooling. Thanks to the necessity that education has gone through, new methods, strategies, and tools started to be developed. However, academically talking, it may not be as virtuous as it should be.

## **2.2 Theoretical bases**

Online education and its teaching and learning processes are concepts that have been studied for a long time before they became a fundamental tool in the COVID-19 pandemic. There are multiple research studies, theories, models, standards, and evaluation criteria to verify its effectiveness (Picciano, 2021). Virtual education is known as that modality that emerged to generate new learning spaces different from those of the traditional face-to-face and semi-face-to-face modalities. Globalization and the growing boom in the development

and skills in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have made it possible to integrate education into one of its fields of action long before the pandemic (Cepal, 2021). However, this contingency led the different delivery modes and approaches in the teaching and learning processes to rapidly strengthen their foundations to guarantee continuous access to education.

### ***2.2.1 Virtual Education.***

Valdez (2018) defines virtual education as a renewed model that has the uniqueness of an innovative and flexible curriculum, which generates interaction in the teaching-learning relationship and self-learning, supported by ICTs (as cited in Mauricio & Alexandra, 2020). Likewise, Saldarriaga et al. (2016) mention that virtual education is an influential strategy to improve attendance and effectiveness at different levels and types of training, due to its hypertextual, interactive, and multimedia (as cited in Saldarriaga et al., 2016). In general, effective online learning comes after a careful instructional design and planning process, using a systematic model for design and development. In this way, the outcome process affects the quality of instruction and the training process as a whole (Hodges et al., 2020).

### ***2.2.2 Blended & Hybrid Learning.***

Other approaches such as blending learning or hybrid learning have gained importance and gained popularity and recognition in times of pandemic. For its part, blending learning, in Brew's words, "means integrating online and face-to-face formats to create a more effective learning experience" (Brew, 2008, p. 98) (As cited in Al Zumor et al., 2013). According to Badawi "blending learning is a flexible approach that combines face-to-face learning activities with online learning practices that allow students to exchange collective and individual feedback in four specific areas: namely, learner feedback, learner strategies,

and alternative assessment synchronously or asynchronously“ (Badawi, 2009, p. 15). For its part, hybrid learning, according to Littlejohn & Pegler (2007), is an integration of face-to-face teaching and learning methods with online approaches. In general, hybrid learning is about a mix of modes of instruction, delivery media, instructional, and web-based technologies (as cited in Klimova & Kacetl, 2015).

### ***2.2.3 Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT).***

On the other hand, unlike what is conceived and designed to be developed in one or several modalities from the beginning, emergency remote teaching (ERT) is according to Wang, 2020, a temporary change of teaching to an alternative mode due to emergency circumstances (as cited in Shim & Lee, 2020). As the expansion and spread of COVID-19 increased, the closures of schools and universities also boosted, with ERT being the preferred containment measure. ERT differs from other modalities since ERT does not intend to recreate a particularly compact educational ecosystem, but rather to supply limited access to instruction in a way that is quick to establish during an emergency (Barbour et al., 2020). Depending on the emergency context, ERT allows teachers and students to have curricular and academic freedom to maximize learning opportunities. For this, there must be reflective processes raised in need to generate innovative strategies, discern between their goals, and strengthen vital educational interests (Toquero, 2020).

In conclusion, whatever the delivery modality and approach, there are a series of distinctive characteristics that do not allow one to generalize with the other, the specific case of ERT. With the arrival of the pandemic, virtual and distance education became widespread to such an extent that it was as if one were talking about it. It is crucial to know the differentiation when evaluating what ERT has left so far in face-to-face educational

institutions in the more than two years when classrooms move to the homes of students, teachers, administrators, and parents.

### 2.3 Legal framework

Education is a neuralgic issue in present-day society. Such is the case that in recent years, social outbursts have been generated, mainly in South America. The purpose of these is mainly to guarantee the right to free, quality, and affordable education for all as emphasized by the United Nations, “everyone has the right to education” (1948, art. 26). This notion is reiterated in the Colombian constitution of 1991, in force until now, which states that "Education is a right of the individual and a public service that has a social function: it seeks access to knowledge, science, technology, and other goods and values of culture" (República de Colombia, 1991). Based on the previously mentioned, it is important to ratify that education is a fundamental right to which every human being, regardless of nationality, should have easy and free access. In the case of Colombia, the MEN has as one of its main functions the generation of mechanisms that facilitate access to education.

One of the most relevant laws issued by this government organism is the *Ley General de Educacion* or *Ley 115 de 1994*. This law stipulates how the educational institutions should be governed and encourages the improvement of the quality of education provided in the country. Also, the MEN sets certain areas of knowledge that must be included in the institutions' curricula, among them are foreign languages (Law No. 115, 1994). However, this regulation does not specify a particular foreign language. Over time, this legislation has gone through some changes. In 2013 *Ley 1651* was enacted, which modified several aspects of the *Ley General de Educacion*, highlighted the teaching of English as a foreign language, and the creation of the *Ley de Bilingüismo* (Ley No.1651, 2013). Thus, clarity is given concerning the foreign language to be taught in educational establishments.

The above-mentioned laws have been the basis for the design of guidelines and bilingual programs that seek to promote and strengthen the English language in the country. This process began with the elaboration of the *Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés* (EBC), a project of the MEN with the British Council. Its aim is to unify and provide guidance on what knowledge should be taught and learned at each school level (Vélez, 2006). Moreover, MEN (2016) develops the *Derechos Básico de Aprendizaje: Inglés* (DBA), as a complement of the EBC for the improvement of the quality of English teaching. In addition, to date, 3 programs have been carried out to reinforce the English language in the country's schools, being the last one the *Programa Nacional de Inglés* (2015-2025), which looks for 50% of the students in Colombia reach a B1+ English level by the end of High School (MEN, nd.). Nevertheless, it is necessary to take into account the global current circumstances at the moment to evaluate the results of this program.

### **3. Methodology Design**

This section presents the methodology implemented for the elaboration of this research. It shows the type of research that was carried out, describes the hypotheses and variables, the sampling and the population included in the research, the instruments used to collect the data, the resources and analysis techniques that were applied and, finally, the schedule plan followed.

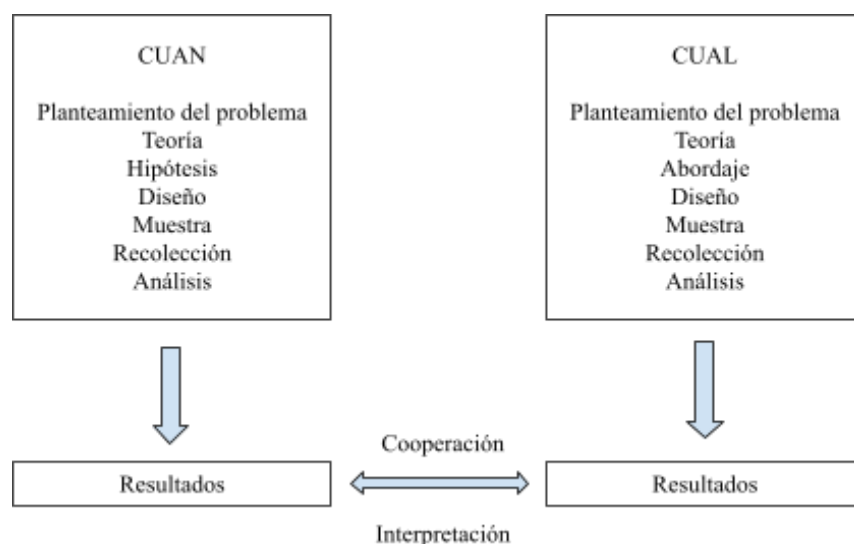
#### **3.1 Type of investigation**

This research study had a mixed-method approach mostly directed towards the qualitative perspective. Cohen et al. (2018), claim that in the field of qualitative research, human beings are seen as subjects in constant construction of perceptions based on their daily experiences, what surrounds them, and how they interpret it. Also, Chen (2006) stated that mixed methods seek to merge the qualitative and quantitative parts, regardless of their

variations, to obtain a more real and closer overview of the problem to be investigated (as cited in Hernández & Mendoza, 2018).

**Figure 1.**

*Concurrent triangulation design (DITRIAC)*



*Source:* From *Metodología de la investigación: las rutas cuantitativa, cualitativa y mixta* (p.638) by Hernández, R., & Mendoza, C, 2018, Mc Graw Hill Education.

With this in mind, delving into the students' perceptions both qualitatively and quantitatively, it was possible to achieve a balance and greater accuracy in the collection, analysis, and sampling of the results.

### 3.2 Hypothesis and variables

After the research question was formulated, the following hypothesis was established: the students of the public school *Instituto Tecnico Damaso Zapata*, in the ninth grade, have favorable perceptions regarding their English learning process during the ERT. In this way, the dependent variable would be the students' perceptions, and their learning process would be the independent variable. With this clear, this research sought to ratify or deny this

affirmation and the existing relationship between these variables. In addition to this, no follow-up indicators were necessary during the development of this research work.

### **3.3 Sample and sampling**

This research study takes place at the *Instituto Técnico Superior Dámaso Zapata*, a public secondary school institution in Bucaramanga. This educational institution has 4,460 male and female students currently enrolled, of which 520 belong to the ninth grade. Their age range is between 12 and 15 years old, and they are distributed into 13 groups. The sample selected were two groups that were chosen randomly. According to the MEN, this specific grade must have an intermediate level of English (B1), which could provide notions about the level of achievement of the MEN standards. 30 students were selected, 15 from each group, from a probability sampling process in the form of simple random sampling where all had the same chance of being selected. As stated in Creswell, “Simple random sampling intends to choose individuals to be sampled who were representative of the population” (Klassen, et al., 2012). It is necessary to clarify that all the participants involved remained anonymous in this research.

### **3.4 Data collection instruments**

The quantitative information from questionnaires and the qualitative information from open and closed-ended questions, and interviews merged so the two types of data could strengthen each other (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Therefore, the information necessary to achieve the above objectives were collected by two main instruments: Questionnaire and interviews.



### ***3.4.1 Consent form.***

Before starting the data collection process, the corresponding legal procedures were managed with the educational institution for the application of this study. A letter of consent was delivered to each of the participants informing about the purpose, dynamics and ethical and legal agreements established in the research. This contained the signature of the parents or person responsible for the students involved before the application of the questionnaire and interviews. Finally, it is important to mention that participants were informed that their personal data and the information collected were used solely and exclusively anonymously for purely academic purposes (Annexe 1).

### ***3.4.2 Questionnaire.***

Questionnaires can be an adequate help when talking about a quick and efficient way of measuring attitudes, behaviors, preferences, and opinions in numerous samples (McLeod, 2018). This questionnaire was applied to a population of 20 students, and it contained a total of 10 different types of Likert scale and open-ended questions, which were divided into three main sections. In the first section, students were asked about some demographic information relevant to this study. In the second section, the viewpoint of students were requested regarding English classes during ERT. Finally, in the last section, students were asked about their opinion concerning face-to-face modality after ERT.

### ***3.4.3 Interviews.***

According to Moore (2017) “interviews are used to gather data that allow the interviewers to explore questions in greater depth (p.397).” In this part, a sample of 13.5% of the population was selected following a random selection sampling. The interview consists of 7 questions about the individual English learning process of the student interviewed during

and after the pandemic. These questions sought to know more deeply and in a more individual way those perceptions during and after ERT by asking about personal feelings, attitudes, and experiences.

### 3.5. Resources and analysis techniques

Different tools were used depending on the type of data collection. On the one hand, quantitative information was collected through questionnaires using Google forms. On the other hand, qualitative information was compiled through interviews and recorded by the video call platform known as Zoom. Afterward, the quantitative results were analyzed in two moments. First, after the summary of results returned by the Google forms interface itself. Second, the data was exported to Microsoft Excel, providing greater flexibility in organizing, aggregating, sorting, filtering, adapting, and graphing the results. In the case of qualitative data, the interviews were transcribed for later analysis and grouping of the possible points in common and those that differ. In this way, a classification was made, allowing an easy understanding of the qualitative data through Microsoft Excel when presenting its results. Specifically, the data analysis was carried out under an interpretive content analysis that allowed the aforementioned classification by both explicit and implicit common points.

### 3.6. Activities and timetables

[illegible]

[illegible]

	July 1															
Second general revision	July 4-8															
Revision APA 7th edition format	July 18-22															
Culmination final paper	July 25- August 5															

#### 4. Results analysis.

The analysis of the collected information was carried out through one of the variants of the technique known as content analysis. As Holsti (1969) mentions, this technique allows inferences to be made about specific characteristics that are objectively identified in the messages (as cited in Drisko & Maschi, 2016). In addition, this technique allows the data to be objectified using coding and categories that allow the data obtained to be filtered, being a research technique to make replicable and valid inferences from the texts to the contexts (Krippendorff, 2013 as cited in Drisko & Maschi, 2016). Specifically, an interpretive content analysis was carried out that allows for a more interpretive and inferential perspective of content analysis where both manifest and latent are considered and analyzed. Manifest content or denotative meanings is explicit in the data. While latent content or connotative meanings is the one that is not explicit, the symbolism underlying physically present data

(Berg, 2008 as cited in Drisko & Maschi, 2016). The above due to some forms of discourse, such as sarcasm, irony, or double meaning, require active interpretation of communications. In this sense, the four resulting categories are presented along with their results after applying the interpretive content analysis to the questionnaire answers. Moreover, what was found in the interviews is also presented. Finally, it is pertinent to mention that the questionnaire was presented to students in both languages, being English the one chosen to do the analysis.

**Figure 2.**

*Resulting categories and coding after interpretative content analysis.*

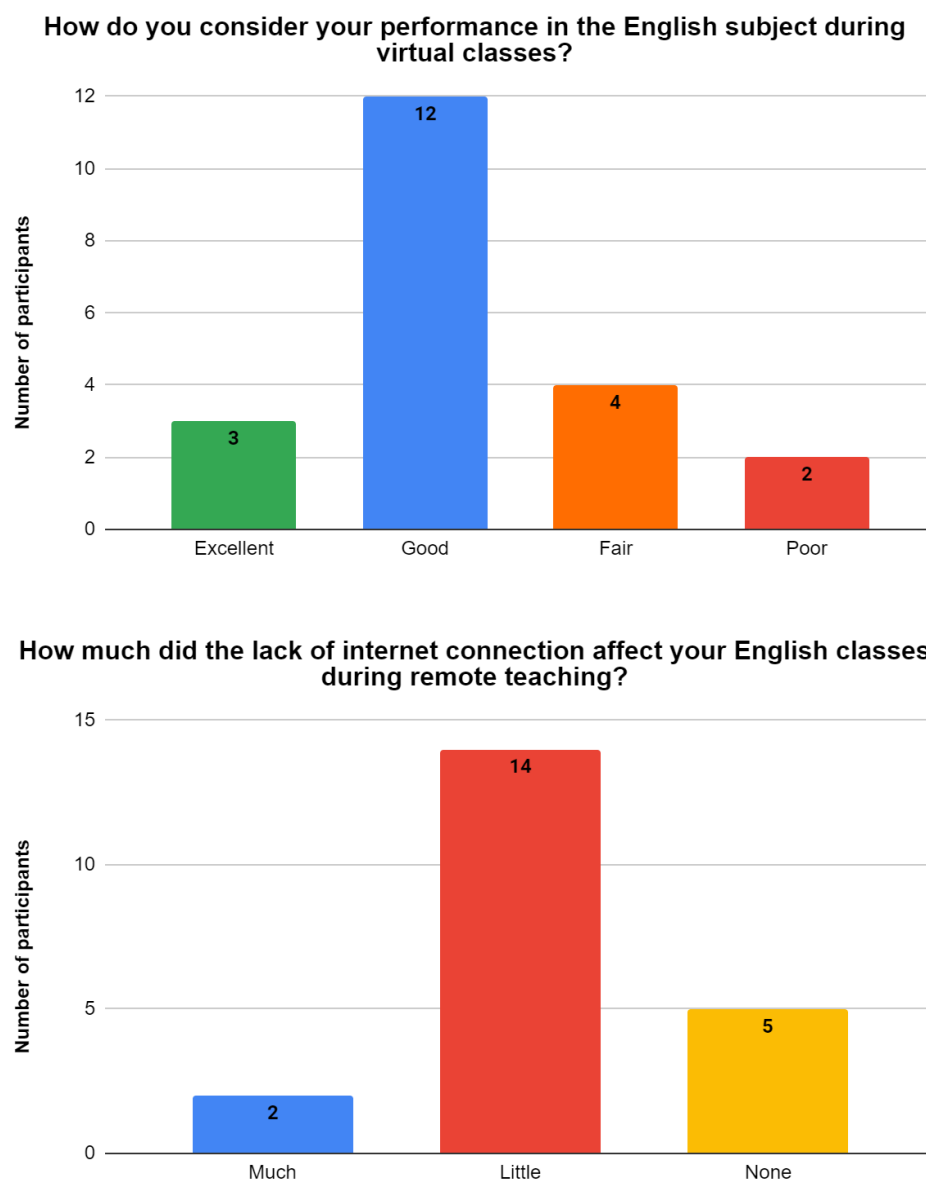
Category	Question	Nomenclature
English proficiency perception during and after ERT	How do you consider your performance in the English subject during virtual classes?	Q1
	How much did the lack of internet connection affect your English classes during remote teaching?	Q2
	How do you consider your performance in English after virtual classes?	Q6
	Do you consider that virtual classes increase or decrease your level of English? Why?	Q9
	How well do you manage your time in face-to-face English classes?	Q10
Didactic strategies as a factor that influences the level of participation during ERT	How often did you participate in virtual English classes?	Q3
	What kind of strategies did your English teacher use during remote classes?	Q8
Changes in remote and face-to-face English classes	If you could change something about your English remote classes, what would you change?	Q4
	If you could change something about your face-to-face English classes, what would you change?	Q7

Implementation of the Derechos básicos de aprendizaje (DBA)

Based on your learning experience, which of these standards do you think were carried out during English remote classes?

Q5

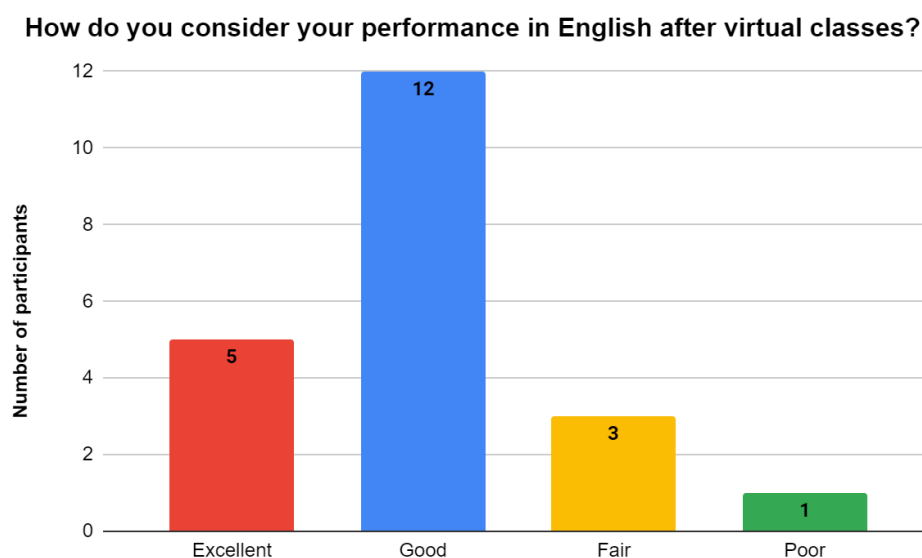
#### 4.1 English proficiency perception during and after ERT



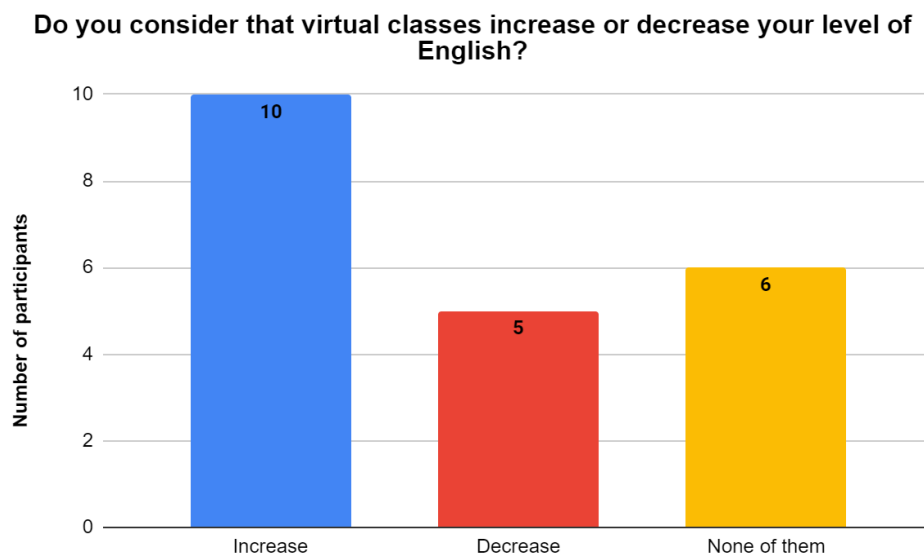
**Graphic 4.** Q1 and Q2 results.

The data collected shows that a significant part of the students consider that their performance during the ERT was good. 15% of the students mentioned that it was excellent,

while only 10% perceived it as poor. Of these, their poor adherence to the language is compromised by the quality of their internet connectivity (Q1). Students were asked to scale how connection problems and/or the lack of internet could affect their performance in the remote English classes (Q2). This time, it was found that a majority of students (70%) declared that the internet affected just a bit in their performance during this process. On the other hand, 20% of the students stated that internet connection did not represent any problem. Finally, 10% affirmed that internet connection had a crucial role during their performance in remote English classes. This could determine that the majority of students agreed that the internet did have a percentage of blame in how they were able to cope with the remote classes. As Hazwani (as cited in Mohd et al, 2021) mentioned, internet connection is the most meaningful aspect that influences ERT. With these data collected, it could be deduced that in this case, the internet problems should not have affected the performance of the students, since very little was presented.



**Graphic 5.** Q6 results.

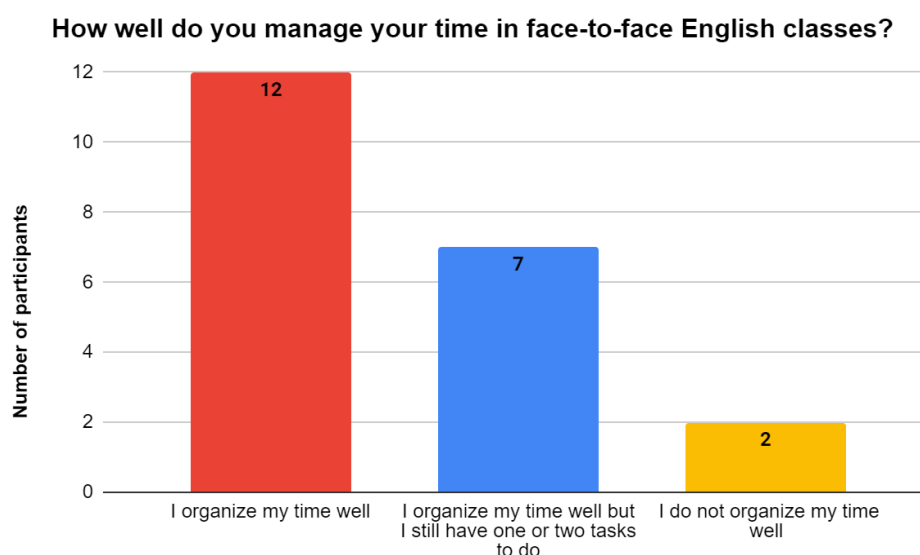


**Graphic 6.** Q9 results.

Simultaneously, regarding performance perceptions after remote classes (Q6), the number of students satisfied with it increased, displacing most of the students to ranges other than that considered poor. The results were in descending order: 55% good, 25% excellent, and 15% fair. As evidenced, the change in modality according to the sample was not so uneven among those who consider remote classes as the main factor that led to an increase or decrease in their English proficiency (Q9). 50% reckon that it helped to increase it, and another 25% are among those who noticed a decrease in their learning process. The main reasons in favor of remote teaching lie in practicality and the focus on new themes and dynamics that fostered language acquisition. On the contrary, there are more outstanding distractions that condition learning, less significant learning due to the use of online translators, and the flexibility in the rules that provoked disconnection and disinterest in their learning processes. When it comes to the students' time management, they had to scale how well they manage it in face-to-face classes (Q10). 60% of students claimed that they effectively organized their time, and 35% of students added that they organized their time but despite that, they still had unfinished activities or tasks. Finally, just 5% of students answered



that they did not manage their time at all. With this analysis, it could be seen that the majority of students successfully administer their time when they have to go to school and that the other 40% mentioned having problems when managing their time that leads to incomplete English tasks.

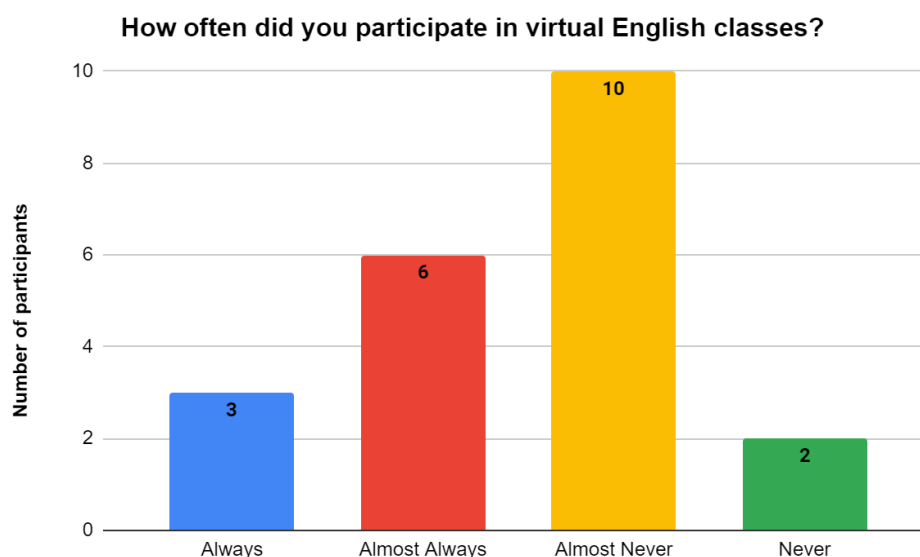


**Graphic 7.** Q10 results.

#### **4.2 Didactic strategies as a factor that influences the level of participation during ERT**

The didactic strategies and resources that stood out the most during the remote classes were online games, online work guides, slides, forums, audiovisual material, and the incorporation of social platforms that were not used in pre-pandemic times. Regarding the methodology of the classes, the students highlight considerable flexibility in the assessment and communication methods. As mentioned by Alvarado (2022), remote classes encouraged the incorporation of technological tools that have ended up being of great help to the training of students. Despite this, the lack of consistent and face-to-face interaction and exposure to the language in times of pandemic has negatively impacted the language skills that generate fluency and communicative competence (Llanquileo, Sandoval, Peña, 2021). When

contrasting this information with their level of participation, despite having progress in terms of teaching strategies, this did not represent a higher number of enrollment in remote classes. Most mentioned that they never got to participate in them, while a smaller group perceived a noted opportunity to participate in class. The students highlight that despite having a more dynamic content presentation, the remote classes as such increased their vocabulary but not their fluency. The above, despite the fact that the speaking ability is present in most of the DBAs for 8th grade.

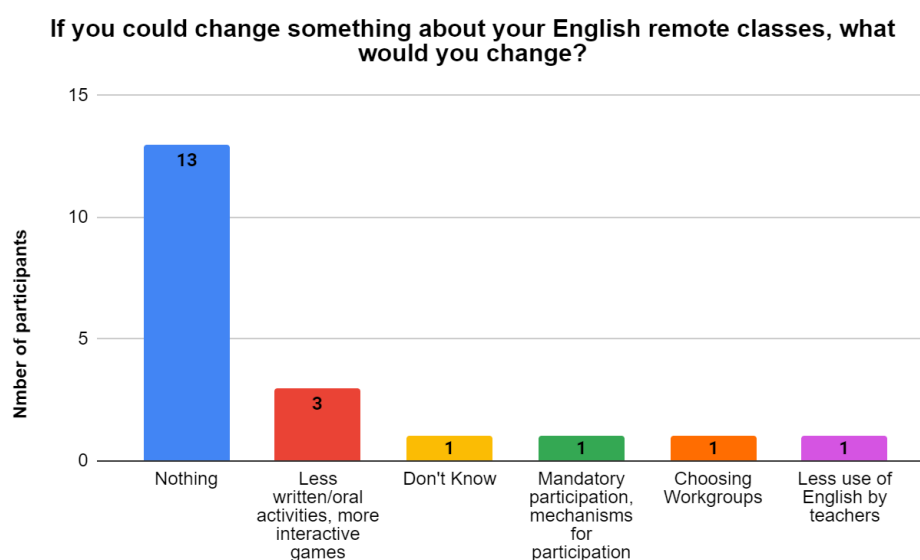


**Graphic 8.** Q3 results.

#### 4.3 Changes in remote and face-to-face English classes

The following category compiles the information obtained from questions 4 and 7 of the questionnaire applied to the participants. This category is focused on identifying the changes that students would make to their English classes, whether conducted remotely or face-to-face. For this purpose, the questions were analyzed individually, and at the same time compared what the participants contributed to the research.

On the one hand, Q4 was presented in an open-ended manner in order to know in a more detailed way the changes that the students propose for the remote classes. Thus, after analyzing their responses, they were grouped and organized into the following categories:

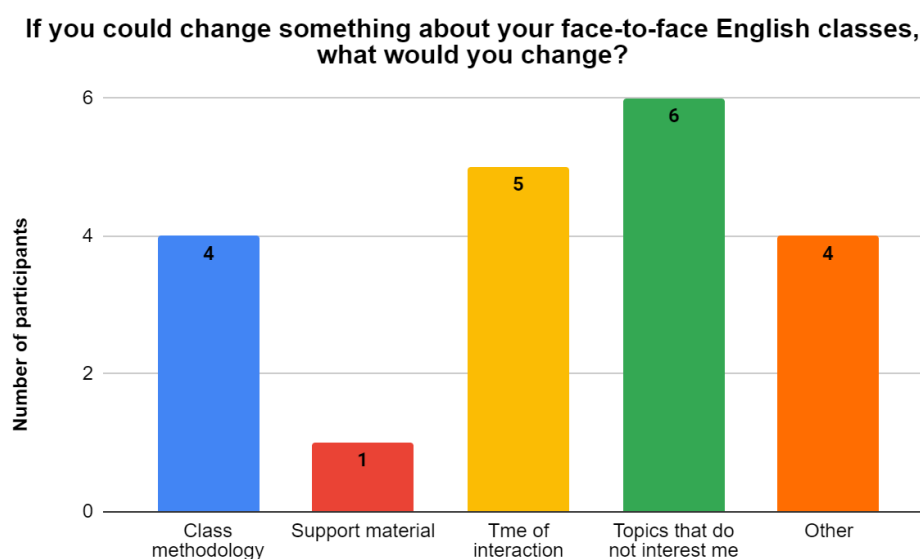


**Graphic 9.** Q4 results.

The graphic shows that 13 (65%) students were satisfied with the virtual classes, stating that they would not change anything about them. While 7 (35%) mentioned some aspects that would have changed of the remote classes, among which are: less written/oral activities, more interactive games: 3 (15%), don't know: 1 (5%), mandatory participation, mechanisms for participation: 1 (5%), choosing workgroups: 1 (5%), and less use of English by teachers 1 (5%). These data reflect the conformity of the majority of the population with respect to the classes they had remotely and how they were developed.

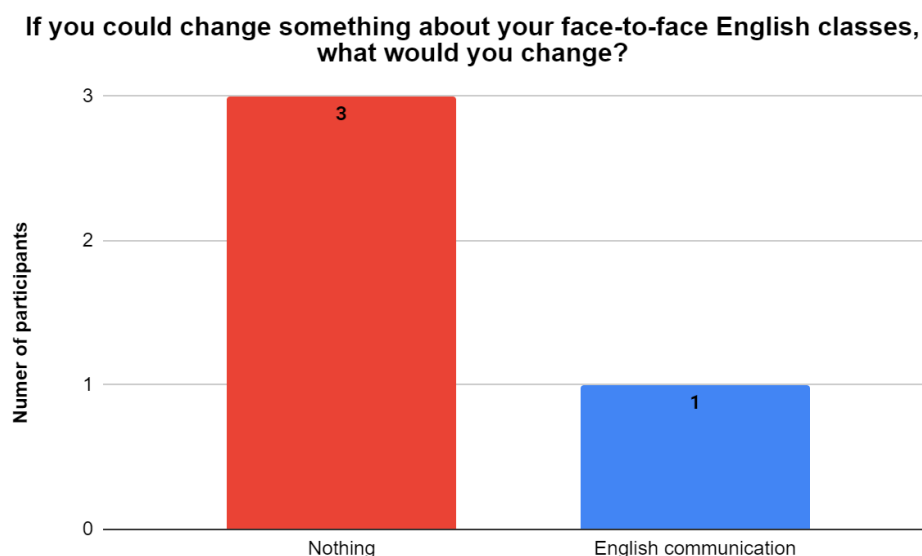
On the other hand, Q7 has five answer options, these are (1) class methodology, (2) support material, (3) time of interaction, (4) topics that do not interest me, and (5) other. The last option gave the participant the possibility to write down the aspect that they would like to

change about his/her face-to-face classes and that was not mentioned in the options previously given. This is how the following graph is obtained:



**Graphic 10.** Q7 results.

The graphic shows that 4 (20%) of the surveyed population consider the methodology of the face-to-face English classes as a factor to be changed. One participant (5%) considers that the support materials should be adequate for the classes, while 5 (25%) of them affirmed that they would change the time of interaction during the face-to-face English classes. In addition to this, 6 participants (30%) agree that the topics covered during the classes are not of interest to them, being this the most selected aspect by the respondents. Finally, 4 participants (20%) chose the option "other". It is important to mention that the participants who checked the "other" option were asked to describe which aspects (other than those mentioned above) should be changed in the face-to-face classes. Thus, after being analyzed, this information was classified as shown below:



**Graphic 11.** Q7.1 results “other” option.

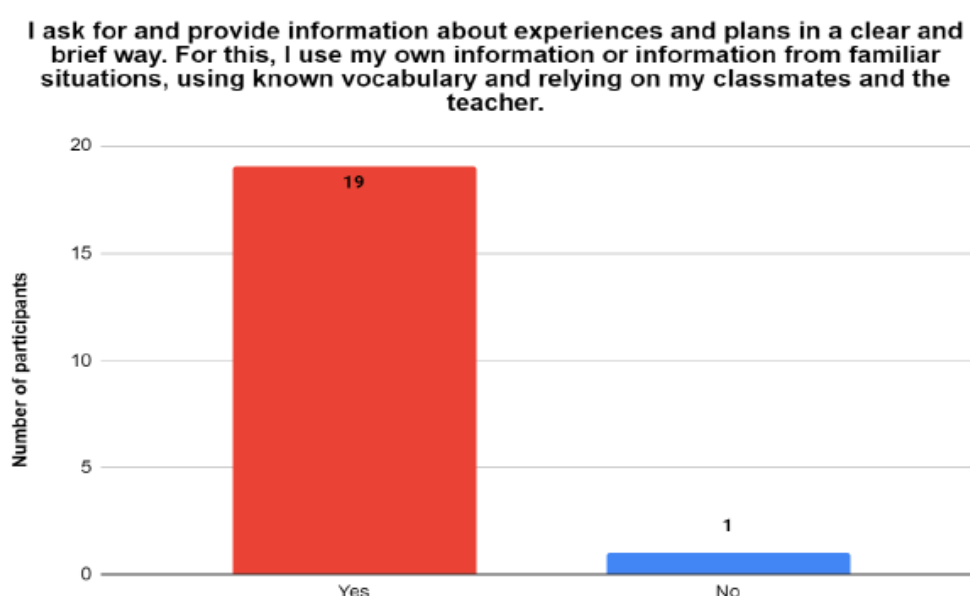
The graphic shows that 3 (75%) of the 4 students who selected the "other" option stated that they would not change any aspect of their face-to-face classes, while 1 (25%) participant finds that constant communication is a factor they would change. When comparing the above graphics, it can be seen that, in contrast to the remote classes, the participants find several aspects to improve or change in their face-to-face classes, with only 15% stating that they would not change anything about them.

With this information, we can close this category by concluding that, despite the fact that the remote teaching and learning modality was established as a contingency plan derived from the pandemic situation present during the last two years, the adaptation of the students to it was evident.

#### **4.4 Implementation of the *Derechos básicos de aprendizaje (DBA)***

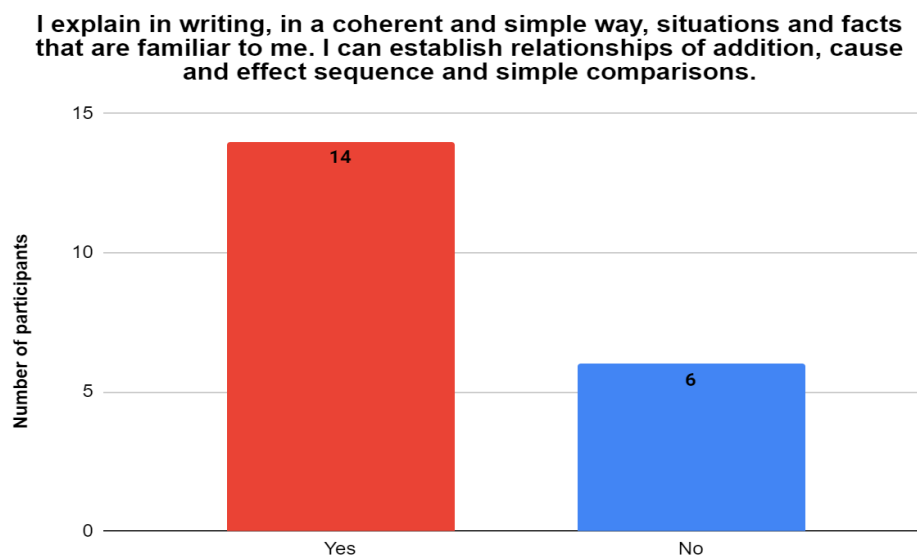
This category is focused on students' perception of the implementation of the basic learning standards during remote classes. The standards-aligned with the MEN mandates and

included in the English area plan of the educational institution were taken into account. The purpose of this is to know if these aspects were taken into account during the English classes that were carried out remotely, complying with the MEN guidelines with respect to the contents that should be taught according to the students' grade. For this, Q5 and the excerpts from the interviews contain the 8 standards that should be applied for 8th grade taking into account that it was during that course that the students had remote classes. The results are shown below.



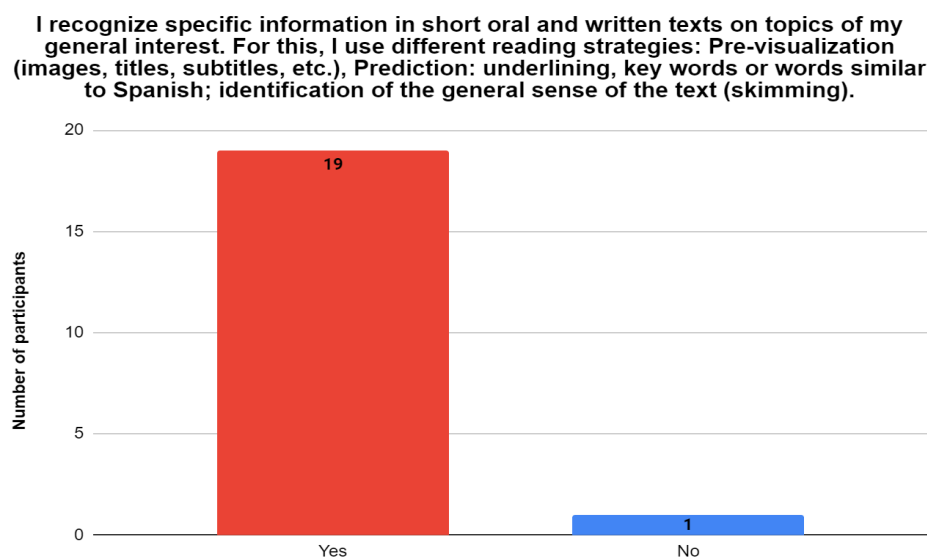
**Graphic 12.** Q5 Derecho Básico de Aprendizaje #1.

The graphic shows that 95% of the surveyed population (19) stated that standard #1: *"I ask for and provide information about experiences and plans in a clear and brief way. For this, I use my own information or information from familiar situations, using known vocabulary and relying on my classmates and the teacher."* was present during the remote classes, while the remaining 5% of the population (1) did not evidence this standard in the development of the remote English classes.



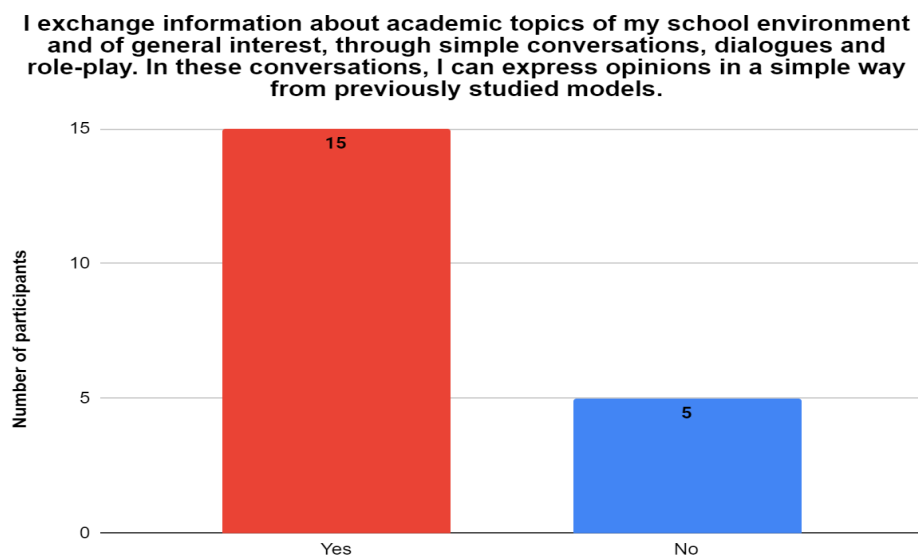
**Graphic 13.** Q5 Derecho Básico de Aprendizaje #2.

Regarding this standard, 14 participants (70%) affirmed that it did take place during the virtual classes, while 6 of them (30%) could not identify it in the development of their virtual English classes.



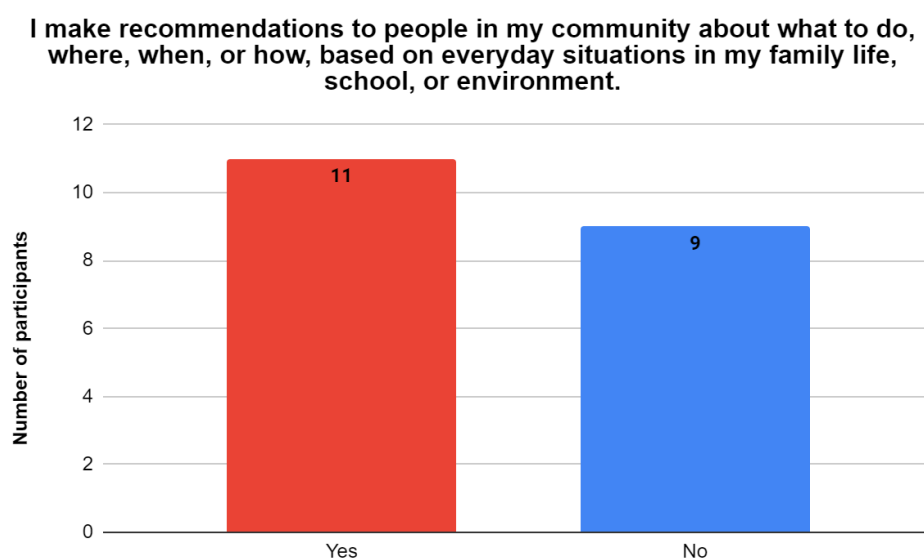
**Graphic 14.** Q5 Derecho Básico de Aprendizaje #3.

The graphic shows that 95% of the surveyed population said they had addressed this standard during their virtual classes, while the remaining 5% said they had not touched on this topic.



**Graphic 15.** Q5 Derecho Básico de Aprendizaje #4.

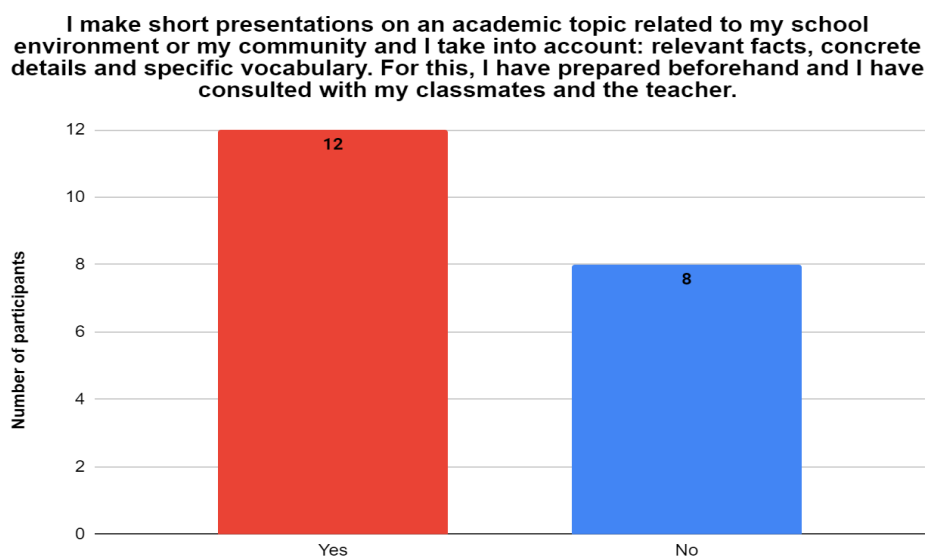
The graphic shows that 15 participants (75%) responded that they did cover this standard in their virtual English classes, while 5 (25%) mentioned that they did not.



**Graphic 16.** Q5 Derecho Básico de Aprendizaje #5.

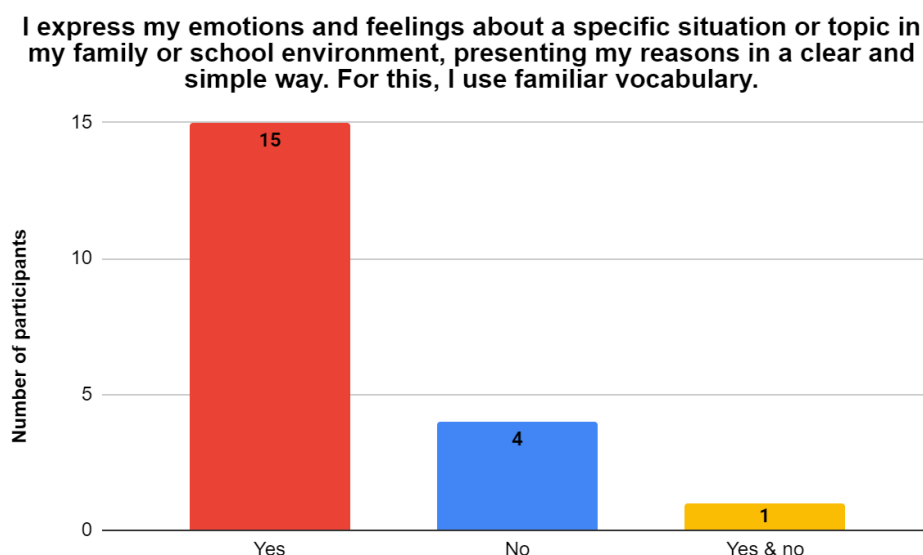


The graphic shows similar values, 11 people (55%) agreed that the standard 5: *"I make recommendations to people in my community about what to do, where, when or how, based on everyday situations in my family life, school or environment"* was discussed in class, while 9 (45%) agreed that this standard was not addressed during their virtual English classes.



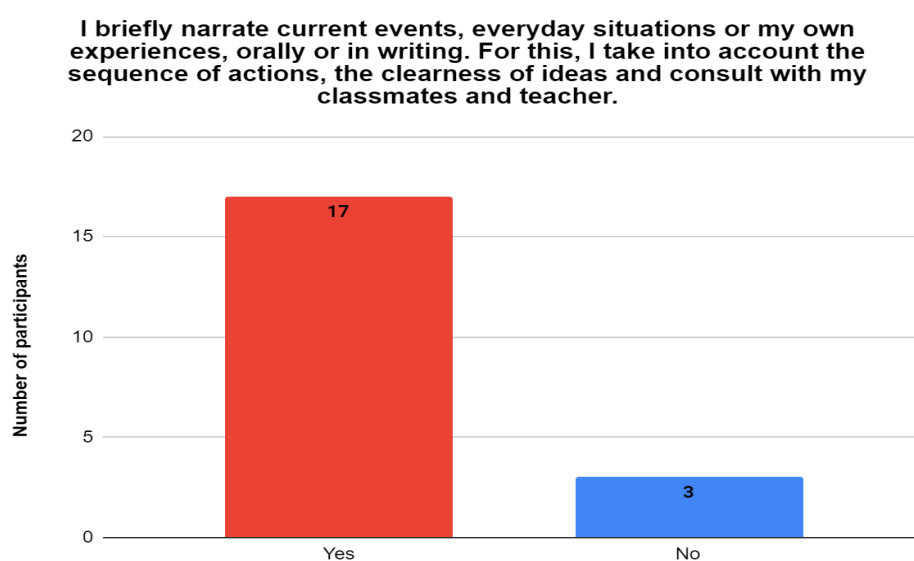
**Graphic 17.** Q5 Derecho Básico de Aprendizaje #6.

According to the data collected, 12 participants consider that the above standard was developed in the classes conducted virtually, while 8 affirm that this standard was not discussed in the classes.



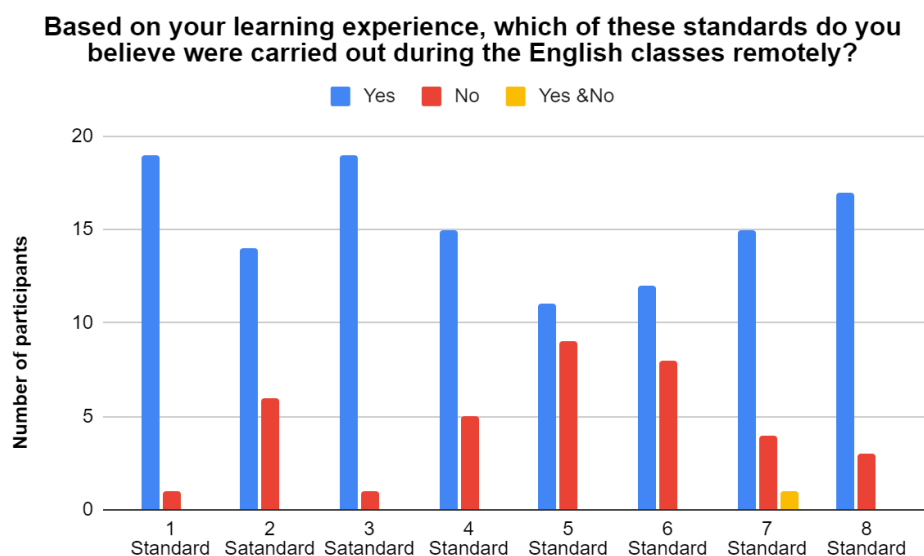
**Graphic 18.** Q5 Derecho Básico de Aprendizaje #7. Source: Authors.

In the graphic, it can be identified that 75% of the participant population (15) claim to have seen this standard during their virtual classes, while 20% agreed that they did not develop this standard. In addition, a particularity of this question and their answers is that one of them (5%) checked both options.

**Graphic 19.** Q5 Derecho Básico de Aprendizaje #8. Source: Authors.

In the case of standard # 8, the graphic shows that 85% of the respondents (17) affirm that the standard was included during their remote classes, while the remaining 15% (3) agree that this standard was not evident in their virtual classes.

Finally, after analyzing the 8 standards individually, a comparison of responses was made in relation to all the standards as follows:



**Graphic 20.** Comparative summary DBA's responses. Source: Authors.

Overall, it can be concluded that, according to the perceptions of the students, the standards to be studied in the eighth grade in the subject of English are fully met. However, it is evident that, although most of the students agreed that standards 2, 5, and 6 were included in the development of their virtual English classes, there was also a significant number of students who agreed that these standards were not taken into account at the time of conducting the English classes in this modality.

As a complement to this category, regarding the interviews, the two participants disagreed on three of the standards asked, these were numbers 1, 2, and 4. However, in relation to standards 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8, the students agreed on the following:

- Standards 3, 6, and 8 were developed during the virtual classes.
- Standards 5 and 7 were not included during the virtual classes.

This additional information suggests that, although virtuality provides great communication facilities, as well as being the tool that allowed the continuity of education globally, it still has some disadvantages. Garcia (2021), affirms that one of the most difficult

challenges was the adaptation of the preschool, primary and secondary education levels, having to restructure their methodology, teacher-student, and student-student relationships, as well as the problems related to internet access. Thus, connectivity is precisely the aspect that students are in agreement on when talking about the shortcomings of this emergency teaching modality. The students argued that certain standards were not included in their virtual English classes due to the difficulties presented in this modality: I<sub>1</sub>: *“la metodología virtual, por el internet todas esas cuestiones no se podía evidenciar que los alumnos hicieran el trabajo, (...) solamente había que completar actividades y no ponían a hacer diálogos así con personas”* I<sub>2</sub>: *“Si , la verdad por lo que era virtual, y por que no era tan chévere o no era mejor. Solo escuchar, e intentar comprender lo que se estaba hablando”*

#### 4.5 Interviews

From the students who were asked in a more personal and punctual way, it was found that both participants agreed that virtual classes did not affect their grades. They stated that grades neither increased nor decreased during ERT, despite the fact they had different opinions about their experience in virtual classes. This agrees with the response of most of the other participants in Q1 and Q9. 70% are satisfied with their learning process during ERT. Similarly, the percentage of perception of a decrease in the English proficiency is only 25% compared to 75% where the majority, 50% consider there was an increase instead.

Similarly, it could be found that students' also agreed on describing the feeling of comfort when referring to face-to-face classes coming back. This, by affirming, in turn, that they would not change anything and that they would choose this modality over the ERT. In this case, these two students belong to the smallest group of participants who stated in Q7 that they would not change anything about their face-to-face classes. However, it should be noted that the majority of responses point to a change in the topics through which grammatical

structures are presented (30%), interaction time (25%), and methodology (20%). Therefore, another important aspect was found taking into account face-to-face variations. In this particular institution, before reaching total face-to-face attendance, the students went to school under the alternation modality. In here, both participants emphasized that this modality helped with their learning since as the number of students in the classroom was smaller, teaching became more personalized and methodological.

## **5. Conclusions**

The process of data collection and analysis allowed obtaining key information that supports the objectives set for this research work. Willing to identify the implications and factors that play an important role during the virtual English classes. In the same way, corroborate the scope that the DBAs had and the perceptions that the students expressed after experiencing their English classes virtually. Hence, conclusive information based on the previously discussed results is presented below.

Firstly, regarding the factors and implications pointed out in the objectives, it can be concluded that the most relevant and visible of them during and after ERT was the COVID-19, the quality of resources, and the time management. Confinement due to the pandemic forced education to take alternative paths and create new methods for its survival. Therefore, in turn, made students face challenges since not all of them had the accurate resources for a more fluid education. The above leaves gaps in learning and does not help it to increase. This time, the presence of COVID-19 did not involve and impact the education of the students, since they managed to adapt to it. Also, due to the lack of resources, the development of worksheets, and exclusive use of platforms with the sole purpose of delivering activities and tests were the methodologies that prevailed during ERT.

Secondly, in the case of ERT, the findings lead to conclude that, although it has had to incorporate and diversify the pedagogical resources used for its development, it has shown shortcomings in language skills, communication, and interaction. Supporting the aforementioned, it was the standards (1,4,5,7) focused on the communicative part, the ones that students, both in the survey and in the interviews, agree on their difficulty in being included in the classes carried out in this modality. It is also important to highlight that this difficulty was more present in the standards that sought to communicate personal situations, feelings and thoughts. Likewise, concerning the content of the class, taking as indicators the DBA in the English area for the eighth grade, it can be concluded that the majority of the population stated that these competencies were fully achieved during the ERT. In both cases, the communicative factor shows a decrease in the percentage of proficiency.

Finally, the results obtained conclude that there was a change in the English learning processes during the context of the ERT. Both in the field of performance and class development. However, these were largely positive changes and were well received by students. Regarding performance, 90% of students agree that their performance goes beyond being considered poor. Even 50% of the participants highlight that their learning processes during the ERT helped to improve their proficiency in the language. The mentioned induces that the different teaching modalities implemented during the contingency due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to significant changes for this group of students, contrary to deteriorating it as their perceptions were believed to be. Regarding class development, 65% perceive that the methodology and resources implemented by their teacher were satisfying. However, it is meaningful to note that most of the other 35% would prefer less emphasis on productive skills (*speaking and writing*) and more interactive games. This is despite the fact that 4 out of 8 of the DBAs for this grade involve the use of productive skills. Taking into

account that it was precisely the majority of these standards that the students claimed to have shown the least in their virtual classes.

## 6. Further research

Given the contractions found in some cases, it would be pertinent to analyze a larger sample from different grades that contrast the students' perceptions about their English learning processes. This is by aligning and contrasting it with the standards established by the MEN and the student's current level of language skills. Knowing this data becomes more relevant now that most educational institutions are fully returning to the face-to-face modality, allowing a complete perspective of the learning process and how much it was affected or not given the circumstances that COVID-19 brought. It is also relevant to know the advantages and disadvantages of those methodologies and modalities that have been adopted during the context of the ERT. In the same way, the different modifications that have been made to the academic programs that higher educational institutions provide after the contingency. For example, the case of the Master's Degree in Language Didactics, a program offered by the *Universidad Industrial de Santander*, which due to the measures approved by the government through the *Directiva Ministerial N°09*, had the opportunity to be modified, in order to adapt to the teaching and learning needs that arose after the pandemic. In this sense, it would be pertinent to instigate more on how these modalities influenced higher education, knowing the modifications made by the universities to the programs they offer to their population and how they were able to adapt to it. This is to develop and strengthen future contingency plans that allow the correct schooling processes in emergencies such as COVID-19. In this way, the educational system will have more tools and possibilities to adapt to the changes and challenges that the coming decades will bring.

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