An exploration of the relationship between learning motivation in pandemic and post-pandemic times and the English academic performance of Students at University Levels.

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Trabajo de Grado en Modalidad Trabajo de Investigación para optar al Título de Licenciado en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés

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Abstract

Title: An Exploration of the Relationship between Motivation in Pandemic and Post-pandemic Times and the English Performance of Students at University Levels.

Authors: Héctor Mauricio Pájaro Galvis & Iván Guillén Vega

Key Words: Learning Motivation, Affective filter, English Academic Performance, COVID-19, post-pandemic, E-learning, remote attendance classes, face-to-face classes.

Description: This mixed methods research project aims to explore the relationship between the students' motivation in the midst of the pandemic caused by COVID-19, in pandemic and post-pandemic times and the English academic performance of students at university levels at Universidad Industrial de Santander. The participants were 21 students from the "Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés" program, who were taking the "Advanced English II" subject; their ages were between 18 and 22 and had at least experienced the university settings in both pandemic and post-pandemic times. The data collection instruments implemented were a questionnaire and an interview. In addition, both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed and categorized into different sections. The results showed that even when the students' learning motivation was affected during the remote attendance modality, its effects on English academic performance were moderate. On the other hand, there were other factors influencing academic performance: starting English level, personality differences, university assessment system and guarantees.

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*Bachelor Thesis

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Resumen

Título: An Exploration of the Relationship between Motivation in Post-pandemic Times and the English Performance of Students at University Levels.

Autores: Héctor Mauricio Pájaro Galvis & Iván Guillén Vega

Palabras Clave: Motivación para el aprendizaje, Filtro afectivo, Desempeño académico en inglés, e-Learning (aprendizaje electrónico), Presencialidad remota, Presencialidad.

Descripción: Este proyecto de investigación de métodos mixtos tiene como objetivo explorar la relación entre la motivación de los estudiantes en medio de la pandemia causada por el COVID-19, en tiempos de pandemia y post-pandemia y el rendimiento académico en inglés de los estudiantes de niveles universitarios de la Universidad Industrial de Santander. Los participantes fueron 21 estudiantes del programa de "Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés", que cursaron la asignatura de "Inglés Avanzado II"; sus edades estaban entre los 18 y 22 años y habían experimentado al menos el ámbito universitario en tiempos de pandemia y post-pandemia. Los instrumentos de recolección de datos aplicados fueron un cuestionario y una entrevista. Además, se analizaron los datos cuantitativos y cualitativos y se clasificaron en diferentes secciones. Los resultados mostraron que, aunque la motivación de aprendizaje de los estudiantes se vio afectada durante la modalidad de asistencia a distancia, sus efectos sobre el rendimiento académico en inglés fueron moderados. Por otro lado, hubo otros factores que influyeron en el rendimiento académico: el nivel de inglés inicial, las diferencias de personalidad, el sistema de evaluación y garantías de la universidad.

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*Trabajo de Grado

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Introduction

The worldwide public health crisis caused by Coronavirus keeps on affecting numerous human aspects all around the world; a very important one is education which introduced various adaptations and processes to navigate the pandemic, going from traditional educational processes to a technologically mediated *modus operandi*. Terms such as distance learning, remote learning, e-learning, virtual classes, online classes among others hovered around and worked as alternative methodologies in this new context. It has not been an easy path since such a disruption in the status-quo of activities has definitely affected people largely, their psychology and consequently their living conditions, and it is natural to expect a lot of mixed results -good and bad- (Moise et al., 2021). The multidimensional nature of the pandemic posed various challenges. To mention one, students and educators had to adapt to new a methodological and technological infrastructure (Radina & Balakina, 2021), that is, some teachers and professors and students faced problems regarding internet connection, appropriate use of technology -telephony systems and so on-, and appropriate use of pedagogy in digital contexts. COVID-19 proved to be stressful for all and negative effects such as anxiety, worry, fear, economic issues and so on are inextricably linked to this moment in history (Onyema et al., 2020). The contrast in circumstances was noticeable in the now digitally dominated environment and in the particular conditions particular to each person as configured by the pandemic. Now, in 2022, things are going back to normal, although we should speak of a *new normal* because multiple scenarios have changed in important ways and human activities are being developed differently. For example, education's face is and will be different, one that is delineated with technological and digital elements at large which previously were unthinkable. It will sketch blended-learning features.

1. Problem Context

Almarabeh (2014) states that it has changed after adopting the development of information, multimedia technology and the use of the internet as a new way of teaching and this has been magnified and diversified with the arrival of the pandemic. Moreover, The International Association of Universities Report Survey (Marinoni et al., 2020) says that:

"The consequences will be felt way into the future. In order to envisage medium- and long-term scenarios, it is important to capture what is happening now, what are and will be consequences for national and international students, for part time, contract based or tenured faculty and for all other staff" (p.6).

Similarly, for our part, understanding that many things could have happened and have happened in the midst of the pandemic in terms of education, we want to focus on the experience of students' psychological conditions during and after the pandemic, with the hope that that query can evidence aspects of that reality; specifically this research project aims to explore one important aspect: students' motivation and its relationship with their academic performance at Universidad Industrial de Santander during pandemic and post-pandemic times.

2. Justification.

The COVID-19 reality was a totally new situation where educators and learners had to wade through difficulties of connectivity, family issues, social, mental and emotional aspects (adaptation problems, lack of interaction, feelings of isolation, depression, anxiety, etc.). While teaching and/or studying, learners and educators had to grapple with the effects of COVID-19 in the immediate area or around the world: alarming news, clinics and hospitals full to the brim, deaths, the fear or worry of infection of oneself or close ones. These experiences must have proven

somewhat apocalyptical to a lot of people, even more so in our globally connected world where information is passed and shared in millions of ways. Young people especially, continually in touch with network sites, must have experienced feelings of hopelessness, pessimism, uncertainty, all while having to study; this situation goes equally for educators, although with the difference of being more experienced in life. On the other hand, it is also true that each person reacts differently to a situation, nevertheless, it remains that in one way or another a pandemic negatively affects everyone (Akat & Karataş, 2020). For the record, Osman (2020) states that:

> According to UNESCO reports, more than 1.5 billion students in about 165 countries have been affected by the lockdown of schools and campuses. As a result, schools, colleges and universities were forced to shift in some way or another to online learning as a replacement for on-site delivery. (p. 464).

As for the Universidad Industrial de Santander (UIS), the emergency response shift was the *remote attendance* modality, which was the name given to distance e-learning, thus it was possible to continue having classes through digital platforms and avoid the full cessation of classes. It was thought to duplicate and recreate every process that could normally take place in in-person classes by ways of interaction through digital platforms. However, as Almarzooq et al. (2020) consider: "with any new virtual initiative, technical issues are expected" (p. 2637). Indeed, Colombia as a developing country did not have it easy in managing the constraints as far as educational technology is concerned. In the case of UIS university, the institution tried to ease the problem by giving many students devices and internet plans, nonetheless, with many students coming from different areas of the country, often from parts with difficulties of access to technology and internet such as rural areas, students' needs were not met equally. Evidently, having devices and internet access is not enough for a good learner's learning experience, but it

can definitively have a negative bearing on it if problems arise, and thus on his learning motivation and academic performance; for the matter, what else can be termed a problem if not the COVID-19 pandemic? More importantly, the full range of factors and experiences is what gives us a picture of what the learning experience is like in e-learning pandemic contexts. These factors, already touched upon, such as economic life, family environment, emotional and mental health, teachers' and professors' (in)experience with technology methodologies and so on, that is, their combination is what configures the learning process during this pandemic.

As it should be clear, e-learning methodologies or alternatives during the pandemic brought sudden changes in the rhythm of educational processes, and, therefore, it was expected that issues appeared. As Adnan & Anwar (2020) concluded: "although online learning is proving helpful in safeguarding students' and faculty's health amid COVID-19 pandemic, however it is not as effective as conventional learning." (p. 49). Furthermore, we believe that learners' learning motivation was significantly affected by the pandemic. If learning motivation is low, the learner will not be able to achieve his learning goals successfully, then, learning motivation functions as a predictor of academic performance/achievement. Anjomshoa & Sadighi (2015), referring to language learning, mentions that "motivation is one of the important aspects of second language acquisition as it is a desire for learning" (p. 135); skills are not enough, motivation is a vital factor in achieving goals. What's more, we believe that learning motivation and particularly second language learning motivation (in this case English learning motivation) is influenced by the state of mental and emotional health, and not only that but also the very same learners' psychology - emotion and cognition- is responsible for much of the learning process. There is a close link between emotion and cognition because "emotions influence attention, perception, memory, reasoning, and decision [...]. Emotions are also influenced by cognition. Beliefs about properties

and causes of events shape the quality, intensity, and duration of emotion episodes", Ellsworth & Scherer (2003, p. 329). Again, as already suggested and understanding that a person's psychological state is responsible for most of his behavior, it is possible and probable that second language learners' learning motivation was influenced by how both pandemic and e-learning experiences were perceived and experienced and in turn, their learning motivation had an influence on their English academic performance. On top of that, the shift to face-to-face classes in what we have termed post-pandemic, represents a positive contrast with the previous moment in the pandemic, all the more since technology has taken a place into the classroom and can provide the educational field with advancements and improvements in the way learning and teaching sessions are given form.

Finally, it is hoped that the exploration of these themes -learning motivation and its relationship with academic performance during pandemic and post-pandemic times- results in useful material and insights for enlarging the academic community members' knowledge about how the crisis caused by the COVID-19 affected L2 learners' learning process. We expect that the findings help in broadening awareness and stir reflections about the exposure to online learning methodologies in the midst of a worldwide health problem. It aims to be part of an emerging body of literature that deals with the multidimensional personal experience of learners in contexts of e-learning in externally challenging situations such as the COVID pandemic.

2.1 Research Question.

This research aims to answer the following questions:

- **RQ1**: What is the relationship between the student's learning motivation of English and their English Academic Performance at university levels in pandemic and post-pandemic times?
- **RQ2**: What are the perceptions that students have about both remote attendance and face-to-face modality in the 'new normal'?
- **RQ3**: What external factors were involved when achieving good academic performance during remote attendance?

As an early hypothesis it is believed that students' experiences and conditions during the pandemic had a significant negative impact on their learning motivation and thus negatively affected their English academic performance. Furthermore, to a large extent it is true that personal attitudes and beliefs define what people are capable of, they imply what is known as perceived competence, in this case perceived competence for learning (Carlton, 2022) so following this line of thought, students' context during the pandemic was likely to exert influence on their perceived competence for learning English.

3. Objectives

3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this research project is to explore the relationship between learning motivation in pandemic and post-pandemic times and the English academic performance of Students at University levels at Universidad Industrial de Santander.

3.2 Specific Objectives

- To determine whether there was substantial incidence of their *remote attendance* experience on their English learning motivation.
- To explore the students' perceptions towards their own level of English learning motivation during the pandemic and the post-pandemic times.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Background and Important Concepts

Multiple studies have emerged around the implementation of technology in education. Most of them focus on how virtuality has improved traditional pedagogical practices, (Area & Adell 2009; Bates, 2002; Cabero, 2006). Furthermore, important studies (García Peñalvo & Seoane Pardo, 2015; Gunasekaran et al., 2002) try to categorize the contexts where these modalities occur. Moreover, the pandemic changed education based on virtuality. As a result, recent studies try to explore that phenomenon. (Rashid & Yadav, 2020; Velásquez, 2020; Avendaño et al., 2021).

4.1.1 Distance learning, online learning, e-Learning, and Virtual learning.

Distance learning was the first concept to emerge. (Moore et al., 2011, p. 130), then other concepts: online learning, e-Learning, online collaborative learning, mediated learning, virtual learning, etc. These concepts vary in terms of outcomes. Namely, some authors believe, as cited by Moore et al. (2011), that online learning is the evolution of distance learning because its objective is the same: to provide education without both learner and instructor being in person, yet online learning counts with more tools that allow for more flexibility, connectivity and varied interaction. The following definition is similar to what e-learning is said to be: "it is defined as education being delivered in an online environment through the use of the internet for teaching and learning" (Snigh & Thurman, 2019, p.302) and that "the teaching content is delivered online and the instructors develop teaching modules that enhance learning and interactivity in the synchronous or asynchronous environment" (p.302). Now, e-Learning, according to García Peñalvo & Seoane Pardo, (2015), is a base model to develop most of the concepts related to teaching and learning processes implementing technological and connectivity tools. The fundamental difference would be technological tools since e-learning not only refers to the use of the internet and web-based platforms but also to the use of any electronic device that can enhance and support the e-learning experience, as Ellis (2004) suggests, and that it does not necessarily require internet: audio-tape, interactive tv (not very used today). As for online learning, it can be used when referring to the learning processes that involve the use of the internet in general ((Simamora, 2020).

E-Learning existed before, it is not just an emergency methodology for the pandemic, although its use and features have been amplified during the pandemic. Area & Adell (2009) say "it permeated the schooling foothold in almost all around the world" (p. 3). Through e-Learning

learners develop awareness, autonomy and responsibility with regard to their own formative processes, it facilitates human and personal relationships among students or between teachers and learners (Gunasekaran et al., 2002), "it provides students with a different opportunity to learn regardless of where they are and when they are available" (E-Seoud, 2016, p. 63), and in Cabero Almenara's view (2006), this educational tendency presupposes the solution to multiple issues such as geographical distances, restricted access to the information, excessive-length preparation of students and the poor combination of scarce materials inside classrooms, etc.

Unlike e-Learning, Virtual Learning is related to the environment or the platform itself, in which it is possible to carry out the learning process. Thus, when virtual learning is mentioned, it is understood that the learning setting must be virtual, that is, it is only possible through electronic means connected to the internet. Another definition in Dung's view (2020) is that "it generally refers to instruction in a learning environment where teacher and student are separated by time or space, or both. The course contents are conveyed through IT applications, multimedia resources, the Internet, videoconferencing, etc." (p. 45).

4.1.2 Remote attendance Modality

Remote Attendance is the term given by the university to the educational emergency measures during the pandemic. It is the hybridization between many concepts: virtual learning, online learning and online collaborative learning among others but it attempts to keep the quality and characteristics present in face-to-face classes. However, its purpose was not fully achieved. As it is mentioned by Kuklinski (2020), "digital and distance interaction are useful as a first connector for the student, while interaction on campus is a second level of deep connection" (p.41).

4.1.3 Motivation in General Education.

A suitable definition is proposed by Tohidi & Jabbari (2012, p. 820): “Motivation is the driver of guidance, control and persistence in human behavior. What strengthens a person's behavior? What guides such behaviors or conducts, then in a certain direction? It is called motivation.” When we refer to motivation in education, we refer to learning motivation and also to its treatment in education. Even though educators and education theorists are aware of its relevance, this concept presents its problems in the classroom. Rost (2006) states that motivation is somehow ignored or neglected by teachers in the classroom when it should be given attention for achieving learning goals. Now, since learning a language is a long-term goal, motivation becomes a very important aspect of language learning. “Motivation is a kind of desire for learning” says Anjomshoa & Sadighi (2015, p. 135) referring to SLA. Furthermore, learning a language requires that the learner have learning skills, but if the learner is not motivated enough, it will prove difficult to do it. Often one of the reasons for decreased learning motivation is the teacher's skills or his curricular strategies. We will talk about the teacher’s role, but first let us talk about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation briefly and lay a link with their versions in language learning: integrative and instrumental motivation.

4.1.4 Intrinsic/Extrinsic motivation and Integrative/Instrumental motivation.

For Reiss (2012, p. 152) “... is a modern form of dualism in which many psychologists associate survival needs with extrinsic motives and psychological needs with intrinsic motives.”. Intrinsic motivation is simply defined as “motivation to engage in an activity for its own sake” (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002, p. 245). For example, the motivation to listen to music for enjoyment. A person would display extrinsic motivation if he had to listen to a piece of music and analyze its

composition, therefore, it is "a means to an end" (p. 245). These two types of motivation can be transposed into language learning theories in subtypes form: integrative and instrumental motivation, which are described as the drive to learn a language to be in or because of the culture, people, etc., of that language, and the drive to learn it to get a job, pass an exam, etc. respectively. Several scholars favor integrative motivation because its duration is more sustained. For the record, a study by Samad et al. (2012) showed that high-achieving English learners correlated well with integrative motivation. Perhaps this may be explained by considering that it is strongly related to identity formation since learners want to assimilate aspects of the culture of their target language. Nevertheless, learners can display both types of motivation.

4.1.5 Teachers' role in students' learning motivation (during COVID)

Several studies have examined the importance of the teacher's role in facilitating e-learning (Lambropoulos et al. 2012; Sawang et al., 2013; Sloan et al., 2014). Motivation can actually be improved by what and how teachers teach. A study by Siegle et al. (2014) found that honors students of a university reported that their interest and motivation at high-school had to do with their experiences with the teacher. Some of the environmental perceptions that determined and shaped this occurrence were within the categories of social relationship skills and knowledge. Certainly, the significance of something has to do with how meaningful it is; according to Parra (2020), activities that fail to inculcate meaning in people's lives eventually lead to existential emptiness followed by conformism. In the particular case of the pandemic, in the early stages, for many feelings of emptiness and uncertainty may have been salient, compromising their performance in daily activities. To alleviate that, certain recommendations were necessary.

Kaplan-Rakowski (2021) gives one of value: "Instead of strictly striving for efficiency, they should place greater stress on providing increased emotional support during times of crisis" (, p.134).

Additionally, e-Learning has had its drawbacks (Mahyoob, 2020), and on the other its benefits (Kamal et al., 2021). For instance, in a study conducted by Krishnapatria (2020), students of English for Business Purpose, 56% reported being content and 44% disappointed. Hence, he recommends using appropriate teaching materials for e-learning contexts, allocating reasonable time and promoting self-regulated learning. Another study with rather positive results (Quispe-Prieto et al., 2021) evaluated 298 students' satisfaction with Latin American universities under the covid-19 pandemic in Brazil, Colombia and Peru; it reflected an average level of satisfaction - moderate to high; medium to high.

4.1.6 Students' motivation for learning English during COVID-19

Language learning is said to be a multifaceted process as several SLA theories evidence (Mitchell et al., 2019). Some of those factors influencing language learning are interaction (Verga & Kotz, 2013), exposure, engagement and *motivation* (Lasagabaster et al., 2014). Interaction is related to motivation because it is a key component in magnetizing it. Li & Jeong (2020) refer to the embodied cognition theory, saying that the *whole-body interaction* consists of the interaction between perception, action, the body and the environment, making this theory an explicative view of the importance of interaction. In online classes this theory is not actualized because although there can be speech interaction, it cannot be equated to the context of face-to-face interactions. A major problem for learners in pandemic was the lack of interaction, that they felt more motivated in face-to-face interactions (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). However, online classes can make learning

motivating by providing opportunities to explore, be creative, diversify, get language input and output the language.

4.1.7 Three motivation theories

We will focus mainly on two motivation theories for our project: the affective filter hypothesis by Krashen (1982), first proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977), and the L2 Motivational Self System Model by Dörnyei (2009). Additionally, Maslow's motivation model (Maslow, 1943) will be a supporting theory.

Krashen's theory helps explain why some students respond better to the act of learning a language and others do not. Having a high affective filter, that is, experiencing anxiety, low motivation, low self-confidence and so, will prevent the learner from understanding and absorbing the language input; conversely, a low affective filter will allow that to take place. Alternatively, Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self-System Model (L2) language learners view their future self in terms of ideal self, ought-to self, L2 learning experience, all of them tailored to success in language learning for which is important to maintain a vision of the future, based on hopes, wishes, fantasies, etc. (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The general context of the learner can be viewed as part of a project of big proportions and, therefore, it is not exclusively circumstantial as Krashen's theory seems to purport. However, both theories give valuable tools to understand the learner's L2 learning process.

On the other hand, Maslow's theory helps us understand people's state and development in a hierarchy of needs ranging from physiological needs to self-actualization needs; so, conjointly, in contexts where students compromise the lower blocks of the pyramid, it is difficult that they advance into the experiences of the higher needs such as respect, self-esteem, strength, the desire to embody one's full self, thereafter, the process becoming more unstable and preventing the

acquisition of intellectual skills such as learning a language. Students could have compromised their scale of needs during pandemic.

5. Methodology Design

5.1 Research Design

This research project has an exploratory and mixed-method nature, in which data from both quantitative and qualitative was gathered. According to Creswell (2002), quantitative and qualitative data provide different insights when approaching the research problem, and descriptive quantitative analysis of the qualitative data can allow us to draw tendencies and patterns to get a clearer picture of the data (Mackey & Gass, 2015). On the whole, qualitative data provides a broad frame for understanding the general idea of the matter, while quantitative helps researchers to have specific statistics based on the results. Equally important is the shared value of a phenomenological approach which is like the backbone of the exploration. Marshall & Rossman (2016, as cited by Cohen et al., 2018, p. 300) express that "this type of research aims to describe, explain and interpret a phenomenon, situation or experience by identifying the meaning of these as understood by the participants, often at an individual as well as a group level". This procedure is suitable for this project since we aim to elicit opinions and perceptions from the students regarding their motivational state and analyze their responses.

5.2 Hypothesis

The hypothesis in which this study is situated is that students' experiences and conditions during the pandemic lockdown caused by COVID-19 had a significant negative impact on their motivation and thus negatively affected their English academic performance. The rationale for the

hypothesis lies in the consideration of all the possible components that constituted the students' learning experiences and learning process during the remote attendance modality, and their likely effect on their motivation for learning English, which is a varying phenomenon, but whose behavior in those pandemic times could have been negative, that is, that students' motivation might have been lower than expected, thus producing a lessened English academic performance and extending into other stages of the whole COVID-19 induced learning process.

This becomes clearer when the various changing contexts in pandemic are compared to non-pandemic contexts: pedagogical changes, not always for the best, personal difficulties, internet access or technical issues, mental and emotional health issues, inappropriate place of study, the presence of COVID and its derived effects, long exposure to screens, circumstances out of their control, etc.

5.3 Participants and Sampling

The participants of this project were 21 fifth-semester students at Universidad Industrial de Santander. They range from 18 to 22 years of age (see Figure 1); 13 of them were female students, 8 male students and 1 non-specified. (See Figure 2). The rationale for choosing them is that the COVID-19 timeline up until now spans five semesters, hence, all of them or at least the majority have gone through the pandemic and post-pandemic experience and can provide rich data to see the effects of both modalities on motivation and academic performance. A convenience sampling method was used to gather data. We contacted the two teachers in charge of the subject Advanced English II to facilitate the communication with the participants, then they joined a WhatsApp group to keep in touch during the research project.

Figure 1

Demographic Section: Age of Students.

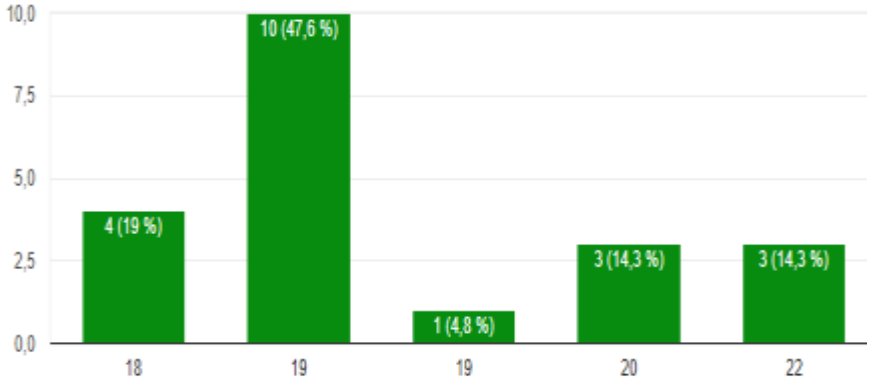
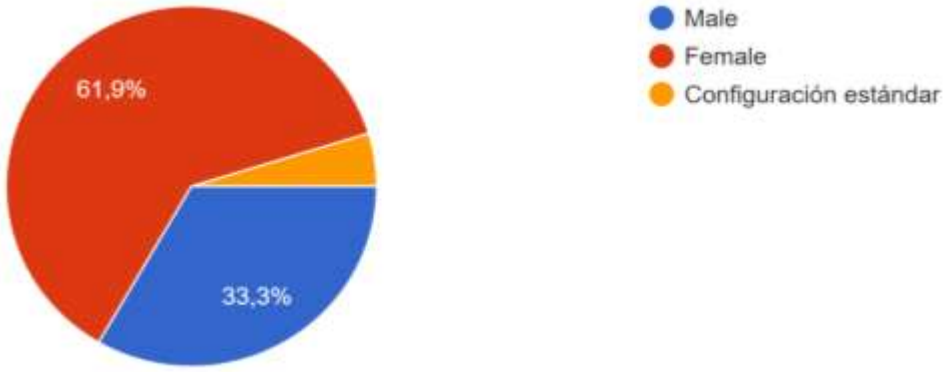


Figure 2

Demographic Information: Gender



5.4. Data Collection Instruments

This research project used two different types of collection instruments that corresponded to both the quantitative and qualitative nature of the data seeking to be gathered. The two

instruments used in this research study were: 1) A questionnaire that included 17 questions (See Annex A). 2) An Interview that consisted of 10 questions. (See Annex B).

5.4.1 Questionnaire (Quantitative Data)

It was decided to create a Google Forms questionnaire mostly based on the Likert scale and to a lesser extent on open-ended and closed-ended questions in order to get an overview of aspects that could play a role in defining their motivational level or state. According to Bertram, (2008) "A Likert scale is a psychometric instrument in which the interview must indicate whether they agree or disagree on a certain statement, item, or choice, through an organized and unidimensional scale". For instance, it is expected that this instrument will help us to obtain as accurate results as possible about the student's perception of their English academic performance with regard to their learning motivation.

5.4.2 Interview (Qualitative Data)

The last part of our data collection stage was the implementation of an interview. Students whose variables were peculiar such as age, starting English level, affective filter, English academic performance were chosen in order to capture a wider range of perspectives and also to explain variance of results according to those differences. The questions were based on both remote attendance and face-to-face modality. Matters of confidentiality and anonymity were kept. All the interviews were conducted via Zoom and were recorded under the participants' approval.

5.5 Resources and Analysis Techniques

The researchers of this project intended to embody the attitude of a stranger or observer, so that they were "best able to see things for what they are, uncluttered by assumptions that form

part of everyday thinking about those things" (Denscombe, 2014, p. 99). In that sense, the resources and analysis techniques implemented in this research paper were rigorously developed based on the research design previously described. Basically, this research project was divided into three different stages. The first stage corresponded merely to the information gathering: Quantitative and qualitative data resulting from both the questionnaires and the interviews. The second stage concerned the analysis of the data itself: in the case of the quantitative data, the techniques to analyze the information were facilitated by the Google forms statistics and percentages results that were graphically shown. On the other hand, it was necessary to categorize and arrange the students' responses based on the questions and the similarities among them. Finally, a triangulation of the results was made in order for the researchers to obtain a greater scope that could be discussed and interpreted based on the literature and theories. This entire process allowed the investigators not only to contrast the research hypothesis but also to establish some of the actual factors that influenced the relationship of English academic performance to the remote attendance modality and to a lesser extent, the face-to-face modality.

6. Results

This section is divided in two phases: the analysis of the questionnaire and the analysis of the interview.

6.1 Quantitative Analysis

6.1.1 An overview of students' affective filter, motivation levels and academic performance.

The following chart (see Table 1) contains the self-reported students' starting English level, their affective filter in both remote attendance and face-to-face modality in terms of anxiety, stress

and overwhelm (which is the feeling that a certain situation or life in general exceeds our capacity to deal with it); answers to issues of motivation and academic performance. For convenience matters, it was decided that each word be reflected with the first letter. The words belong to categories of frequency (never, rarely, sometimes, usually, and always), levels of motivation (high, medium-high, medium, medium-low, and low), and performance (excellent, good, fair, and poor) and as said above are shown only with the first letter. In addition, remote attendance and face-to-face modalities will be represented RA and FTF respectively.

Table 1

Affective filter, Motivation levels and Academic Performance, first variables; second variables: starting level and age.

			Affective filter *(Anxious, Stressed, Overwhelmed)*						**Motivation levels**				**English Academic Performance**			
Student #	Age	Starting English level	Remote attendance			Face-to-face			Semesters 1-4 (1-3 RA; 4 FTF)				Semesters 1-4			
1	18	Beginner	R	S	R	U	S	S	H	H	H	H	P	G	G	G
2	18	Elementary	U	U	U	S	R	S	H	H	H	M. h	F	F	G	G
3	18	Pre intermediate	S	S	S	U	U	U	M. h	M	M	M.l	F	F	G	F

4	18	Intermediate	U	S	S	R	S	R	H	M.h	M.l	M.l	E	G	G	G
5	19	Elementary	A	A	A	R	R	N	H	M.l	M.h	M.h	E	P	G	G
6	19	Elementary	U	U	U	S	R	S	M.h	M	M	M	P	F	G	G
7	19	Pre intermediate	S	S	R	R	U	U	H	H	L	M.h	E	E	E	E
8	19	Pre intermediate	S	U	U	S	R	R	H	M.h	M.h	M	E	G	G	G
9	19	Pre intermediate	R	R	R	U	U	U	H	H	M.h	M.h	G	E	G	G
10	19	Pre intermediate	A	A	A	A	A	A	L	L	L	M	E	G	G	G
11	19	Pre intermediate	U	U	U	R	U	S	M.h	M.l	M.l	L	E	G	F	G
12	19	Intermediate	N	N	N	S	U	S	L	L	M.l	M.h	E	G	G	F
13	19	Intermediate	S	S	U	N	N	S	H	M.h	M	M	E	E	G	G
14	19	Intermediate	R	U	U	U	U	U	M.l	L	M.h	H	G	G	E	E

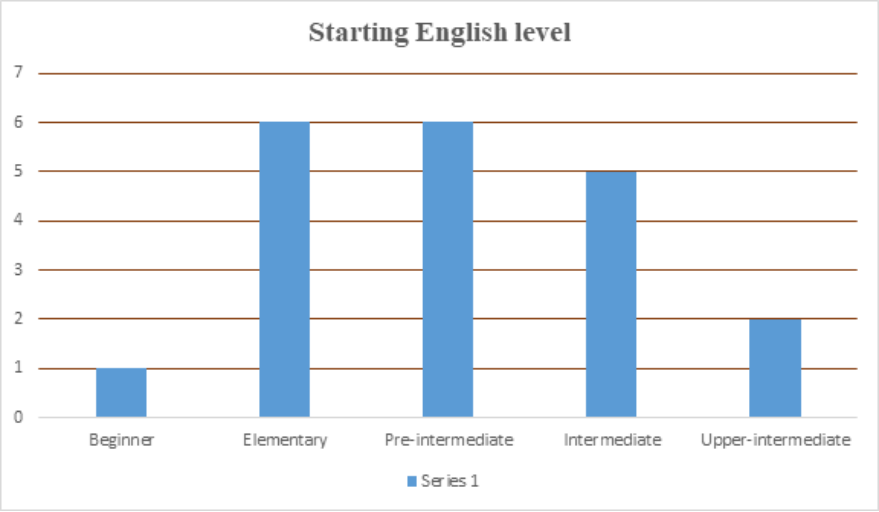
15	19	Upper intermediate	U	U	U	R	R	R	M.l	M.l	M	H	E	G	G	E
16	20	Elementary	A	A	U	S	S	S	H	M.h	L	M.h	G	F	P	G
17	20	Pre intermediate	S	U	U	U	U	U	M	M.l	M	M	P	F	G	G
18	20	Upper intermediate	S	R	R	U	A	U	H	M.h	M.l	M.l	E	G	P	E
19	22	Elementary	S	U	U	S	A	S	H	H	M.h	L	E	G	F	P
20	22	Elementary	N	U	U	R	R	R	M.l	M	M.h	M.h	G	G	G	G
21	22	Intermediate	U	S	S	R	N	R	H	M.h	M.l	M.h	E	E	G	F

First, we will analyze these variables as shown in the table. What first stands out is that more than half of the participants began with (H) *high* levels of learning motivation but that number decreased along the learning period until less than a quarter reported to have had those levels; evidently “prior to learning a foreign language and at the very beginning, students have high motivation. But in the process of mastering a foreign language, the attitude of student’s changes, since they need to overcome various difficulties” (Khaydarova et al., 2020, p. 1479), and motivation levels might decrease. On the other hand, about 60% of the students had higher affective filters in remote attendance with respect to the face-to-face modality, however, the

opposite is true for a few students whose affective filters were higher in face-to-face modality: students 3, 7, 9, 10, 14, 17 and 18 in two or the three aspects. As reiterated, several reasons might come in as an explanation for an increased affective filter during RA even if students did not have to comply with requirements that occur in face-to-face classes such as doing presentations in-person, tighter test-taking policies, peer-pressure, etc. One reason could be the challenges they had to face, both externally and internally: inappropriate place of study, resistance to online classes, technical issues, and so on. Similarly, another explanation can be found with Dörnyei's motivation theory of the self. If the ideal L2 self is threatened because as a language learner the learning goals are not being achieved, it can occur that the learner gives way to discouragement and gets temporarily demotivated, decreasing his engagement in classes. Yet one more possible factor is individual differences, which the same author, Dörnyei (2014) supports.

Figure 3

English proficiency levels participants started off the foreign language teaching program



Students of this program are supposed to begin with a pre intermediate level. We can say that six of them fulfilled this condition, seven were below that level, and seven, on the other hand, had the upper hand. It is clear that having more or less skill in any activity you undertake has an influence in one way or another. If we look at their academic performance in the above-mentioned table, we realize that all students who fulfilled the required English level and beyond, the first two semesters performed academically with excellent and good results (E & G) except for two student who reported fair (F) and poor (P) performance results in both semesters: one both fair, the other poor and fair. The picture for students with reported levels under the threshold is interesting because although it is true that many of them showed *poor* or *fair* results at least in one semester, especially the first one, two of them got good or excellent results during this semester which shows an important learning motivation and the desire for overcoming challenges. Something else to mention is that they were older than many other students (most likely twenty years old at the beginning).

6.1.2 Affective filter and Motivation levels

Let us now analyze more closely the affective filter with motivation levels from table 1. Note: will simplify this analysis with the following terminology: The affective filter is high if the frequency is higher than *sometimes* (S), that is, *usually* (U) and *always* (A) in two or the three aspects in any of the modalities; we will consider motivation to be low if it is under medium (M) and, conversely, we will consider it high if above medium (M.h & H); likewise, we will specify when we are categorizing the results according to each modality, represented by RA and FTF, and per semester. Let us remember that the affective filter of FTF corresponds to the fourth semester; a quick note about this: on an informal survey with the students, they expressed to have participated

in what was denominated *hybrid mode*, the third semester, which consisted of alternating between e-learning and FTF.

The behavior of the data goes in many directions for many students. We could take for granted that the effect of a variable has its cause in another variable such as *motivation is low if the affective filter is high*, however, in order to avoid assumptions, we choose to classify it thus: 1) motivation is low and the affective filter is high - ST3 in FTF; ST5 in 2nd semester, RA; ST10 in RA; ST 11 in 2nd and 3rd semesters; ST15 in semester 1&2; 2) motivation is high and the affective filter is low -ST1 in RA & FTF; ST9 in RA semesters 1&2;- 3) motivation is low and the affective filter is low- ST12 in RA. The seemingly mystifying variance in motivation could have been influenced by the behavior students maintained in terms of coping-strategies to keep their motivation levels stable, but also because of the students' regulated learning or autonomy or even their individual differences. One case that illustrates an individual difference (personality) is ST10, who had the same frequency (always) in both modalities, that is, personality features of his could have made him have such an affective filter. This case alone confirms the relationship between affective filter and motivation with crystal-clear evidence, but it does not confirm the hypothesis of this study.

6.1.3 Affective filter and Academic Performance

Furthermore, we need to lay a link between the affective filter and the inextricable relationship between language learning/acquisition and language academic performance. Why? Simply because the English academic performance of students naturally means sufficient or insufficient language skills. On top of that, the concept of affective filter suggests that a high affective filter prevents the intake of language input which builds up the learner's language skills,

thereupon, enabling him to have a good language academic performance. But student number 10, the most likely to show this relationship (if we take his data at face value), reported positive academic results albeit his very high affective filter and low motivation. Moreover, STs 1&9 having low affective filters and different English starting levels performed academically in the following terms:

Table 2

Students with low affective filters and high motivation

			Affective filter *(Anxious, Stressed, Overwhelmed)*						**Motivation levels**				**English Academic Performance**			
Student #	Age	Starting English level	Remote attendance			Face-to-face			Semesters 1-4 (1-3 RA; 4 FTF)				Semesters 1-4			
1	18	Beginner	R	S	R	U	S	S	H	H	H	H	P	G	G	G
9	19	Pre intermediate	R	R	R	S	U	U	H	H	M. h	M. h	G	E	G	G

4.1.4 Motivation levels and Academic Performance

The following cases seem to correlate low levels of motivation with low academic performance in specific semesters, however this is contradicted by the students themselves in other semesters and other students that despite having low motivation got good or excellent academic performance. Nevertheless, let us take a look and stir some reflections.

Table 3

Cases that seemingly correlate low levels of motivation with academic performance

N.	Age	Starting level	RA			FTF			Mot. Levels				E. A. P			
3	18	Pre intermediate	S	S	S	U	U	U	M. h	M	M	M.l	F	F	G	F
5	19	Elementary	A	A	A	R	R	N	H	M.l	M. h	M. h	E	P	G	G
11	19	Pre intermediate	U	U	U	R	U	S	M. h	M.l	M.l	L	E	G	F	G
16	20	Elementary	A	A	U	S	S	S	H	M. h	L	M. h	G	F	P	G
18	20	Upper intermediate	S	R	R	U	A	U	H	M. h	M.l	M.l	E	G	P	E
19	22	Elementary	S	U	U	S	A	S	H	H	M. h	L	E	G	F	P

Firstly, the table shows that motivation in six cases low motivation levels correlated with low academic performance (fair and poor). An interesting case is ST3 who got fair academic performance in three semesters (1, 2 & 4) and in the fourth semester got medium-low motivation levels, also in the second and third semesters he displayed medium motivation levels, which cannot be considered to be optimal per se. All in all, we cannot draw a line regarding a clear correlation of the main variables (motivation levels and academic performance) as far as this table is

concerned, however we can suppose that in semesters where motivation was low (M.l & L) academic performance did not surpass the (G) good classification, except for ST18 who had excellent academic performance in the fourth semester with M.l motivation. As for now we can hold in mind that motivation levels might influence academic performance but it is not the only factor. The question of motivation and academic performance have to be understood from a different perspective; for example, Dörnyei's motivation theory of the self provides us with a better perspective in the sense that if they don't make an effort even though they may feel discouraged or demotivated, they won't have an acceptable academic performance, so, although their enthusiasm may be low, the idea of failing, which would mean defeating their ideal self, make up for the lack of learning motivation. Nevertheless, it makes sense at all that with high levels of learning motivation students can achieve better learning results and have a greater sense of satisfaction which can contribute to enhancing their self-confidence, learning competence and willingness to invest in their learning process.

Table 4

Students' motivation strategies applied in remote attendance

	Motivation strategies in RA (Semesters 1, 2, 3)					E.A. P		
Starting level	**N°**	**Fr.**	**Mot. Level (1)**	**Mot. Level (2)**	**Mot. Level (3)**	**S1**	**S2**	**S3**
Beginner	1	U	H	H	H	P	G	G
Pre intermediate	8	A	H	M.h	M.h	E	G	G
Pre intermediate	9	A	H	H	M.h	G	E	G
Pre intermediate	10	U	L	L	L	E	G	G
Intermediate	12	A	L	L	M.l	E	G	G

Upper intermediate	18	U	H	M.h	M.l	E	G	P

Drawing on the previous table we can affirm that not all of these six students that applied motivation strategies obtained high levels of motivation: ST10 & ST12 are good examples of it. However, most students' academic performance was not below *good*, only in two cases (ST1 in first semester and ST18 in third semester). What's more, the other students kept good or above good levels of academic performance in most cases, especially during the first semester because, as we have already pointed out, their starting English level may have taken them a long way in terms of academic performance mainly in that semester. Overall, their reported levels of motivation reveal the effectiveness of motivational strategies and students' decision-making skills. Furthermore, variability in motivation levels among participants might also lie in individual differences, which play a role in language learning as well, something that we will discuss in another section.

Table 5

Students' learning strategies applied in remote attendance

	Learning strategies in RA (Semesters 1, 2, 3)								**E. A. P**		
Starting level	**N°**	**Fr.**	**Mot. (1)**	**Level**	**Mot. (2)**	**Level**	**Mot. (3)**	**Level**	**S1**	**S2**	**S3**
Beginner	1	U	H		H		H		P	G	G

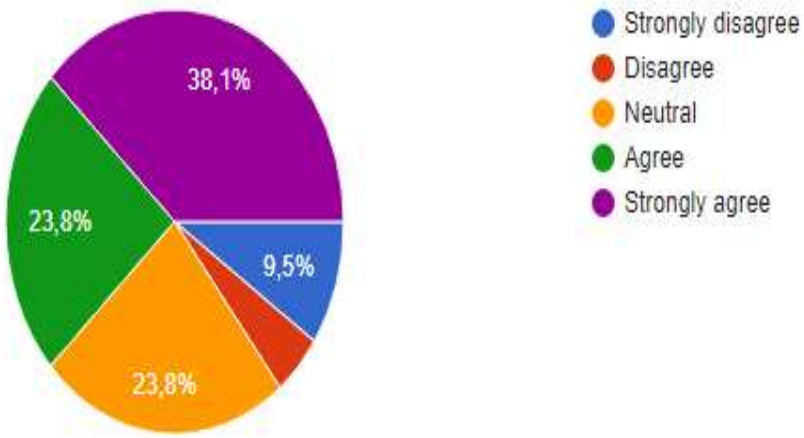
Elementary	2	A	H	H	H	F	F	G
Elementary	5	A	H	M.l	M.h	E	P	G
Pre intermediate	7	A	H	H	L	E	E	E
Pre intermediate	8	A	H	M.h	M.h	E	G	G
Pre intermediate	9	A	H	H	M.h	G	E	G
Pre intermediate	10	A	L	L	L	E	G	G
Intermediate	14	A	M.l	L	M.h	G	G	E
Upper intermediate	18	U	H	M.h	M.l	E	G	P
Elementary	20	U	M.l	M	M.h	G	G	G
Intermediate	21	U	H	M.h	M.l	E	E	G

As presented in this table, there does not seem to exist a mathematical progression so to speak of learning strategies in relation to their academic performance. Once again it must be said that those students who had a sufficient English level at the start of the program reported more positive academic performance results than in subsequent semesters, although they continued to have good results. It is necessary to mention that academic performance in cases such as those of ST 5, 14, 18 & 21 is apparently linked to motivation levels given that in semesters where it was below medium for each student, their academic performance was not as satisfactory as in other

semesters where motivation levels were high (above medium), except for students during the first semester with suitable proficiency levels.

Figure 4

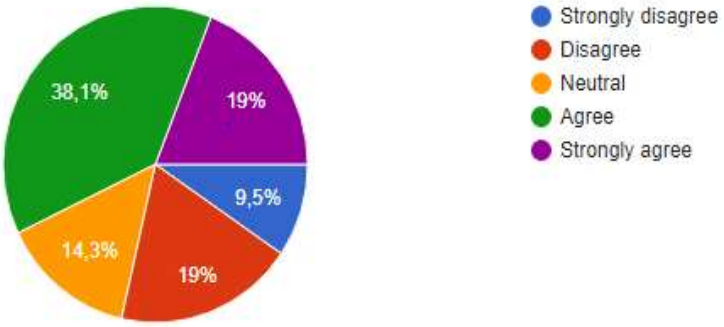
It was harder to get motivated learning through virtual classes than it is through face-to-face classes



Regarding the effort they had to make to get motivated during RA, the data was the following: more than 60% agreed and/or strongly agreed (13 participants), 23,8% were neutral (5), and only 14,3% were in disagreement (6), as represented in the graphic below. This shows that an important percentage of students faced more challenges in maintaining sufficient motivation levels during this modality.

Figure 5

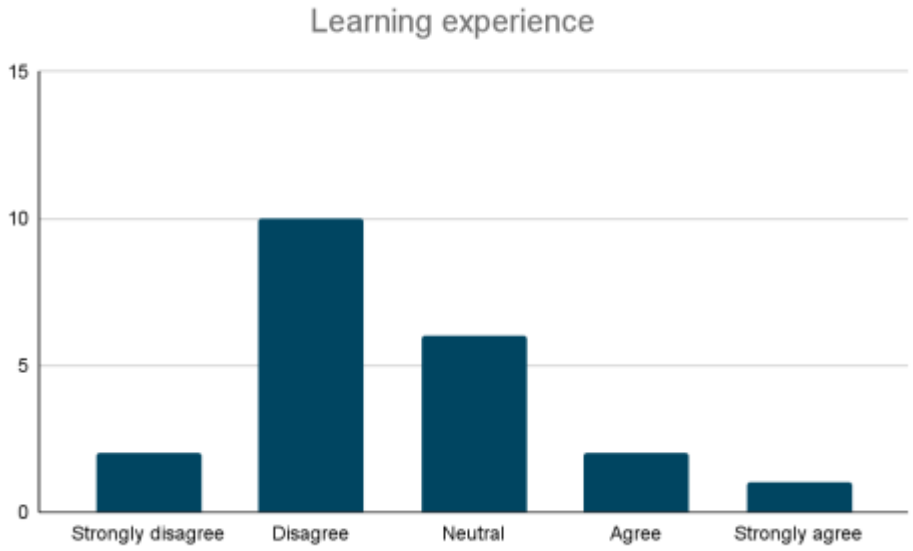
The conditions I experienced in remote attendance, such as family and economic problems, connectivity, atmosphere and environmental factors (e.g. noise), negatively affected my English learning motivation



57% of the students, 12 to be exact, strongly agreed (19%) and agreed (38%) about their English learning motivation being affected by the condition they lived during RA. This can be reflected also in Table 1 as 12 students had medium-low and low motivation levels in the RA semesters. Amidst those challenges one with high prevalence might be connectivity problems as it is often experienced by many around the globe, a fact that disrupts learning processes and consequently motivation.

Figure 6

Students' learning experience in face-to-face compared to their learning experience in remote attendance.



They responded to the statement "I have experienced more problems and difficulties to learn and pass in face-to-face classes than it was in virtual classes" and the answers disclosed that more than half of the students did not think so, six of them were neutral and only three agreed with the statement. It means that for most of them the learning experience in FTF has been more positive when it comes to language learning. Among the various possible explanations for this perception, we bring to the fore the question of social interaction, which is a core element in language learning, more specifically, in the consolidation of language skills such as speaking. Interaction is crucial to set the learner into a more engaged and meaning-packed learning opportunity. In Covid-19 mandated isolation this aspect was severed given that virtual social interaction was insufficient to replicate or sustain factors that contribute to language acquisition: attention, interlocutors' physical

presence, body gestures, etc. Surely enough students as human beings who value learning and meaningful experiences, get probably motivated in the classroom where they have their teachers and partners as interlocutors and source of input. The difficulties experienced by the students who agreed perhaps were powered by changing circumstances in FTF; let us mention that according to table 1, four students reported poor or fair academic performance as well as below medium motivation levels, therefore, it is possible that these factors had to do with that perception and experience, although we cannot assure that the participants who answered like that are the same participants from the table. Other things with probable bearing on that learning experience and perception may be personal preference of modality, in fact, within all the advantages that online learning is able to give us, that of convenience of access to materials and information, time-saving, lack of in-person interaction and in-person academic activities, which is something some people might prefer over in-person contexts, etc. Similarly, regarding those students that remained *neutral* we could venture to say that perhaps they did not have a clear contrast of the two modalities, possibly motivated by the number and type of the elements to be considered among the two modalities: time efficiency, convenience, interaction, connectivity… (Gherheș et al., 2021).

Table 6

The activities, content, and dynamics implemented during English remote attendance online classes have POSITIVELY influenced my level of motivation

Scale	N° of students	%
Strongly agree	7	33,3
Agree	9	42,9

Neutral	5	23,8
Disagree	0	0,0
Strongly disagree	0	0,0
Total	21	100

Table 7

The activities, content, and dynamics implemented during English face-to-face classes have POSITIVELY influenced my level of motivation.

Scale	N° of students	%
Always	3	14,3
Usually	4	19
Sometimes	7	33,3
Rarely	7	33,3
Never	0	0,0
Total	21	100

The two tables above were supposed to contain the same parameters of measurement, but because of an error of information displacement they changed. Having said this, it is still possible to analyze the data and perhaps establish some comparisons.

An aspect that may strongly influence learning motivation is the teacher's pedagogy and didactics, in other words, what and how the language is taught. Teachers' readiness and success in using technology and e-learning environments in education seem to depend on four of aspects or strands:

"(1) teachers' background variables, (2) teachers' attitudes or beliefs towards technology, (3) teachers' pedagogical beliefs, and (4) teachers' perceived training effectiveness and organizational support." (Li et al., 2019, p. 503). The background variables refer to gender, age and teaching experience. Regarding activities, content and dynamics used in face-to-face classes influencing their level of motivation, students for the most part gave positive answers; 75% of the students regarded those elements of FTF as a good influence on their learning motivation. On the other hand, in RA the opinions, although less positive than regarding FTA, were not necessarily counterproductive: only a third of the participants felt that these teaching-learning factors rarely exerted a positive influence on their learning motivation.

6.2 Qualitative Analysis

In this data collection stage, only four out of twenty-one participants were taken into account to conduct the interviews. The reason corresponds to the fact that aspects found such as starting English level, affective filter, academic performance, motivation and preference over the learning modalities called the researchers' attention in order to develop a greater width of analysis. Certainly, the different categories in which this analysis is carried out are based on the interview questions. In this case, each category is presented individually but at the same time it gathers all the participants' answers that are related to it.

6.2.1 Students' perceptions of the Remote Attendance modality.

6.2.1.1 Positive Aspects.

After analyzing the answers to this first question of the interview, we noticed that one of the most important and repetitive positive aspects mentioned by the participants is the fact that

most of their teachers took the initiative to present very active and dynamic classes based on digital tools such as interactive platforms, games, apps or websites that allowed or increased students' participation while the learning process was taking place. "... *Pero como tal los profesores creo que daban lo mejor de sí tratando de hacer las clases bastante dinámicas y didácticas"* points out ST1.

Additionally, it was also highlighted how well the teachers adapted themselves to the Remote Attendance modality and that their comfort giving virtual classes had positive repercussions on the students. *"... Los profesores se adaptaron muy bien a este sistema y a la situación, debido a que propusieron muchísimas actividades que eran compatibles con el entorno digital…"* ST10. Moreover, ST1: *"la situación ameritaba que fueran un poco más flexibles y pues fueron entonces bien por ahí, personalmente a mí como que me facilitaba un poquito las cosas cuando no entendía algo…"*. It is worth mentioning that aspects such as optimal conditions, personal comfort, guarantees at home or having external support were not mentioned or considered as positive aspects, at least in this question.

6.2.1.2 Negative Aspects.

On the other hand, it is evident that many negative aspects abound in each and every one of the responses provided by the students regarding their perception of the Remote Attendance modality. Furthermore, in this section, unlike the previous one, aspects such as the basic conditions when having virtual classes were taken in a negative light, in addition to the routine throughout the semesters, the stress and anxiety caused by the lack of social communication or the social pressure when being in front of the camera. In the case of ST10, for example, it was claimed with regards to connectivity problems that *"A veces no se podía comprender el mensaje que nos daban*

los profesores y a veces el aprendizaje quedaba truncado para algunos estudiantes que de pleno se les iba la luz o se les iba el internet o se les entrecortaba". Similarly, it was said by ST16 that *"yo comparo lo que yo aprendí presencial con lo que yo aprendí virtual y siento que no aprendí nada, era más como que sabía que tenía que saberlo para el quiz, para el parcial. Entonces pues yo estudiaba solita por mi cuenta. Pero que las clases como tal me hayan enseñado, no…".* The data provided by ST16 in table 1 supports this claim: high affective filter during RA and got fair academic performance during the second semester and poor during the third one. Apparently, the effort was not only being made by the teachers to teach under these conditions, but also by the students to learn, either because of the physical setting difficulties or because of the calamities that the pandemic could have caused: *"además en el segundo año de la pandemia, a eso de mayo se murió mi madrina, entonces además de todo, pues no tenía ganas de estudiar, la verdad."* ST16.

As it is evident, negative consequences were also found as a result of the lockdown with respect to the student's social relationships: ST10 assured that "... *perdimos la capacidad de encontrarnos cara a cara con profesores directamente en la universidad para que nos explicaran temas de mejor forma"*. Further, ST10 ended up with: *"algunos de mis compañeros, incluyéndome a mí, desarrollamos algún tipo de ansiedad por estar en frente de las cámaras".* This claim is supported by the data in table 1 regarding this participants' affective filter. In line with it, ST18 complements by saying that *"Hubo muchas veces que me sentí incómodo. También el hecho de que no tuve contacto con mis compañeros hasta mucho después, yo sé que mucha gente realmente no tiene esa habilidad y se le dificultó mucho encontrar compañeros de trabajo".* Therefore, participants considered social interaction an important aspect in both personal and academic level.

6.2.2 Students' perceptions on their starting English level as a determining factor

Students mentioned that a higher English level was decisive in their learning process. .However, the perceptions vary as to whether it is something positive or negative since those students who had low levels of English found a way to motivate themselves to achieve a better performance and those who entered with a higher level do not consider themselves to be in a different or more advanced stage than their classmates at the current moment: *"Mi nivel de inglés me motivó a trabajar más duro para alcanzar el nivel de mis compañeros"* ST1 complemented; "*eso ya depende como de la de la propia determinación de la persona, por ejemplo, algunos compañeros entraron con un A2 y ahorita les va muy similar a mí, que yo entré con un B2"*: ST18.

Regarding the relationship between the Starting English level and Students' Motivation, we also had interesting findings such as: *"el nivel de inglés con el que uno empieza ayuda mucho como a la motivación que uno tiene. Si uno llega y uno ya entiende bastante y ya hace bastante las cosas, pues uno se siente mucho mejor"*. On the other hand, other perspectives showed how difficult it could have been for those with lower levels as revealed by ST16 in *"...pues se vuelve complejo, porque siempre están los que: ¡Uy, qué oso, pronunció mal! Entonces de otra manera es maluco porque se hace el ambiente como feo, como pesado, como difícil".*

6.2.3 Student's perceptions on how their motivation was affected

In general terms, once again we found variety in the results. On the one hand, we have students who were positively motivated either to improve their level of English because they always liked it or those who were motivated to overcome the barriers that virtuality posed to them. On the other hand, we have the students whose motivation was negatively affected and whose experience was somewhat difficult and exasperating. For example, Students 1 and 10 agreed on

the positive aspects: *"a mí sí me gustaba la presencialidad remota y pues sí, estaba bastante motivada, digamos que yo siempre he estado muy motivada para aprender inglés porque era como una meta personal"*: ST1 and *"pude encontrar motivación para aprender muchísimo más debido a que quería superar las barreras que nos trajeron estos tiempos de pandemia."*, ST10. On the contrary, students 16 and 18 commented that some aspects of their motivation were negative: *"...el hecho de que no podía interactuar con compañeros de manera presencial era algo que yo de verdad estaba esperando hacer. Entonces sí, fue muy desmotivante."* ST18 and *"...era complicado porque obviamente el idioma me gusta. Pero pues yo por lo menos soy muy dispersa, entonces era muy difícil estar ahí en la clase y no era capaz de concentrarme y quedarme ahí"* ST16.

6.2.4 Implemented Strategies to strengthen their English Academic Performance

In this section it is interesting to note how the students decided on their own to take extra classes or tutorials on the internet, research digital resources on social media platforms among others strategies such as listening to music and watching movies or videos with the aim of improving their English and therefore their academic performance. STs 1 & 10 contributed to this section by answering "*Usaba herramientas digitales, aplicaciones de lectura, ver películas, escuchar música en inglés, ver videos en youtube…"* and *"leer artículos en el idioma que quiero aprender, escuchar música en el idioma que quiero aprender"*.

Finally, it is also worth stating some of the recommendations of the students on how not to mix both the study and the other areas. In addition to this, many other minor details were shared such as bathing and getting ready before a virtual class even if the camera was off and not taking classes lying down, among others. "que se haga en otro espacio que no sea la habitación, como para que separen al menos esos dos espacios", stated ST18

6.2.5 Students' preferences over the different learning modalities

With regards to the question that confronted the students and sought to know their preferences regarding the different modalities they had to experience during the pandemic and the post pandemic, none of our respondents opted for preferring the remote attendance modality over the traditional face-to-face classes. Clearly, even when some participants affirmed and accepted that their process during Remote Attendance had been very comfortable and very favorable, they were sure that their preferences were for the traditional Face-to-face classes and this was due to different reasons, such as having the teacher in class to understand their body language -gestures and facial expressions-, or developing better social relationships with other classmates or just the fact of not having connectivity problems and therefore missing parts of the class. For example, one of the significant opinions is ST's 18: *"Uno llega al salón de clases y ya lee, el hecho de que hay pupitres, de que hay un tablero, de que hay esto, de que está la pantalla para las diapositivas, de que está la mesa del profesor y todo eso como que lo pone a uno en una mentalidad de bueno, estoy acá para estudiar".* On the contrary, during remote attendance, learners' focus and sense of commitment were not supported by the features described above.

Regarding the levels of motivation that can be found related to the Face-to-face classes, we found that the fact of being in the classroom makes students actually work on what is proposed. This act of truly working in class generates doubts on the students, doubts that can be cleared up by the teacher present in the classroom and consequently contributing a much more significant learning, since students are forced to perform properly in the academic context in which they are. This is supported by ST10 when it was replied *"Otro factor es la ayuda que le pueden brindar los profesores activamente a los estudiantes, incluso inmediatamente después de clase".* As well as ST10 and ST16 when it was expressed that *"... la presencialidad porque la información se*

transmite efectivamente, no sólo de forma unilateral, hay mucha más confianza, mucha más motivación a aprender" and *"...entonces es chévere porque uno sabe que uno llega a clase y puede coger el profe un momentico, uno solito, en su cuerpo para hacer las preguntas que uno no entiende"* respectively.

6.2.6 Students' perceptions on returning to face-to-face classes

In this final instance of the interview, two differentiating points arise again. One of the first aspects that we noticed is that based on the students' responses, it was evident as if there were two different groups of people assuming the Remote Attendance modality: those who tried to make their learning process as transparent and fair as possible and those who, based on the guarantees and conditions that the university provided, made an effort to have good scores and grades without minding opening websites and consulting on the phone when it was supposed not to be allowed. Also, there were students who acknowledged having taken advantage of the tools that virtuality made available for them and who recognized that they had become used to that type of modality in different ways. Therefore, one of the clearest consequences is that the majority of students unimproved their academic performance when returning to face-to-face classes and, naturally, setting foot to the physical classroom for the first time for them. The decrease in academic performance was not due to attitudinal or motivational factors but rather a consequence of a sudden change of the modality and the lack of habit and appropriation of it. *"Personalmente me costó un poquito al inicio agarrarle el hilo a esto de parciales y todo presencial. Entonces digamos que en el primer corte del primer semestre que tuvimos, ahí sí mis notas bajaron un poquito", says* subject ST1.

With regards to the objective of this research project in terms of motivation, it is evident that the group of people who were used to and quite comfortable during the virtual classes had some anxiety due to the implementation of a new methodology and therefore their experience was not the best: *"para los que no se sentían cómodos con la virtualidad, eso fue un respiro pero el grupo que se sentía muy a gusto con las clases virtuales su motivación decayó bastante y sus niveles de ansiedad se incrementaron" ST10*. However, this cannot be directly associated with their academic performance since they overlapped it rapidly *"pero ya en el siguiente corte de lo que ya sabía más o menos como era entonces volvía a tener las notas normales que tenía durante la virtualidad y pues ahora se mantienen así"*: ST1.

At the same time, students who were very excited to return to Face-to-face classes experienced a huge change in their motivation. They argue that starting from the fact that they felt teachers being more comfortable motivated them even more. "... *en cuanto a la motivación, aumentó bastante. El profesor ya nos habla y se les nota a los profesores la comodidad que tienen con los estudiantes en el salón. No están preocupados por los aspectos problemáticos de la virtualidad" ST18.* Finally, one last negative aspect lies in the social pressure that some students might have suffered due to the anxiety of social settings in face-to-face contexts. *"Llegaron llenos de ansiedad, llenos de nervios, de ser tal vez juzgados o de ser juzgados por sus compañeros, por sus profesores en vivo y en directo"* ST10. As a consequence, they could have developed indisposition when taking classes in a traditional way.

7. Conclusions

This study aimed to explore the relationship between Learning motivation and Academic performance of English students at Universidad Industrial de Santander. The researchers hypothesized that the remote attendance modality had a negative impact on their learning motivation, affecting their academic performance, however, this idea was not confirmed. But first of all let us mention some limitations of the study. For instance, academic performance as a predictor of learning motivation was not taken into account, for example, the academic performance participants achieved at the end of each semester could have been vital in the presence of learning motivation for the next semester. Something else to note is that what is known as *hybrid mode* was not sufficiently considered. *Hybrid mode* was the alternation between online and in-person classes in the third semester. Participants reported in the interview to have been negatively affected by it because teachers neglected those students who were connecting virtually and thus the learning process was somehow hindered.

In general, we did not find a definitive connection and variation between Learning motivation and Academic performance in pandemic and post-pandemic times mainly because various factors come into play to modify Academic performance in one way or another such as their starting English level, individual differences, learning strategies and university policies that allowed flexible processes. Similarly, learning motivation was influenced by different factors: motivation-coping strategies, classroom pedagogy and content, teacher's role, affective filter, learning experience, pandemic-related contexts, individual differences, among others. Nevertheless, some evidence points to a moderate influence of Learning motivation on Academic performance. We found that in many cases where motivation levels were below medium-high (M.h) -passed the first semester when some students with sufficient or above required English

proficiency levels were able to get excellent academic results-, participants did not have an academic performance above good (G), only it occurred in one instance: ST18 in fourth semester. As we came across several factors linked to learning motivation and academic performance, we will talk about them separately.

Among the factors influencing motivation we have the affective filter, mostly in terms of decreased motivation given that when participants had a high affective filter their motivation was low (six students), and only increased motivation when the affective filter was low in two cases: two students. There was not conclusive evidence of extended influence of affective filter during the two modalities: The behavior of the data is not stable when it comes to contrasting the two variables -affective filter and motivation- in RA and FTF (remote attendance and face-to-face), and even within the same modality (RA)-**.**

Another factor is pandemic-related issues such as poor internet connection as reported by the interviews. This issue is most occurring in developing countries. Colombia, for example, being a developing country has an internet service infrastructure that often fails, particularly in small towns or rural areas. Similarly, studies conducted in other countries reveal this same fact (Muslimin & Harintama, 2020; Noori, 2021; Salas-Pilco et al., 2022; Sari & Nayır, 2020).

Individual differences are also influential because those students who were determined to overcome challenges maintained high or acceptable motivation levels and the few participants with low motivation levels somehow indicate the influence of personality traits. Personality traits differentiate learners from one another since each learner is able to maintain motivation for achieving learning and academic goals according to his or her personal resources and characteristics in terms of mental fortitude, skill-set, mindset, etc. In line with it, a study conducted in Indonesia to university students, a developing country, showed that students' learning

motivation during the pandemic was contained into themes and sub-themes: "(a) personal, with sub-themes of challenge, curiosity, self-determination, satisfaction and religious commitment; (b) social, with sub-themes of relationships, inspiration, and well-being of self and others; and (c) environmental, with sub-themes of facilities and conditioning." (Rahiem, 2021, p. 1). Moreover, Dörnyei (2005, p. 29) says that personality factors are "heavily implicated in the learning process in general and in SLA in particular", that they can function as "powerful modifying variables" (2015, p. 30), consequently they produce a myriad of different results with particular configurations in the learner. It is believed that being able to maintain a vision of the future and set goals energizes people into materializing those desires by overcoming challenges and rejoicing in successes.

Additionally, personality traits in general can be associated with The Big Five model of personality (conscientiousness, neuroticism, extraversion, openness, and agreeableness) first proposed by Goldberg (1992). Openness, conscientiousness and extraversion are thought to be personality traits that predict learning motivation and neuroticism to have a negative relation with academic performance and learning motivation. On the other hand, we cannot claim that participants demonstrated those particular traits, although salient data seems to point it out: see table 1, ST 1, 2, 7, 10 & 17.

Finally, a very important factor with regard to motivation was the L2 learning experience, a concept developed by Dörnyei. This factor may be related to personality traits because the nature of the assessment given to L2 learning experience also depends on the person and naturally the person views things according to his personality (Keller & Karau, 2013). More than half of the participants assessed their learning experience as more positive during face-to-face classes; these results are also supported by the opinions recorded in the interview: despite the advantages in RA,

in terms of learning experience, in other words, the meaningfulness of it, participants regarded FTF as a better option. Some other defining aspects of the learning experience in both modalities as mentioned in the interviews are connectivity problems, lack of interaction, negative emotions, physical setting and teacher's presence as motivating aspects. Regarding interaction Lytle & Kuhl (2017, p. 624) think that "social interaction may activate brain mechanisms that invoke a sense of relationship between the self and other, as well as activating social understanding systems that link perception and action" (p. 624); they also indicate that researchers have found "that social contexts provide both *motivation* in the form of increased attention and social arousal, as well as *information*, such as eye-gaze following, that provides added information about speakers' intentions and goals" (p. 627). Further to it. evidence of L2 learning experience working as a first predictor of intended learning effort (motivated behavior) and learning achievement in a large-scale survey conducted in China (You & Dörnyei, 2016). The researchers found out that "for Chinese students the desire to invest time and energy in language learning seems to be associated first and foremost with the evaluation of the learning process" (p. 512). Certainly, the more time and energy invested in language learning, the better the learning achievement and as a consequence the academic performance; similarly, the more rewarding the learning process, the more time and energy the learner is willing to invest. Of course, it is too difficult to determine in which cases the likeliness of the L2 learning experience as the context described before is evident in their learning motivation and their English academic performance due to it not being necessarily limited to the assessment of their L2 learning experience but also to other factors already mentioned.

Finally, a factor with some incidence on their learning motivation was motivation coping strategies. Results showed that out of the six participants that *always* or *usually* applied motivation raising or coping strategies during RA, only in two students (see table 4, STs 10 & 12) these

strategies were not effective. As an explanatory hypothesis of it we bring to the fore personality traits or personal circumstances, although only ST 10 correlates well with this idea.

As for factors influencing academic performance, not only do we have learning motivation but also participants' starting English level, learning strategies, individual differences, and most likely self-regulated learning, a factor unconsidered within the objectives of the project, but one that can function as a powerful explanation of academic performance, more so in e-learning contexts where learners have ease of access to materials and activities.

First and foremost, let us discuss learning motivation. Results showed that only in six cases was this confirmed, but only in particular semesters because many students contradicted this relationship, even those who had confirmed it at a given semester. Due to the variations and non-logical results in this respect, the hypothesis of motivation levels having an important impact on academic performance during the pandemic, especially a negative impact, cannot be confirmed. On the other hand, it was found that, as stated at the beginning of this section, where motivation levels were below medium-high levels students did not get beyond *good* academic performance. Learning motivation seems to have had a moderate effect on Academic performance in the present study.

About learning strategies applied during remote attendance we found that it could have had minimum incidence on Academic performance as shown in table 5. Research about this factor is varied. Oxford (2018), perhaps the most prominent researcher of LLS, contents of its importance. Learning strategies in the cognitive, metacognitive and compensatory vein in SLA (Senad et al. (2021), learners implement them to learn vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation. With the breadth of information on digital platforms this becomes accessible for students. Now, since this study

dealt mostly with quantitative data, it is not possible to have details about participants' learning strategies, yet in the interview section there are references to the types of learning strategies the participants tried: using reading apps, reading articles, watching YouTube videos, using digital tools, etc. Certainly, these are general things that language learners do, but within them there are steps they take to improve language skills.

The university adopted policies in order to ensure that students did not have stressful difficulties regarding academic requirements and educational processes; in this respect the university showed understanding of students' personal context in the pandemic by applying a flexible assessment system. This factor, we believe, made it possible for the participants to have it easier and hence be able to perform better academically. Reference is made by ST 1 about it (see section 4.2.1.1 Positive aspects).

Evidence of personality differences as influential on participants' English academic performance is scarce in this project, nevertheless, although its incidence is moderate or low according to the data collected, it appears to be pervasive in some cases. The criteria of two students chosen for the interview were based on their peculiar affective filter and motivation levels. ST 1 reported high (H) motivation levels all along the two modalities, perhaps motivated because of or by the necessity to *catch–up* with the level the other students had. ST 1 acknowledges that learning English was a strong goal (see section 4.2.3 of the qualitative analysis), besides wanting to overcome challenges presented by the pandemic. As for ST 10, the presence of a very high affective filter (Fr. Always), as already suggested can imply the display of personality factors or perhaps factors of a different nature. ST 10 indicated that a certain amount of anxiety was developed during RA because of being in front of the camera. In general, there's no reason to discard the influence of personality on the participants' academic performance.

Further study on personality in second language learning should be carried out, emphasizing on how it shapes the perceptions and experiences that give place to attitudes and behaviors with regard to language learning and learning in general. Personality might be a stronger predictor of academic performance because it encompasses or presupposes a relationship with many other factors such as learning strategies, motivation, affective filter, self-regulated learning, learning experience, etc.

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Appendix

Appendix A - Questionnaire: Quantitative Data

An exploration of the relationship between learning motivation in pandemic and post-pandemic times and the English academic performance of Students at University Levels.

This questionnaire is part of a research project which seeks to explore the relationship between student's motivation to learn in pandemic and post-pandemic times and their English academic performance in the Foreign Language Teaching Program at Universidad Industrial de Santander. The statements are designed to elicit answers about your experience when in and related to the English language classes.

All the information that you provide will be absolutely confidential and will only be treated for academic purposes.

The questionnaire will be of a Likert-scale nature and will be based on aspects of frequency, agreement, and score.

*Obligatorio

Demographic Information

This section will be exclusive for personal information. All data will remain confidential and no information in this section will be published or exposed.

1. E-mail *

2. Age *

3. Gender *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ Otro: _____

4. According to the CEFR, (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), What was your English Level when you were admitted at the University?

Selecciona todos los que correspondan.

- ☐ Beginner
- ☐ Elementary
- ☐ Pre-Intermediate
- ☐ Intermediate
- ☐ Upper-intermediate

In this section you will be asked to carefully read the statements and provide an answer based on the Frequency model of response provided below.

Frequency
1 - Never
2 - Rarely
3 - Sometimes
4 - Usually
5 - Always

5. 1. I felt anxious during virtual classes in Remote Attendance *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

6. 2. I felt stressed during virtual classes in Remote Attendance. *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

7. 3. I felt overwhelmed during virtual classes in Remote Attendance.

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

8. 4. I feel anxious during face-to-face classes. *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

9. 5. I feel stressed during face-to-face classes. *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

10. 6. I feel overwhelmed during face-to-face classes. *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

11. 7. I applied strategies to keep myself motivated during Remote Attendance.

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

12. 8. I applied strategies to improve my English Academic Performance during Remote Attendance.

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

Agreement Section

13. 9. The conditions I lived in remote attendance modality, such as family and economic problems, conectivity, atmosphere and environmental factors (e.g. noise), negatively affected my English learning motivation.

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

14. 10. I have experienced more problems and difficulties to learn and pass in face-to-face classes than in the virtual ones.

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

15. 11. It was harder to get motivated learning through virtual classes than it is through face-to-face classes *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Pedagogical and Didactic aspects

16. 12. The activities, content, and dynamics implemented during English online classes POSITIVELY influenced my level of motivation.

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Usually
- Always

17. 13. The activities, content, and dynamics implemented during English face-to-face classes have POSITIVELY influenced my level of motivation.

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ◯ Strongly disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly agree

English Performance Section

18. 14. Isolation and lockdown negatively affected my academic performance of the English language.

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree

19. 15. I consider that I was able to achieve all my learning goals regarding the English learning process during the Remote Attendance modality.

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ◯ Strongly agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree

20. 16. My English Academic Performance in the the following semesters was

Marca solo un óvalo por fila.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1st semester	◯	◯	◯	◯
2nd semester	◯	◯	◯	◯
3rd semester	◯	◯	◯	◯
4th semester	◯	◯	◯	◯

Motivation levels

21. 17. My motivation in the following semesters was

Marca solo un óvalo por fila.

	High	HIgh-medium	Medium	Low-medium	Low
1st semester	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
2nd semester	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
3rd semester	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
4th semester	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Appendix B - Interview Format: Qualitative Data

Interview Protocol

1. **Instructions**

Good morning/ afternoon. Thank you for being here and sharing your valuable time with us. We are (...). We are students from the Foreign language teaching program at UIS. The purpose of this interview is to get your perceptions about Learning Motivation and Language Performance by analyzing your experiences during the previous semesters (Remote Attendance Classes) and the impact that it has had on your motivation. Feel free to answer the questions as honestly as you want: there are no right or wrong answers. This interview will be recorded for the purpose of this investigation, of course this information will not be published.

a. Consent form instructions

2. Demographic questions

a. Age, gender, semester, English level…

3. **Interview questions**

1. According to your experience, what is your opinion of the remote attendance modality in terms of language learning?
2. Do you consider that the English level you began with was determinant in your Academic Performance?

3. How did the remote attendance modality influence your motivation to learn English?
4. Did your level of English learning motivation influence your English Academic Performance?
5. What strategies or activities have you done to keep your English Academic Performance in good shape?
6. Do you prefer the face-to-face or remote attendance modality to keep you motivated to learn the language? Why?
7. What other aspects do you really think had a great impact on your learning motivation during the remote attendance modality?
8. Did you have the opportunity to participate in hybrid classes? If so, how do you describe them? What's your opinion about them?
9. What consequences do you think there existed when returning to face-to-face classes in terms of your learning motivation and your English performance?
10. What are the most difficult aspects to deal with in face-to-face classes? How motivated were you at the beginning? Did your grades improve?

4. Debriefing

Thank you for having been here and helped us today. Your time is much appreciated and with your help/ answers, we will be able to better understand what your perceptions are and this will be helpful as well to start reflecting on the most suitable practices and approaches / methods to be applied through this learning modality in order to benefit not only you as students but also educators and institutions in the long run.

5. Interview reflection

- **Instructions:** after you are done with the interviewee, take a few moments to fill out the following chart to make sure you record your final reflections and observations about the interview.

Respondent name/ ID	
Interview date	
Respondents attitudes toward you/ the interview	
Unusual circumstances/ events	
Additional comments	